Misr University for Science & Technology
English Testing for Admission and Placement

English is Essential for Success with MUST Academics

Misr University for Science & Technology (MUST) is a private institution based in Egypt. More than 20,000 students in 13 schools matriculate annually earning undergraduate and post graduate degrees in engineering, medicine, business, biotechnology, and more. MUST is among the most technologically advanced educational institutions in the country.

Every student is required to demonstrate proficiency in English to pursue a degree. Study at MUST, in fact, cannot begin until a student can demonstrate their ability to communicate in English at academic levels. To that end, the university assesses the speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills of every incoming student. The result of the test determines the level of English course that each student must take, if any. Students lacking in English communication skills are required to take remedial non-credit English courses and demonstrate proficiency before they can begin working on their academic curriculum.

Large English Testing Program Requires Advanced Technology Solution

The MUST Test Centres are responsible for assessing the English proficiency skills of more than 5,000 students every year. This testing must be completed in the six weeks immediately prior to the start of term to ensure the accurate placement of students.

Tests previously used by MUST were pen and paper, and did not assess speaking skills. MUST needed a technology solution that could assess all four skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Moreover, they required a system that could simplify registration and administration. Finally, they also needed to receive the results within minutes so that all 5,000 or more new students could be placed quickly in the proper training interventions.

MUST turned to Pearson and its Versant™ English Placement Test (VEPT) for a solution. The VEPT is an English proficiency test that measures the speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills of individuals whose native language is not English. The test takes 50 minutes to complete and questions are randomized to ensure maximum security. Results for this web-delivered test are available within minutes. With a 0.99 correlation, Pearson test scores generated by the Versant™ testing system are virtually indistinguishable from expert human scoring, ensuring confidence in the results.

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"Our previous test was a manual solution that was too time consuming," said Khaled Khorshed, Manager of the MUST Test Centres. "We did not have the resources to thoroughly and accurately assess so many students in so little time. We needed a computer-based test that was easier to administer, had a secure testing and scoring process, and provided accurate and reliable results. We got all of that with the Versant English Placement Test."

The MUST English Test Centre team now manages the entire English assessment process for each new group with a single system. Using Versant's test management tool, ScoreKeeper™, a roster can be uploaded into the system, automatically assign a unique identification number to each student, administer the test, and then deliver the results. What previously took hundreds of hours is now done in minutes.

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Fast Implementation Necessary Despite Complexity

As part of adopting the VEPT, MUST also elected to implement the Pearson Learning Management System (LMS) to manage a host of educational resources, including English assessments. The integration with MUST's backend systems began in the summer and had to be ready for the fall semester.

"Our e-program is large and complex and in only a few months, Pearson was able to not only deploy the VEPT, but also integrate their LMS with our backend systems, which enabled us to easily deploy many other Pearson learning products for our 20,000 students," said Khorshed. "They were with us every step of the way and that is why the integration was completed so quickly."

MUST is the first university in Egypt to have an English assessment center and the first to implement the VEPT. Their single sign-on LMS enables staff and students to access all tests in one place. "MUST is one of the most technologically advanced universities in Egypt," said Ahmed Samir, Pearson's Technology Delivery Manager for Egypt. "Their LMS integration is seamless throughout the organization and one of the most sophisticated in Egypt. It is also helping them to meet their goal of going completely paperless."

English is Critical for MUST Students

Although Arabic is the national language of Egypt, English is used throughout the university. MUST believes that to properly prepare students, they must be fluent in English. "Students who wish to be successful in an advanced career in Egypt or anywhere in the world, must have English," said Khorshed.

Students that cannot demonstrate proficiency must take non-credit English classes before they can be placed into their chosen academic track. This delay can be costly and time-consuming so a precise understanding of their limitations with the language is critical. If they are placed too high, they may not be able to perform in classes. If placed too low, their academic career could be unnecessarily slowed. The VEPT provides detailed results for each student's performance in the four skill areas—speaking, listening, reading, and writing—so that the MUST team knows precisely which interventions were necessary.

"If we don't correctly assess each student's English proficiency, it will result in a poor educational experience for them," said Khorshed. "The Versant English Placement Test has been extremely accurate and helped us to consistently place students in the proper curriculum. This has resulted in happier students and teachers."

Before graduation, every student that has taken English classes is assessed again using Pearson's high stakes test, PTE Academic . MUST also offers a certificate program for students to demonstrate their excellence with English for employers.

About the Versant English Placement Test

The VEPT is an English proficiency test which measures speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills of individuals whose native language is not English. Universities, private language schools, and corporate training programs around the world use the test to:

- Evaluate a test taker's English communication skills for course placement or exit exam.
- Monitor test taker or employee progress and measure instructional outcomes.
- Benchmark the language levels of students and staff.

Test questions reflect many different situations in the classroom and real world including reading aloud, conversations, and writing summaries and opinions. Independent industry experts have found that the VEPT correlates highly with the TOEFL iBT and IELTS, and score concordances are available for those tests as well as the Global Scale of English (GSE) and Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The VEPT can be taken on a computer that is installed with Pearson's Computer Delivered Testing software or delivered over the worldwide web.

To try a sample test or get more information, contact us at:

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