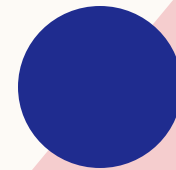


**MITAA  
INFORMATION  
FOR  
DEPARTMENT  
CONTACTS**

English Language Academy

# INDEX

- Acronyms
- What is the MITAA?
- Why does the MITAA exist?
- Is my ITA required to take the MITAA?
- Assessment Criteria of the MITAA for ITAs
- Responsibility of ITA's department contact for MITAA
- Summary
- Contact Information



# ACRONYMS

**ITA:** International Teaching Assistant

**ELA:** English Language Academy

**EAP:** English for Academic Purpose courses

**MITAA:** University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee  
International Teaching Assistant Assessment

**NNS:** Non-native Speakers (of English)

# WHAT IS THE MITAA?

The ELA uses the MITAA as the tool for assessing spoken English proficiency of prospective ITAs.

The MITAA evaluates English language proficiency, cultural competency, and teaching skills for the classroom.

# WHY THE MITAA?

## BEYOND THE POLICY

Imagine being a new freshman. Many of these students are young and may not have had much exposure to peoples of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Their world view and life experiences may be quite limited. With major life changes that happen for many students at this time, they are often overwhelmed and still learning proper regulation and coping skills to overcome obstacles.

Students with limited international or diversity experiences anecdotally find NNS/international instructors harder to understand due to lack of exposure to dialects, especially accents, as well as internal biases they may not realize they have.

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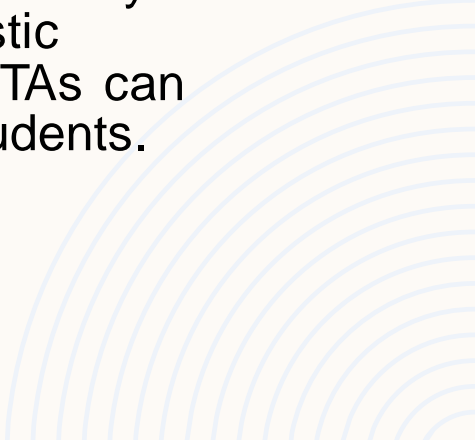
The MITAA emphasizes the importance of language ability/pronunciation/interaction, (e.g. ITA is comprehensible enough to teach and be mostly understood by future students)

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New university students may not have had much exposure to NNS/ITAs, so they may not be sympathetic language listeners. This can lead to conflict and dissatisfaction with course overall or lead to students struggling to understand and do well with the course material.

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We encourage all students to be kind and understanding in situations which can be fueled by misunderstanding due to cultural and linguistic differences. However, we must ensure that ITAs can clearly and accurately communicate with students.



# WHY DOES THE MITAA EXIST?

The Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System established policy 20-17 in December 1991 concerning the selection, training, and evaluation of teaching assistants. Section 1.B states: *“Non-native English speakers must be required to demonstrate proficiency in spoken English before they are assigned classroom duties as teaching assistants.”*

# DOES MY ITA NEED TO TAKE THE MITAA?

## ENGLISH PROFICIENCY SCORE REQUIREMENT

Not all prospective International Teaching Assistants must take the MITAA.

ITAs **do not** have to take the assessment if they have a recent (within the last 2 years) standardized test score that meets the criteria below:

- 24 or better on the Speaking section of the internet-Based TOEFL (iBT) or
- 7.0 or better on the Speaking section of the IELTS
- 185 or better on the Speaking section of the Cambridge English: Advanced (CAE) or the Cambridge English: Proficiency (CPE)
- 125 or better on the Conversation **and** Production sections of the Duolingo English Test

## IF ENGLISH PROFICIENCY SCORE REQUIRES A MITAA

Initial and Exit MITAA

- There is an initial MITAA at the beginning of the semester for those that do not meet the minimum score listed for one of the standardized tests.
- There is an Exit MITAA at the end of the semester for those that needed to take EAP coursework before being a TA with teaching responsibilities.
  - The student must sign up for an exit MITAA to determine whether they have demonstrated marked improvement.
  - A department representative must attend both the initial and exit MITAAs.

# ASSESSMENT CRITERIA OF THE MITAA FOR ITAS

The MITAA is conducted by a panel of three evaluators: one department representative and two ELA representatives.

There are 5 categories being assessed:

- *Overall Language Ability*
- *Pronunciation*
- *Interaction with committee (panel of evaluators)*
- *Organization, Development, and Content*
- *Presentation Delivery*

Each category is assessed on a 1-5 scale (with 5 being the best).



# ASSESSMENT CRITERIA: SUMMARY OF REQUIREMENTS

To Pass with no additional restrictions both scoring benchmarks must be met:

- The ITA needs an average of 15 by all raters
- Must achieve a minimum of 3 from each rater in the following categories
  - Overall language ability
  - Pronunciation
  - Interaction with committee to pass.

If they do not achieve an average of 15 and/or do not meet the minimum benchmarks in the specified categories, the overall score combined from all 3 raters may determine additional restrictions

- 45-60: No restrictions (no additional coursework needed)
- 35-44: Provisional pass – required to take EAP 435 concurrent with classroom teaching
- 34 or below: Required to take EAP 435 before beginning classroom teaching.

# ASSESSMENT CRITERIA CATEGORY BREAKDOWN

Scoring is 1-5 for each category. A minimum of 3 is required in 3 specified categories and an average of 15 from each rater is required to pass without restrictions.

## Overall Language Ability

(a score of 3 in this category is required)

- vocabulary (word choice & complexity)
- grammar
- fluency

## Pronunciation

(a score of 3 in this category is required)

- stress and intonation patterns

## Interaction with Committee

(a score of 3 in this category is required)

- able to understand and interact with the committee as demonstrated by response to presentation follow-up questions and role play scenarios
- basic listening ability
- response to and handling of questions

## Organization, Development, and Content

- main ideas clear
- ideas logically organized
- ideas supported with details and examples
- ideas paraphrased, repeated, and reinforced
- cohesiveness

## Presentation Delivery

- good volume, rate of speech, eye contact, use of visual aids (non-electronic), non-verbal communication
- confidence in material and skills

# RESPONSIBILITY OF DEPARTMENT CONTACT JOINING AN ITA'S MITAA



The ITA should contact the school or department to find out who will be joining the MITAA as part of their panel and to receive the go ahead for registration.



The department representative needs to be a content specialist and/or faculty member who teaches in the department.



The ITA will need to include the representative's name and contact information on their registration.



The representative will be a part of the evaluation panel for the MITAA.



The representative and the ITA do not need to arrive together for the MITAA, but both must be on time to conduct the assessment. If you believe you will be late or if you need to reschedule, please email the English Language Academy at least 24 hours ahead of time.



The department contact for the MITAA will need to be available for the scheduled Initial and Exit MITAAs.

Initial registration scheduling information will be emailed near the beginning of the semester

Exit Registration and scheduling information will be emailed near the end of the semester.

# MITAA TEST FORMAT

- *Arrival: ITA will wait outside for 5 minutes while evaluators and department rep meet*
- **5 minutes: ELA Evaluators and Department Representative Meet to go over MITAA and Rating Sheet**
  - Review the rating sheet
  - State purpose and importance of the assessment
  - Overview of the test format
  - Overview of the 5 categories
  - Discuss scoring
- *Invite ITA into room*
- **2-3 minutes: Warmup Questions**
- **5 minutes: Role Play Scenario(s)**
- **3-4 minute: Presentation**
- **2-3 minute: Questions and Answers**
- *Before ITA leaves the room, they will be told it will take a day to receive the results.*
- **5 minutes: Raters Debrief – sharing scores, discussing thoughts or inconsistencies to reach an agreement on results.**

## TIMELINE SUMMARY

### Beginning of Semester

ITA communicates with department to request department representative to join MITAA.

ITA emails ELA for registration and scheduling for the initial MITAA.

Initial MITAA – Department Rep required to attend.

### During Semester

If the ITA does not meet required scoring criteria, then they do not pass the MITAA and will be required to complete English for Academic Purposes (EAP) coursework either prior to OR concurrently with their TA teaching duties, depending on the scores in other categories.

### End of Semester

ITAs will register for an Exit MITAA to determine if they demonstrated enough improvement. –

Department Rep required to attend exit MITAA.

ELA will do its best to make sure that exit MITAA session dates are scheduled prior to contract due dates.

# ELA CONTACT INFORMATION

## [MITAA Website Link](#)

The ELA point person for MITAA rotates. Please email the [el-academy@uwm.edu](mailto:el-academy@uwm.edu) to:

- Be taken off MITAA informational emails
- Be added to the MITAA information emails
- Ask questions about the MITAA as a department rep or on behalf of the ITA. (Please CC the ITA(s) if working on their behalf or include their information in the body of the email.)