



**For more information  
contact:**

**Michener English Language Assessment**

The Michener Institute for Applied Health Sciences  
222 St. Patrick Street  
Toronto, ON Canada M5T 1V4

**Tel:** 416-596-3101 ext. 3321

**Hours:** Monday to Friday between 9 am - 3 pm

**Email:** [info@themela.com](mailto:info@themela.com)

**Website:** [www.themela.com](http://www.themela.com)

Funded by:



Test research  
and development by:



# MELA

MICHENER ENGLISH LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT

An English language  
proficiency assessment for  
internationally educated  
health professionals





## What is **MELA?**

The Michener English Language Assessment, or MELA, is a standardized, English language proficiency test specific to the health care sector. MELA measures English language proficiency based on communication that is typical in health care education and practice settings. The test is referenced to the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB), a Canadian framework for English language proficiency. MELA scores are used by post-secondary institutions and regulatory bodies as approved and acceptable demonstration of communicative competence to study or practice.

## How are **MELA** scores used?



*Massage Therapist demonstrates a patient assessment.*

MELA scores are used:

- **For admission** by registration departments at post-secondary institutions to determine communication skills sufficient to join health care educational programs;
- **As a diagnostic tool** by program consultants to advise applicants about strong and weak areas in their language proficiency and provide options for skills development;
- **For licensure** by regulators as part of the credentialing process for internationally educated health care professionals seeking to be licensed in Canada.



*Michener student demonstrates microscope use.*



## MELA Test Format & Content

MELA measures English language communications skills in four areas: speaking, listening, reading and writing. The test takes about three and a half hours, including 10 minutes for sign in, document verification and instructions.

The test structure is based on the assumption that a test taker can engage in various complex tasks but their performance levels will differ depending on their language skills. For each skill area MELA tasks increase in their level of difficulty, with the first task being relatively common, and the final task being more complex.

*Michener students demonstrate a patient transfer.*



### Speaking (20 minutes)

The speaking test is a four-part interview which is recorded and rated by two different assessors to ensure score reliability. The interview requires test takers to demonstrate their ability to describe, instruct, persuade, educate, give opinions, propose, and recommend. Performance during the interview is evaluated based on the appropriateness of responses, fluency, pronunciation and the range and accuracy of language used. The role play scenario is occupation-specific.

### Listening (60 minutes)

The listening tasks test the ability to understand messages and follow instructions, conversations, and short academic-style lectures. There are four tasks that include completing forms while listening, taking notes, and answering multiple choice questions. The audio is delivered at normal speech rate and varies in length from 2 to 8 minutes.





### **Reading** (60 minutes)

The reading tasks test comprehension of authentic texts from health care workplaces such as procedural manuals and memos, as well as some academic texts such as medical journal articles and textbooks. There are three tasks that include matching and multiple choice questions. Because health care workplaces rely heavily on forms and charts, the reading test contains passages in prose as well as forms and charts.

### **Writing** (60 minutes)

The writing tasks test the ability to complete forms accurately and communicate requests and ideas clearly and effectively. Tasks include writing a report, making a request, and discussing a health care topic. The writing tasks are assessed according to content, organization, and accuracy of language use.

## Where is **MELA** administered?

The MELA is administered at the Michener Institute. For fees and registration, visit [www.themela.com](http://www.themela.com)



## What **MELA** scores are acceptable?

A score on any standardized language proficiency test is an indication of a test taker's level of language ability. The minimum score required on a test for any given purpose will vary depending on the reason for taking the test, for example admission to a bridging program or readiness for professional practice. For more details on MELA scores, visit [www.themela.com](http://www.themela.com)



## How was **MELA** developed?

MELA is a Canadian-made, language test which was developed in 2004, specific to the health care sector. It has undergone an extensive test development and validation process. MELA was structured around a language benchmarking analysis, which was conducted to identify the communication skills needed to practice effectively and safely in the Canadian health care workplace. The test items were developed by language specialists with input from health care workers, employers, regulators and test takers to ensure that the content was appropriate and meaningful. Guidance from language testing and measurement experts further ensures reliability and validity. The reliability of MELA test items was verified through detailed psychometric studies. MELA has also been evaluated against one of the most popular international standardized language proficiency tests through a concurrent validity study. MELA cut scores are set through an appropriate standard setting method which ensures that the results are used fairly and defensibly.



## About Michener

The Michener Institute for Applied Health Sciences is Canada's only post-secondary institution devoted exclusively to applied health science education. Since 1958, Michener has educated applied health professionals who serve a vital role in the country's health care sector in such fields as medical laboratory science, medical radiation sciences, respiratory therapy, chiropody, diagnostic cytology, genetics technology, ultrasound, and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).

The Michener Institute for Applied Health Sciences recognizes the expertise that Internationally Educated Health Professionals (IEHPs) bring to the Canadian health care system. Through its long commitment to the provision of bridging programs for IEHPs, Michener has supported IEHPs in their path to the Canadian health care workforce through professional education. Through MELA, Michener plays an active role in the fulfillment of language fluency requirements for IEHPs through specially designed language assessment that is profession specific and diagnostic.



*Michener students demonstrate an ultrasound procedure.*

