



DELA Optimize your success!

Doing well at university requires excellent academic language skills – a ‘step up’ from what you have been used to at secondary school. This is why the University of Melbourne is asking many students to take the Diagnostic English Language Assessment (DELA) when they commence an undergraduate degree.

What is DELA?

DELA is a diagnostic tool that assesses your strengths and weaknesses in academic reading, writing and listening. The results will indicate if you’d benefit from extra support at the start of your degree. DELA has no impact on your place in the course.

Will I have to sit DELA?

You will have to sit DELA if you are an undergraduate student with any of the following:

- VCE English study score between 25–29
- VCE English Language study score between 25–29
- VCE English Literature study score between 25–29
- VCE ESL study score between 30–34
- IELTS below 7
- or equivalent (for equivalencies, go to <http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/asu/download/DELA-Table-of-Equivalencies081127.pdf>)

Why do I have to sit DELA?

Developing tertiary academic language skills early is a key to success in your studies. DELA will identify the language skills that you may need to improve and direct you to the best program of support for your requirements and course.

Will I have to sit DELA even if I am a native speaker?

Yes – if your language study score falls within the range identified above. All students, both native and non-native speakers of English need excellent academic English skills in order to fully engage in their studies AND get good marks. As a native English speaker, you may still require assistance in developing the sophisticated language skills that you need at tertiary level. Developing strategies for improving your academic English may mean the difference between just passing and getting a high distinction!

What if I don’t take DELA – will I be in trouble?

Your enrolment will not be cancelled if you don’t sit DELA, or if you fail to follow up with participation in skill improvement opportunities that are recommended to you following completion of DELA. However, you can expect that if your academic results are subsequently unsatisfactory and you have not taken up these opportunities, you are unlikely to receive a favourable response to a request to continue your studies. If there are any particular problems that arise for you in participating in the recommended action you should discuss these with an adviser in your Student Centre so that alternatives can be explored.

What happens if I fail DELA?

You can’t fail DELA! It’s a diagnostic tool to help you get the most out of your university studies. DELA is working for you, not against you! And it doesn’t appear on your transcript or impact on your university place.

When do I take DELA?

DELA is offered throughout orientation week. Check your orientation program to find the DELA session for your course. If you can’t take DELA at the scheduled time, you can take it at any other time that suits you.

What does DELA involve?

DELA is made up of three components:

- Reading (45 minutes)
- Writing (30 minutes)
- Listening (30 minutes)

It will take around 2 hours, and be held in one of the University’s lecture theatres – the times and venues are listed in your orientation program.

Can I study for DELA?

No, we don’t encourage you to study for DELA – remember it is a diagnostic tool designed to raise awareness of your language needs, not a selection test. But you can check out a sample DELA at

<http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/asu/download/DELA-Handbook2009.pdf> . You can then find out more about the format of DELA and the kinds of questions you'll be asked.

I've got a health issue/impairment that makes it hard for me to perform well on a timed assessment. What should I do?

You can't fail DELA, but if you feel you haven't done as well as you could on DELA, you should discuss this with your student adviser, who will give you advice on appropriate strategies. *(For some students with certain impairments (eg a learning disability, sensory or physical impairment, you may not be required to sit DELA. You should discuss this with the Disability Liaison Unit at 8344 7068.)*

When will I find out my results?

You'll be emailed your results and recommendations within 3 working days after you've taken DELA. Check your university email account and then discuss your results with a student adviser. You may be asked to enrol in an English language credit subject or a program that supports one of your core subjects, depending on your course. Or you may have a study plan developed specifically for your needs. It is important that you discuss your results with a student adviser in your faculty. All language programs are designed to fit within your course of study, at no additional cost. If you would like to know more about the kinds of programs that your faculty provides to help you develop academic language skills, go to <http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/asu/services/DELA/index.html> or check directly with your faculty.