



## Test of Academic Literacy for Postgraduate Students (TALPS)

### What is TALPS

TALPS is a test of academic literacy for postgraduate students that is highly reliable, and used by four South African universities. It was developed by a consortium of four South African universities: North-West, Pretoria, Stellenbosch and Free State.

The Inter-institutional Centre for Language Development and Assessment (ICELDA), is responsible for the standard administration of the test, for marking them, and for assisting in the interpretation of their results. ICELDA also administers various other tests, at school and at undergraduate level, that are highly reliable and widely used.

### Where can you make enquiries?

**Prof. Witness Mudzi**  
Postgraduate School  
University of the Free State  
Tel: 051 401 7161  
Email:  
mudziw@ufs.ac.za

**Dr Avasha Rambiritch**  
Unit for Academic Literacy  
Faculty of Humanities  
University of Pretoria  
Tel: 012 420 4834  
Email:  
avasha.rambiritch@up.ac.za

**Prof. Gustav Butler**  
School of Languages  
Faculty of Humanities  
North-West University  
Tel: 016 910 3480  
Email:  
gustav.butler@nwu.ac.za

**Dr Kim Wallmach**  
Language Centre  
Stellenbosch University  
Tel: 021 808 2159  
Email:  
kimwallmach@sun.ac.za

 [www.icelda.com](http://www.icelda.com)

### How should the TALPS score be interpreted?

The results are presented in the following categories: High risk (Code 1), Clear risk (Code 2), Risk (Code 3), Less risk (Code 4), and Little to no risk (Code 5).

Arrangements for short courses and/or writing centre support for your students should be made via your institution's ICELDA representative - see section with contact detail

### Can arrangements be made for students living with disabilities or who have special needs?

Yes. Questions or queries can be directed to your institution's disability unit.

## What is TALPS used for?



TALPS is used to determine whether students are 'at risk' as a result of too low a level of academic literacy. Should that be the case students may be advised to put plans in place to develop their ability to handle academic discourse more competently.

## How can TALPS be used?

Depending on the selection criteria in your faculty/department, this test could be used in one of two ways:

1. To help determine whether students gain access to the desired programme/field of study

or

2. It could help place students in a specific programme to help improve their academic literacy should the test show that they are 'at risk'.

## Where do students write the test?

Once it has been decided that your students will be writing TALPS, please contact your institutional representative who will assist you with this.

The test results will be sent directly to you to be released to students.

No test results will be released by ICELDA or the ICELDA representative to any individual student.

Should it be necessary for your students to take the online test, arrangements must be made with the ICELDA representative at your institution - see section with contact details.



## What do students need for the test?



Students need to bring their student cards, a soft pencil (HB or B) and an eraser. If students are taking the online test they will need access to a computer and the internet for approximately two and a half hours. Invigilation should be arranged internally.

## Can students prepare for the test?

As this is a proficiency test students cannot study for it. It is advisable that students access the TALPS website (<https://www.icelda.com>) where they can view a sample of the test. This sample test cannot be downloaded or printed out. Students can, however, complete the sample test online. This will give them an idea as to what to expect in the test. The website includes other useful information and exercises related to TALPS.

## What does the test measure?

It tests a number of components of academic literacy that allow it to assess whether students are able to:

- understand a range of academic vocabulary in context;
- interpret and use metaphor and idiom, and perceive connotation, word play and ambiguity;
- understand relations between different parts of a text, be aware of the logical development of (an academic) text, via introductions to conclusions, and know how to use language that serves to make the different parts of a text hang together;

- interpret different kinds of text type (genre), and show sensitivity for the meaning that they convey, and the audience that they are aimed at;
- interpret, use and produce information presented in graphic or visual format;
- make distinctions between essential and non-essential information, fact and opinion, propositions and arguments; distinguish between cause and effect, classify, categorise and handle data that make comparisons;
- see sequence and order, do simple numerical estimations and computations that are relevant to academic information, that allow comparisons to be made, and can be applied for the purposes of an argument;
- know what counts as evidence for an argument, extrapolate from information by making inferences, and apply the information or its implications to other cases than the one at hand;
- understand the communicative function of various ways of expression in academic language (such as defining, providing examples, arguing); and
- make meaning (e.g. of an academic text) beyond the level of the sentence.

## In which language can students take the test?

The test is available in English or Afrikaans.



## Universities



Northwest, Pretoria, Stellenbosch and Free State.



## Contact:

Website: [www.icelda.com](http://www.icelda.com)  
Representative for your institution - see section with contact details.