

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

What's the Score?

Professor Michael Singh and Associate Professor Wayne Sawyer from the Centre for Educational Research have been investigating the efficacy of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) in choosing potentially successful students for teacher education courses. This research was funded by International English Language Testing System Australia Pty Ltd.

In 2005, 18% of the student population in Australian Universities were international students from Asian countries. Professor Singh says, 'these students have a number of issues to deal with regarding education cultures and the use of their intellectual resources, particularly in an academic environment. This cultural learning can be particularly challenging for teacher education students who need advanced academic English not only for their courses, but for their classroom teaching and future careers. IELTS assessment of verbal and written abilities of these students can provide some data relevant to entry level performance, however, a range of factors will affect their potential success at university study. Moreover, future employment is determined by teacher registration authorities and/or employers who require advanced English language proficiency. The IELTS scores Australian universities accept for entry into teacher education courses are currently not recognised by these authorities.'

This study aims to establish what an appropriate IELTS entry score might be according to teacher educators, employers and international student teacher courses for University students. Students in teacher education courses whose first degree was completed in a non-English-speaking culture will be chosen for case studies and interviews. Information about IELTS scores for general and teacher education course admission will also be collected.



By developing a more widely recognised IELTS score that accurately reflects university student teachers' potential, teacher education programs may be better designed to ensure graduate teachers from non-English-speaking cultures meet the high English language proficiency standards required for quality teaching in Australian schools.

Project Title: The efficacy of IELTS in choosing potentially successful candidates for teacher education courses. What is the appropriate score?

Funding has been set at: \$35,093

Contact Details: m.j.singh@uws.edu.au

<http://www.uws.edu.au/cer>

September 2009