

**Joint Admission Examination
for
Four Higher Education Institutions
in
Macao**

**Syllabus
(Student Version)**

Subject – English

1.0 Introduction

The Joint Admission Examination for Four Higher Education Institutions in Macao (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Joint Admission Exam’) provides a single test for secondary school leavers applying to any of the four major tertiary institutions in Macao – the Institute for Tourism Studies (IFT), Macao Polytechnic Institute (MPI), Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST), and the University of Macau (UM).

The English Joint Admission Exam follows the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)¹, and the exam questions are set at a range of levels, including Elementary (CEFR A2), Pre-Intermediate (CEFR B1), Intermediate (CEFR B2), and Upper-Intermediate/Advanced (CEFR C1). The English examination consists of three major sections: Language Use, Reading Comprehension and Writing.

Following is the detailed explanation of each section.

2.0 Language Use (40 marks)

This section of the Joint Admission Exam tests the students’ knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary at levels of Elementary/Pre-Intermediate to Intermediate. The possible types of questions include multiple choice, cloze passage, spotting errors and joining sentences.

2.1 – Vocabulary and Grammar in Context

For the Vocabulary and Grammar in Context, the students will read 4 to 7 short passages. In each passage, two or three words have been left out. The students need to choose the answer, from the four given choices, that best fits each blank. The types of short passages will be in the form of letters, advertisements, notices, instruction manuals, everyday conversations, etc. The passages will each be 40 to 100 words long. The level of difficulty is mostly Elementary to Pre-Intermediate, with two or three Intermediate questions.

2.2 – Cloze Passage

The Cloze passage is a text of around 150 to 250 words. In this passage, ten words or expressions have been left out. The students need to choose the answer, from the four given choices, that best fits each blank to complete the meaning of the passage. The language points tested here will be spread evenly among Elementary, Pre-Intermediate, and Intermediate levels.

¹ The Common European Framework of language proficiency levels is developed by the Council of Europe (http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Cadre1_en.asp) and also used by the Cambridge ESOL examinations (<https://www.teachers.cambridgeesol.org/ts/exams>). The framework allows for equivalences between international standardized exams (<http://secure.vec.bc.ca/toefl-equivalency-table.cfm>).

2.3 – Spotting Errors in Context

The purpose of this part is to test the students' ability to recognize language errors that may cause problems for the communication of meaning in various fields, including public, occupational, and educational areas. The students should be able to identify the errors and choose the best replacement.

Items will be tested in a contextualized passage. The students will read a passage that contains 10 underlined fragments. For each underlined fragment, the students are to choose from 4 choices provided, the best to replace it.

This part requires the students to analyze the correctness or incorrectness of each underlined part in terms of grammar and word choice, and choose an alternative that best replaces it. The language points tested here will be spread evenly among Elementary, Pre-Intermediate, and Intermediate levels.

In detail, the Vocabulary and Grammar in Context, the Cloze Passage and the Spotting Errors in Context test the students' ability to

- Know and use Elementary, Pre-Intermediate and Intermediate vocabulary;
- Know and understand different parts of speech and their roles in sentences;
- Recognize the number, case, and gender of nouns and pronouns;
- Apply agreement rules such as subject-verb agreement, number agreement, and case agreement;
- Use different verb tenses;
- Understand the passive voice and use the passive voice in different tenses;
- Understand the rules for the comparative and superlative forms of adjectives and use them correctly;
- Be able to use different conjunctions;
- Understand the use of different prepositions;
- Understand and use non-predicate verbs, i.e., infinitives, gerunds, and participles;
- Understand different types of clauses (attributive clauses, object clauses, subject clauses, adverbial clauses, etc.) and the coordinators or subordinators used to indicate the different types;
- Infer the left-out words or expressions based on the context;
- Keep the unity of a passage in terms of meaning, tense, style, and coherence.

2.4 – Joining Sentences

The purpose of this part is to test the students' ability to form logical relations between individual sentences. It requires the students to examine the relations between individual sentences and link them up appropriately to form a single coherent sentence.

In this part, pairs of sentences are provided. The students are to read the sentences carefully, and join up the sentences in each pair. Students need to show their ability to form coordination and subordination of ideas within sentences, and to use coherence devices / connecting words.

In general, Joining Sentences questions will test the students' ability to:

- Recognize verb tense consistency within organized idea units;
- Know the different purposes of active vs. passive voice constructions;
- Recognize the coordination and subordination of ideas within sentences;
- Identify referents within and across sentences;
- Identify correct usage of coherence devices.

3.0 Reading Comprehension (30 marks)

The Joint Admission Exam contains several reading passages of different text types and levels of difficulty.

First, there are several short texts of public notices and announcements, and also 1-2 passages of 300-400 words each, with multiple-choice questions. The questions test the students' ability to understand factual information, everyday language, instructions, explanations, descriptions of persons, places, events, feelings and wishes, and to extract the main points of an argumentative text. The level of difficulty of the notices and announcements is Elementary to Pre-Intermediate. The level of difficulty of the reading passages is Pre-Intermediate to Intermediate.

In addition, there is also 1 more difficult and longer passage at the level of Intermediate to Upper Intermediate/Advanced. There are multiple-choice and open-ended questions, which test the students' ability to understand a writer's particular viewpoint or position, more complex or specialized information, such as materials found in academic textbooks, and literary works. The open-ended questions require the students to demonstrate their understanding of the reading passage and their ability to express their understanding in their own words.

A detailed summary of guidelines for preparing for the reading comprehension is given below:

Elementary (CEFR A2)

By the end of the **Elementary** stage, a student:

1. Can understand texts on familiar, concrete matters: short, simple texts, e.g., routine personal and business letters and faxes, most everyday signs and public notices, directions, listings, advertisements, simple textbooks or reports on familiar matters;
2. Can understand short, simple texts written in everyday language, including some shared international words;
3. Can understand short simple texts related to job or field of study;

4. Can find specific information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, brochures, menus, letters, timetables, and short newspaper articles describing events;
5. Can understand simple instructions on equipment encountered in everyday life – such as a public telephone, mobile phone, computer, etc.;
6. Can understand everyday signs and notices in public places, such as streets, buses, restaurants, hospitals, hotels, railway stations and in workplaces.

Pre-Intermediate (CEFR B1)

By the end of the **Pre-Intermediate** stage, a student:

1. Can understand routine information and articles, and the general meaning of non-routine information within familiar areas;
2. Can understand straightforward factual texts on subjects related to their field of interest;
3. Can read everyday material, e.g. letters, brochures and short official documents;
4. Can comprehend clearly written argumentative texts and identify the main conclusions;
5. Can read personal letters expressing feelings and wishes;
6. Can understand clearly written, straightforward instructions for a piece of equipment;
7. Can search one long or several short texts to locate specific information needed to help complete a task;
8. Can recognize significant points in straightforward newspaper articles on familiar subjects and descriptions of events;
9. Can recognize the general line of argument in a text but not necessarily in detail.

Intermediate (CEFR B2)

By the end of the **Intermediate** stage, a student:

1. Can scan texts for relevant information, and understand detailed instructions or advice;
2. Can understand correspondence relating to field of interest. Comprehends longer texts, including specialized articles outside field and highly specialized sources within field (but needs a dictionary to confirm terminology);
3. Can understand articles and reports on contemporary problems with particular viewpoints;
4. Can read many kinds of texts quite easily in different ways according to the purpose in reading;
5. Has a broad reading vocabulary, but sometimes experiences difficulty with less common words and phrases;

6. Can quickly identify the content, relevance and viewpoints of news items, articles and reports on a wide range of topics.

Upper Intermediate/Advanced (CEFR C1)

By the end of the **Upper Intermediate** stage, a student:

1. Can comprehend most of the message in a text, although may still need to refer to a dictionary;
2. Can read quickly enough to cope with an academic course, or to read the media for information;
3. Can read a wide range of long, complex texts from social, professional or academic life;
4. Can understand complex instructions on a new unfamiliar machine or procedure;
5. Can appreciate literary texts and differences in style.

By the end of the **Advanced** stage, a student:

1. Can read a wide range of reading texts with good confidence and competence;
2. Can understand the majority of the message with only minor loss of detail or subtlety;
3. Has little need to refer to a dictionary;
4. Has a reading speed and strategies that are fully effective but somewhat less flexible than those in his/her L1 (mother tongue);
5. Can understand reports and articles likely to be encountered during his/her work, including complex ideas expressed in complex language;
6. Can understand documents, correspondence and reports;
7. Can understand and interpret practically all forms of written language including abstract, structurally complex, or highly colloquial literary and non-literary writings.

4.0 Writing (B2, C1) (30 marks)

This part of the Joint Admission Exam corresponds to the Intermediate (B2) to Upper Intermediate/Advanced (C1) level of the CEFR. The students are expected to show their ability to write a clear and detailed text on a variety of subjects, synthesizing and evaluating information and arguments from a number of sources.

Specifically, the students will need to show their ability to:

- Write an essay which develops an argument, giving reasons in support for or against a particular point of view and explaining the advantages and disadvantages of various options;
- Write a descriptive essay about a particular person, event, process, etc., providing sufficient details;

- Write an essay which compares or contrasts two entities, or two views, etc.;
- Write an essay which provides suggestions to improve an existing phenomenon.

5.0 English Examination – Framework of Structure

Section	Part	Question type(s)	Level
Section 1 – Language Use (40 marks)	● Vocabulary and grammar in context	MCQ	A2, B1
	● Cloze passage	MCQ	A2, B1/B2
	● Spotting errors in context	MCQ	A2, B1/B2
	● Joining sentences	Sentence writing	B1/B2
Section 2 – Reading Comprehension (30 marks)	● Everyday English	MCQ	A2, B1
	● Short passage(s)	MCQ	B1
	● Longer passage	MCQ	B2/C1
		Open-ended questions	
Section 3 – Writing (30 marks)	– 3 general topics – choose 1 topic – (Minimum 200 words)	Essay Writing	B2, C1

NOTE:

A2 means Elementary.

B1 means Pre-Intermediate.

B2 means Intermediate.

C1 means Upper Intermediate/Advanced.

A2, B1 means some questions are A2 and some are B1 (approximately equally).

B1/B2 means the questions are set at the easier level of the Intermediate range.

B2/C1 means the questions are set in the Upper Intermediate range.

B2, C1 means both B2 and C1 are of required standard.