

**MALAYSIAN UNIVERSITY ENGLISH TEST  
(MUET)**

**REGULATIONS, TEST SPECIFICATIONS,  
TEST FORMAT AND  
SAMPLE QUESTIONS**

The information in this booklet applies to the end-2008 MUET and thereafter until further notice.

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### **NATIONAL EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY**

Education in Malaysia is an on-going effort towards further developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner, so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonious, based on a belief in and devotion to God. Such effort is designed to produce Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable and competent, who possess high moral standards, and who are responsible and capable of achieving a high level of personal well-being as well as being able to contribute to the betterment of the family, the society and the nation at large.

## FOREWORD

The Malaysian Examinations Council, which was established under Act 225, Malaysian Examinations Council Act 1980, is a statutory body under the Ministry of Education Malaysia. The Malaysian Examinations Council is managed by a board of governors comprising vice-chancellors of local universities established under Section 6 of the University and University Colleges Act 1971 and under Section 1A of the University of Technology MARA Act 1976, the Chief Secretary of the Ministry of Education, the Director General of Education, the Director of Examinations of the Malaysian Examinations Syndicate, the Chief Executive of the Malaysian Examinations Council, and five other members appointed by His Majesty the Yang di-Pertuan Agong. The Chairman of the Council is also appointed by His Majesty the Yang di-Pertuan Agong from amongst the vice-chancellors of local universities.

The Malaysian Examinations Council is responsible for the conduct of the Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia (STPM) (Malaysia Higher School Certificate) examination effective since the 1982 examination. This examination replaced the Higher School Certificate examination conducted by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate in collaboration with Universiti Malaya. With effect from 1999, the Malaysian Examinations Council is also responsible for the management of the Malaysian University English Test (MUET). MUET is conducted thrice a year and is compulsory for students who intend to pursue first degree studies in local public universities.

This is the first time that the MUET syllabus is being revised since its inception in 1999. It is to ensure that MUET maintains its relevancy in testing candidates' English language proficiency. There are minor changes in the test specifications which detail the aspects according to the four components of MUET: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the MUET Syllabus Committee chaired by Prof Datin Dr Zubaida S A Alsree from Universiti Teknologi MARA. The committee members are Prof Dr Anie Attan, Dr Harriet Wong, Prof Dr Chan Swee Heng, Dr Mohd Sallehudin bin Abd Aziz, Prof Dr Zuraidah Md Don, Prof Madya Khairi Izwan Abdullah, Prof Madya Dr Fatimah Hashim, Dr Tengku Sepora Tengku Mahadi, Ms Sivagnana Chelvi, Mr Martin Bates, Mdm Vasantha Mallar Menon, Mdm Gita Lam Yean Ling and Mdm Esther Evelyn Jeverajah. I also wish to thank all the schools that have allowed their students to participate as the sample for the verification and validation purposes of the test instruments.

Finally, it is hoped that MUET shall have the desired positive effects on the perceptions of students and enthusiasm of teachers with regard to the teaching and learning of English.

**DR. JAMIL BIN ADIMIN**

Chief Executive

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## INTRODUCTION

In the Malaysian education system, English has always played an important role. The Malaysian University English Test (MUET) serves to give continued emphasis on this role.

The objective of MUET is to measure the English language proficiency of pre-university students for entry into tertiary education. MUET comprises all the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. It measures and reports candidates' level of proficiency based upon an aggregated score range of zero to 300. The scores correlate with a banding system ranging from Band 1 to Band 6. A results slip is issued to each candidate who completes all four components of the test.

This booklet contains test specifications which detail aspects of each component of MUET. The test specifications list the skills relevant to help equip students with the level of proficiency in English and critical thinking skills for more effective academic study at tertiary level. They may also be used as a valuable guide to MUET for independent learners.

## GENERAL REGULATIONS

### 1 Test Dates

- 1.1 MUET is administered thrice a year, in March, July, and November.
- 1.2 The Listening, Reading and Writing tests are administered on the same day while the Speaking test is administered over a duration of two weeks.
- 1.3 Candidates will be informed of their specific test dates through the MUET registration slip (MUET/D) which can be downloaded from MEC's portal <http://www.mpm.edu.my>.

### 2 Test Centres

Test centres for candidates will be determined by the respective State Education Departments based on candidates' choice of town in which they wish to take the test.

### 3 Registration

- 3.1 Registration for MUET is online whether through MEC's portal <http://www.mpm.edu.my>.
- 3.2 Candidates from public and private schools/institutions will register for MUET through their respective schools/institutions.
- 3.3 Private individual candidates can register for MUET online through MEC's portal <http://www.mpm.edu.my>.
- 3.4 Dates for registration will be announced by the Malaysian Examinations Council in local newspapers and through MEC's portal <http://www.mpm.edu.my>.
- 3.5 It is the responsibility of candidates to ensure that their particulars are entered correctly during the online registration.
- 3.6 Payment of registration fee must be made by purchasing Malaysian Examinations Council's PIN (MEC PIN) from Bank Simpanan Nasional (BSN) or through internet banking. Candidates may surf MEC's portal <http://www.mpm.edu.my> for further information on registration and payment mode.

3.7 Candidates may check their registration status through the MEC's portal <http://www.mpm.edu.my> and via SMS.

#### 4 **Test Fees**

The test fee is RM100.00 comprising the registration fee of RM40.00 and a subject fee of RM60.00.

#### 5 **Change of Test Centres**

5.1 Candidates who wish to change their test centre must apply through their respective State Education Departments not later two weeks after the MUET/D uploaded at MEC's portal.

5.2 An administrative fee of RM25.00 will be levied for this purpose.

#### 6 **Withdrawal from Test**

Fees of candidates who withdraw from the test will **not** be refunded. However, a refund of RM60.00 will be paid in the following cases.

- (a) A candidate suffering from a long-term illness  
(A copy of the medical certificate from a Government Medical Officer must be forwarded.)
- (b) A candidate who has passed away  
(A copy of the death certificate must be forwarded by the next of kin or a representative.)
- (c) A candidate who get the offer to further study in local university.  
(A copy of offer letter from university must be submitted.)

#### 7 **Deferment of Test**

7.1 Candidates who wish to defer the test must write in to seek permission from the Malaysian Examinations Council stating reasons supported by evidence before the date of the test.

7.2 Approval to defer the test is at the discretion of the Malaysian Examinations Council.

#### 8 **Contagious Diseases**

Candidates who suffer from contagious diseases are normally not allowed to sit for the test. If permitted, the candidate will be seated in a separate room.

#### 9 **Arrangements for Specific Needs**

9.1 Applications for specific arrangements are allowed for

- (a) candidates adversely affected by illness or other misfortunes,
- (b) candidates with special needs.

9.2 Applications must be made on special forms which can be obtained from the online registration.

9.3 The Malaysian Examinations Council will not consider cases which are not reported prior to the test.

## 10 **Materials provided by Candidates**

10.1 Candidates are required to write their answers using a pen or ball-point pen in black or blue ink, except for multiple-choice tests in which only BB or 2B pencils are to be used.

10.2 Candidates must bring their own pencils, erasers and other equipment.

## 11 **MUET Results**

11.1 The MUET results are presented in a results slip which is issued through the State Education Department.

11.2 Candidates from public and private schools/institutions will collect their results from their respective schools/ institutions.

11.3 Private individual candidates will receive their results from the Malaysian Examinations Council by post.

11.4 Candidates are given 12 months to collect their results after the date of release. After this period, the school, institution or State Education Department will return the unclaimed results slips to the Malaysian Examinations Council. Candidates who wish to claim their results slip after that period may request it directly from the Malaysian Examinations Council at a fee of RM20.00.

11.5 Candidates who have lost their results slip may apply for a certified statement of results. The application must be accompanied by information concerning the candidate, i.e. full name and identity card number, session and year of the test, examination centre and index number. A fee of RM20.00 will be levied for the first application, RM30.00 for the second application and RM50.00 for the third application for a certified statement of results.

11.6 Results will also be available on the MEC's portal <http://www.mpm.edu.my> and via SMS.

## 12 **Disqualification of Results and Expulsion of Candidates**

12.1 If the Malaysian Examinations Council is satisfied that a candidate has been involved in any breach of regulation or caution issued for this test or in any irregularity, misconduct or dishonesty whatsoever in connection with the test or any of the papers, the Council may at its sole discretion, bar the candidate from the test and refuse his further admission thereto, cancel his result thereof, and refuse his entry as a candidate in subsequent tests.

12.2 If the Malaysian Examinations Council is satisfied that breaches of regulation or caution or any irregularity, misconduct or dishonesty whatsoever in connection with the test have been widespread at any centre, or that the circumstances in which the test is held at any centre are unsatisfactory, the Council may at its sole discretion, cancel the entire test at that centre or the results thereof, in relation to all the candidates at that centre.

## 13 **Appeal of Test Results**

Candidates may appeal for rechecking of MUET results within two weeks after the release of result. A fee of RM 70.00 will be charged. Candidates may surf MEC's portal <http://www.mpm.edu.my> for further information on appeals for rechecking of MUET results.

## 14 **Answer Scripts**

Answer scripts of candidates remain the property of the Malaysian Examinations Council.



15 **Conditions of Test Registration**

There is no entry requirement to sit for MUET.

16 **Validity of MUET**

The validity period for MUET results are as follows:

- (a) MUET results released before 2009 are valid until 18 July 2013.
- (b) From 2009, MUET results are valid for five years from the date of the release of results.

17 **Test Component**

MUET comprises four components: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. The duration and weighting of each component are as follows:

<b>Paper Code</b>	<b>Paper</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
800/1	Listening	30 minutes	15%
800/2	Speaking	30 minutes	15%
800/3	Reading	90 minutes	40%
800/4	Writing	90 minutes	30%

18 **Test Scores**

Test scores are reported as follows:

<b>Test Component</b>	<b>Maximum Score</b>	<b>Obtained Score</b>
LISTENING	45	
SPEAKING	45	
READING	120	
WRITING	90	
AGGREGATED SCORE	300	
<b>Band Achieved</b>		

19 **Description of Aggregated Scores**

<b>AGGREGATED SCORE</b>	<b>BAND</b>	<b>USER</b>	<b>COMMUNICATIVE ABILITY</b>	<b>COMPREHENSION</b>	<b>TASK PERFORMANCE</b>
260 – 300	6	Highly proficient user	Very fluent; highly appropriate use of language; hardly any grammatical error	Very good understanding of language and context	Very high ability to function in the language
220 – 259	5	Proficient user	Fluent; appropriate use of language; few grammatical errors	Good understanding of language and context	High ability to function in the language
180 – 219	4	Satisfactory user	Generally fluent; generally appropriate use of language; some grammatical errors	Satisfactory understanding of language and context	Satisfactory ability to function in the language
140 – 179	3	Modest user	Fairly fluent; fairly appropriate use of language; many grammatical errors	Fair understanding of language and context	Fair ability to function in the language
100 – 139	2	Limited user	Not fluent; inappropriate use of language; very frequent grammatical errors	Limited understanding of language and context	Limited ability to function in the language
Below 100	1	Very limited user	Hardly able to use the language	Very limited understanding of language and context	Very limited ability to function in the language

# MALAYSIAN UNIVERSITY ENGLISH TEST TEST SPECIFICATIONS

## Aim

The Malaysian University English Test (MUET) seeks to measure the English language proficiency of candidates planning to pursue tertiary studies at Malaysian universities.

## Implementation in Schools

The MUET programme should involve 240 hours of teaching time spanning three school terms. Instruction should be carried out for 8 periods per week at 40 minutes per period.

## Teachers' Guide to MUET

Teachers' Guide to MUET complements the Test Specifications of the MUET. It provides a framework for preparing candidates for MUET.

## Assessment Objectives

MUET tests the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Component	Test Specifications
<b>1 Listening</b>	<p>Candidates are assessed on their ability to comprehend various types of oral text of varying length and level of complexity (content and language).</p> <p>Assessment will cover the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>(i) knowledge</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• recalling information</li><li>• recognising main ideas</li><li>• recognising supporting details</li></ul></li><li><b>(ii) comprehension</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• deriving meaning of words, phrases, sentences from context</li><li>• paraphrasing</li></ul></li><li><b>(iii) application</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• predicting outcomes</li><li>• applying a concept to a new situation</li></ul></li><li><b>(iv) analysis</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• understanding language functions</li><li>• distinguishing the relevant from the irrelevant</li><li>• distinguishing fact from opinion</li><li>• drawing inferences</li><li>• identifying roles and relationships</li></ul></li><li><b>(v) synthesis</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• following the development of a point or an argument</li><li>• summarising information</li></ul></li></ul>

Component	Test Specifications
	<p><b>(vi) evaluation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appraising information</li> <li>• making judgements</li> <li>• drawing conclusions</li> <li>• recognising and interpreting speakers' views, attitudes or intentions</li> </ul> <p><b>Possible genres:</b> Lecture, briefing, talk, discussion, interview, telephone conversation, announcement, instructions, advertisement, news, meeting, documentary</p>
<p><b>2 Speaking</b></p>	<p>Candidates are assessed on their ability to make individual presentations and to take part in group discussions on a wide range of contemporary issues.</p> <p>Assessment will cover the following:</p> <p><b>(i) accuracy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• using grammatically correct language</li> <li>• using correct pronunciation, stress and intonation</li> </ul> <p><b>(ii) fluency</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• speaking with confidence and fluency</li> </ul> <p><b>(iii) appropriacy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• using language appropriate for the intended purpose and audience</li> <li>• using varied vocabulary and expressions</li> <li>• using varied sentence structures</li> <li>• observing conventions appropriate to a specific situation</li> </ul> <p><b>(iv) coherence and cohesion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developing and organising ideas</li> <li>• using appropriate markers and linking devices</li> <li>• using anaphora appropriately together with other cohesive devices</li> </ul> <p><b>(v) use of language functions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• defining, describing, explaining</li> <li>• comparing and contrasting</li> <li>• classifying</li> <li>• giving reasons</li> <li>• giving opinions</li> <li>• expressing relationships</li> <li>• making suggestions and recommendations</li> <li>• expressing agreement and disagreement</li> <li>• seeking clarification</li> <li>• asking for and giving information</li> <li>• persuading</li> <li>• drawing conclusions</li> <li>• stating and justifying points of view</li> <li>• presenting an argument</li> </ul>

Component	Test Specifications
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• expressing relationships</li> <li>• making suggestions and recommendations</li> <li>• expressing agreement and disagreement</li> <li>• seeking clarification</li> <li>• asking for and giving information</li> <li>• persuading</li> <li>• drawing conclusions</li> <li>• stating and justifying points of view</li> <li>• presenting an argument</li> </ul> <p><b>(vi) managing a discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• initiating</li> <li>• turn-taking</li> <li>• interrupting</li> <li>• prompting</li> <li>• negotiating</li> <li>• closing</li> </ul> <p><b>(vii) task fulfilment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• presenting relevant ideas</li> <li>• providing adequate content</li> <li>• showing a mature treatment of topic</li> </ul> <p><i>Possible issues:</i> Socio-cultural, economic, science and technology, sports, environment, education, health</p>
<b>3 Reading</b>	<p>Candidates are assessed on their ability to comprehend various types of text of varying length and level of complexity (content and language).</p> <p>Assessment will cover the following:</p> <p><b>(i) comprehension</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• skimming and scanning</li> <li>• extracting specific information</li> <li>• identifying main ideas</li> <li>• identifying supporting details</li> <li>• deriving the meaning of words, phrases, sentences from the context</li> <li>• understanding linear and non-linear texts</li> <li>• understanding relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– within a sentence</li> <li>– between sentences</li> </ul> </li> <li>• recognising a paraphrase</li> </ul> <p><b>(ii) application</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• predicting outcomes</li> <li>• applying a concept to a new situation</li> </ul>

Component	Test Specifications
	<p><b>(iii) analysis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understanding language functions</li> <li>• interpreting linear and non-linear texts</li> <li>• distinguishing the relevant from the irrelevant</li> <li>• distinguishing fact from opinion</li> <li>• making inferences</li> </ul> <p><b>(iv) synthesis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• relating ideas and concepts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– within a paragraph</li> <li>– between paragraphs</li> </ul> </li> <li>• following the development of a point or an argument</li> <li>• summarising information</li> </ul> <p><b>(v) evaluation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appraising information</li> <li>• making judgements</li> <li>• drawing conclusions</li> <li>• recognising and interpreting writers' views, attitudes or intentions</li> </ul> <p><b>Possible genres:</b> Articles from journals, newspapers and magazines, academic texts, electronic texts</p>
<b>4 Writing</b>	<p>Candidates are assessed on their ability to write various types of text covering a range of rhetorical styles.</p> <p>Assessment will cover the following:</p> <p><b>(i) accuracy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• using correct spelling and mechanics</li> <li>• using correct grammar</li> <li>• using correct sentence structures</li> </ul> <p><b>(ii) appropriacy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• using varied vocabulary and expressions</li> <li>• using clear varied sentences</li> <li>• using language appropriate for the intended purpose and audience</li> <li>• observing conventions appropriate to a specific situation or text type</li> </ul> <p><b>(iii) coherence and cohesion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developing and organising ideas</li> <li>• using appropriate markers and linking devices</li> <li>• using anaphora appropriately together with other cohesive devices</li> </ul>

Component	Test Specifications
	<p>(iv) <b>use of language functions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• defining, describing, explaining</li> <li>• comparing and contrasting</li> <li>• classifying</li> <li>• giving reasons</li> <li>• giving opinions</li> <li>• expressing relationships</li> <li>• making suggestions and recommendations</li> <li>• expressing agreement and disagreement</li> <li>• persuading</li> <li>• interpreting information from non-linear texts</li> <li>• drawing conclusions</li> <li>• stating and justifying points of view</li> <li>• presenting an argument</li> </ul> <p>(v) <b>task fulfilment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• presenting relevant ideas</li> <li>• providing adequate content</li> <li>• showing a mature treatment of topic</li> </ul> <p><i>Possible genres:</i> Report, article, letter, essay</p>

**Paper 1: Listening (800/1)**

No	Item	Description
1	Weighting	15%
2	Duration	30 minutes
3	Number of texts	5
4	Basic criteria for text selection	Length, level of complexity (content and language), text type
5	Possible genres	Lecture, briefing, talk, discussion, interview, telephone conversation, announcement, instructions, advertisement, news, meeting, documentary
6	Number of questions	20
7	Possible question types	(i) Information transfer (ii) Short-answer questions (iii) 3-option multiple-choice questions
8	Skills tested	As in the test specifications

**Paper 2: Speaking (800/2)**

No	Item	Description
1	Weighting	15%
2	Duration	30 minutes
3	Number of tasks	2
4	Topic	Contemporary issues
5	Task format	Task A: Individual presentation Preparation : 2 minutes Presentation : 2 minutes Task B: Group interaction (4 candidates to a group) Preparation : 2 minutes Discussion : 10 minutes
6	Skills tested	As in the test specifications



**Paper 3: Reading (800/3)**

No	Item	Description
1	Weighting	40%
2	Duration	90 minutes
3	Number of texts	6 (at least one text with graphics)
4	Basic criteria for text selection	Length (200 – 700 words), level of complexity (content and language), text type
5	Possible genres	Articles from journals, newspapers and magazines, academic texts, electronic texts
6	Rhetorical style	Analytical, descriptive, persuasive, argumentative, narrative
7	Number of questions	45
8	Possible question-type	(i) 3-option multiple-choice questions (ii) 4-option multiple-choice questions
9	Skills tested	As in the test specifications

**Paper 4: Writing (800/4)**

No	Item	Description
1	Weighting	30%
2	Duration	90 minutes
3	Number of questions	2
4	Possible genres	Report, article, letter, essay
5	Rhetorical style	Analytical, descriptive, persuasive, argumentative
6	Task	Question 1: Interpretation of information based on specific stimuli provided (no less than 150 words) Question 2: Extended writing based on a given topic (no less than 350 words)
7	Skills tested	As in the test specifications

## TEST FORMAT

MUET comprises **four** papers. Candidates are required to sit for all the four papers.

Details of the four components are as follows.

### **Paper 1: Listening (30 minutes)**

Candidates will be required to listen to recorded texts twice and answer questions on them.

There is a total of 20 questions consisting of information transfer, short-answer questions and 3-option multiple-choice questions.

### **Paper 2: Speaking (30 minutes)**

Candidates will be required to perform two tasks: individual presentation and group interaction.

For the individual presentation, candidates will be given 2 minutes to prepare for the given task and 2 minutes to present. Candidates will also listen to the other candidates while they are making their presentations and take down notes for the group interaction.

For the group interaction (4 to a group), candidates will be given 2 minutes to prepare points to support or oppose the other candidates' views. After listening to everyone in the group, candidates will try to come to a consensus. The group will be given 10 minutes for the group interaction.

### **Paper 3: Reading (90 minutes)**

This paper comprises 45 multiple-choice questions based on passages from texts which may be taken from journals, newspapers, magazines, and academic and electronic sources. Questions are in the form of 3-option multiple-choice and 4-option multiple-choice questions.

### **Paper 4: Writing (90 minutes)**

This paper comprises two writing tasks: transferring information from a non-linear source to a linear text and a piece of extended writing. The stimulus may take the form of linear and/or non-linear texts.

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