CamTESOL Conference Featured Speakers

Exit Testing: A Whole-of-University Approach

Pamela Humphreys
Griffith University, Australia
p.humphreys@griffith.edu.au

Dr Abbas Mousavi
University of Maryland, U.S.A.
amousavi@umd.edu

Abstract

The Griffith English Language Enhancement Strategy (GELES) aims to support international students throughout the student lifecycle and aligns with the Australian Government's Good Practice Principles for English Language Proficiency for International Students in Australian Universities. This paper first outlines the GELES, focusing on exit testing as one component of a multidimensional approach, and then provides an overview of preliminary research at Griffith in which graduating students were tested using IELTS (International English Language Testing System). Exit test scores were correlated against degree entry requirements, entry proficiency scores, nationality, discipline, and entry pathway. The key findings, which resulted in the implementation of large-scale voluntary exit testing and further research, are presented here. This paper will be of interest to those involved in support strategies for international students prior to, during, or at the point of graduation of their tertiary studies and to those embarking on the development of similar initiatives.

Background: The Context

It is becoming increasingly common for universities in all English-speaking countries to have student populations comprising significant numbers of international students. In Australia, for example, education is now the third largest source of overseas income; current enrolments by full-fee international students are experiencing the highest figures to date in a number of education sectors (DEEWR, 2010). As a result of these large numbers, the English language proficiency of international students at both entry to and exit from their studies will continue to attract the attention of key stakeholders who wish to ensure graduates that their institutions (or country) are of the highest quality. Support for these students, whether prior to their studies or concurrent, is likely to increase along with the evidencing of graduate outcomes (including language proficiency).

In Australia, the language competence of international students at tertiary institutions has recently come under intense scrutiny. The catalyst for much of the debate was a report published on the evaluation of the skilled migration categories in 2006 (Birrell, Hawthorne, &

Richardson, 2006), along with related articles (Birrell, 2006; Birrell, Healy, & Kinnaird 2007) which raised concerns over the alleged language standards of international students both at entry to and exit from Australian tertiary institutions. Furthermore, research conducted for the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) on migration and international students revealed that employers value graduate attributes including language competence rather than content knowledge, citing issues with communication skills and a mismatch between the experience of higher education and the reality of the workplace (Hawthorne, 2010). Several discussion papers have investigated the job-readiness of all graduates, including international graduates (Harvey, 2000; Hawthorne, 2007).

As a consequence of such research findings, increased media attention, and public debate, the Australian government demonstrated the high value it places upon English language proficiency for international students in Australian universities by investing one hundred thousand dollars (Australian) in research to design a set of good practice principles to help universities support English language proficiency amongst international students. The project was undertaken by the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) in 2008 and an expert group from the Australian higher education sector developed the principles, which were released in early 2009. This report found that the monitoring of students' English language proficiency on completion of their course is not yet common practice within universities. Moreover, few universities have taken any institution-wide approach to address the issues of English language development. There is little published research into the issues related to language standards of international students not only when they gain entry to Australian tertiary institutions, but also when they graduate from them (Arkoudis & Starfield, 2007; O'Loughlin & Arkoudis, 2009). The ten good practice principles (see Appendix) focus on the responsibility of universities to ensure international students have the language competence to undertake their studies. As well as ensuring minimum entry standards are met regardless of entry pathway, universities should provide adequate resources to support students throughout the student lifecycle in identified areas of academic and sociocultural need. The principles also place responsibility on students to continue to develop their own language skills during their studies. The good practice principles confirmed the need and provided explicit direction for the whole-of-university approach already underway at Griffith.

Exit Testing Within a Whole-of-University Approach

The Griffith Context

In 2008, the English Language Working Party was established at Griffith to consider the needs of international and non-English-speaking background students and to develop appropriate support initiatives. Chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), membership includes the Pro-Vice Chancellor (International), representatives from the Secretariat, the International Office, Griffith English Language Institute (GELI), the School of Languages & Linguistics (LAL), and members from the university's four academic groups. The membership demonstrates that this strategy is driven from a high level within the university and involves all key stakeholders.

From 2008 to early 2010, the English Language Working Party developed and progressively implemented the five components of the Griffith English Language Enhancement Strategy (GELES) (Figure 1). The GELES comprises a five-pronged strategy which, in conjunction with existing academic support services, supports international and domestic non-English-speaking background students throughout the student lifecycle to maximise their chances of succeeding academically. Each aspect of the strategy aligns with the good practice principles.

Before Degree		During Degree		Exiting Degree
Griffith UniPrep An intensive 3-week program delivered prior to semester by GELI. It provides the language skills essential for successful tertiary studies in English.	English Language Enhancement Course 10 credit point course taken in first semester of all under-graduates whose language is $\leq$ IELTS 7. Provided jointly by LAL & GELI.	EnglishHELP Free discipline-specific English language support for all degree program students. Group workshops and individual consultations through GELI.	Student Linx Student Linx promotes social and intellectual interaction, encouraging the establishment and building of useful ties across languages, cultures and countries.	IELTS4grads Students completing a full degree at Griffith University can sit an IELTS Academic test at 50% of the normal test fee.

Figure 1. The Griffith English Language Enhancement Strategy. Adapted from Griffith University (2009a).

A pivotal feature of the whole strategy is the English Language Enhancement Course (ELEC), a ten-credit point discipline-specific course which runs across all undergraduate level programs. This course is mandatory for international students whose entry score is less than IELTS 7 (or accepted test score equivalent) or who meet certain exemption criteria according to Griffith's admission policies (Griffith University, 2009b). The ELEC, which commenced in February 2010, is a hybrid of a traditional university subject and an English-language course and is arguably the first such program to be introduced across all programs in Australia (Trounson, 2010). The final component of the strategy ("IELTS4grads") is the IELTS Academic test, offered as an exit test and subsidised by the university.

An Overview of Exit Testing

Exit testing refers to the taking of an English language proficiency test by graduating students. Hong Kong was one of the first locations to initiate large-scale exit testing when the University Grants Committee approved the use of the IELTS Academic test in 2002 in preference to the Graduating Students' Language Proficiency Assessment (Qian, 2007). Since then, Hong Kong has used exit tests as a condition of graduation from eight of its tertiary institutions.

Exit testing is relatively under-researched to date, although a number of research studies related to exit testing in Hong Kong have been published (Berry & Lewkowicz, 2000; Qian, 2007; Zhengdong, 2009), including an examination of alternatives to exit testing. In Australia, O'Loughlin and Arkoudis (2009) published research in *IELTS Research Reports 10* which investigated the score gains of undergraduate and postgraduate international students completing higher education courses in an English-medium environment. It also explored the educational, personal, and social factors that influence any improvement in proficiency. Their study reveals similar findings to the Griffith trial described in this paper, along with additional outcomes.

The literature on exit testing reveals mixed views in the English language academic community. Some have posited that exit testing may provide positive backwash if language competence assumes a higher priority as a result (O'Loughlin & Arkoudis, 2009), whereas others have suggested it may have a negative impact, particularly if the test is compulsory, as it

is in Hong Kong (Berry & Lewkowicz, 2000). These same academics have also questioned whether it is even appropriate to expect students to demonstrate their proficiency at the end of their course of study after having met a language condition for entry.

Exit testing is not currently widespread in Australia, though there is anecdotal evidence to suggest this may be about to change as quality audit mechanisms (e.g., AUQA) demand evidence of improved graduate quality. There are numerous advantages to exit testing from the perspective of both the institution and the student. For example, exit testing is one way in which Australian institutions could specifically evidence meeting DEEWR Good Practice Principles 5 and 10. Principle 5 states that “English language proficiency and communication skills are important graduate attributes for all students.” English language (as a key graduate attribute) can be sampled and measured by testing at the point of graduation. Principle 10 states that universities should “use evidence from a variety of sources to monitor and improve their English language development activities.” Proficiency testing is one such source of evidence. Exit testing can also be viewed positively from the student perspective. It gives an indication of overall language progress during the course of study while also providing students with a test score for use after graduation. An IELTS test score could provide externalised evidence of language competence to employers internationally or be useful for migration purposes. According to Hawthorne, by 2005, former international students constituted more than fifty percent of skilled migrants, with China and India the major sources after the UK (2007). The assumption is that these applicants are characterised by youth, English language ability, Australian qualifications, and a degree of acculturation. An IELTS score (General Training or Academic) is typically required during the application process, and therefore highly desirable to international graduates of Australian universities.

It is not within the scope of this paper to discuss this issue in depth, but Griffith University has taken the view that exit testing will provide some quantitative measure of the impact of the GELES. Voluntary exit testing can be used as one source of evidence and accountability to internal and external stakeholders and could demonstrate that students graduate with strong English language skills. Griffith is conducting related longitudinal research in relation to exit score gains and the impact of the English Enhancement course, described later.

The Use of IELTS as an Exit Test

The development of an institution-specific exit test for Griffith was initially considered, but this proved too costly. More importantly, such a test would have little currency with the test-taker or other stakeholders; uptake may have been limited as a result. However, an external commercially-available proficiency test such as IELTS would be an expedient method of assessing proficiency and would allow for a standardised reporting mechanism understood by a range of stakeholders. IELTS, as a highly regarded and widely accepted test internationally, would make setting benchmarking standards comparatively straightforward. Transparency, due to ease of comparability across programs, institutions, and even countries, makes IELTS an attractive option. It also has the advantage of currency and usefulness for the test-taker.

However, opting to use IELTS or any other proficiency test as an exit testing instrument raises a number of issues. It could be argued that IELTS was not specifically designed to be an exit test, although the IELTS handbook states it “is designed to assess the language ability of candidates who need to study or work where English is the language of communication” (IELTS Handbook, 2007, p. 2). Some have questioned the suitability of using IELTS Academic for this purpose. O’Loughlin was quoted in *The Australian* in January 2009 as saying IELTS “was not designed to be used as an exit test of attainment for graduates or for their workforce suitability...and its use for other purposes is questionable” (“English Tested,” 2009). He goes on

to suggest there is a need for more valid assessments of graduate attainment and workplace readiness in specific professions and trades. O'Loughlin and Arkoudis (2009, p. 46) state that more research is required to validate the use of IELTS as an exit test. Alternatives to exit testing based on reporting competencies and a language portfolio have also been proposed (Berry & Lewkowicz 2000).

It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the complex relationship between language proficiency and academic success, although much has been written on this topic (Bretag, 2007; Murray & O'Loughlin, 2007; Hawthorne, 2007). The English Language Working Party considered IELTS to be the best available option; the advantages of using IELTS Academic as a voluntary exit test outweighed the disadvantages. It also understands that exit test scores should not be used in *isolation* as an indicator of academic success or work-readiness nor as the only measure of the impact of the GELES.

The Exit Test Trial 2008

Background and Rationale for the Trial

Prior to implementing IELTS4grads as the GELES exit test component, a preliminary study, "The Capstone Trial," funded by Griffith International and IELTS Australia, was conducted in 2008. It was commissioned by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (International) to ascertain exiting levels of international students at Griffith University. The outcomes would inform future decisions as to the proposed exit testing and any additional intervention strategies that were to be considered under the GELES.

Research questions. The main research questions were:

1. What is the English language proficiency of international students toward the end of their degree at Griffith University compared to entry thresholds?
2. Are exiting scores affected by discipline, pathway, or nationality?
3. At exit, how many students score
 - higher
 - the same
 - lowerthan was required to *enter* their degree?
4. Does any pattern emerge as to the most/least problematic macro skill?

Methodology

The recruitment phase. Resources allowed the test centre to offer one hundred and seventy IELTS Academic test places free of charge. The opportunity was communicated to all international students via internal communication channels. Students volunteered, applications were taken on a first-come-first-served basis, and places filled within two days. Applicants followed the standard IELTS application process and completed a survey to capture further critical data, such as their degree, discipline, and nationality, and how they had met the language condition to enter their degree program. After numerous cancellations and a significantly higher absentee rate on test day than in public tests (most places re-filled), 155 candidates were tested on 16 August 2008 at the Griffith test centre in a closed test.

Participants. The participants were all international students in their penultimate or final semester of a full Griffith degree program. Sixty-two were undergraduates and ninety-three postgraduates (predominantly completing Masters programs); eighty-eight (57%) are male and sixty-seven (43%) female. The candidates had entered the university via a variety of pathways (see "Scores by main entry pathway"). Twenty-seven nationalities (Figure 2) were represented; the cohort was relatively representative both in terms of nationality and discipline of the

international student cohort of the same semester. However, at 2% of the whole population, caution should be exercised when generalising to the wider population.

Figure 2. Nationality breakdown of candidates in exit test trial; $n = 155$.

Methods of analysis. The results were correlated with the participants' entry level proficiency scores. Cross-correlations of the following variables were carried out to investigate possible trends:

1. undergraduate versus postgraduate
2. nationality background
3. pathways through which students entered the university
4. disciplines

Exit Test Results

Entry to most undergraduate programs at Griffith requires a minimum overall IELTS score of 6 (no subscore below 5.5), while the majority of postgraduate programs require a minimum overall score of 6.5 (no subscore below 6) or the accepted equivalents on TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or ISLPR (International Second Language Proficiency Rating) (Griffith University, 2009b). Histograms showing the frequency distribution of each skill and overall scores are shown in Figures 3 to 7. There was a wide range of scores for each skill. The highest scores were generally gained in the Listening skill with the largest number scoring 7.5 on the IELTS band; 77% scored 6.5 or more. In the Reading skill, the most common score was 6.5 with 60% scoring 6.5 or more. The Writing skill was the macro skill where the lowest scores were gained in general; the most common score was 6. Thirty-eight percent scored 6.5 or more, although 35% scored less than 6. The Speaking skill was relatively strong with the largest group of candidates scoring 7 and 66% scoring 6.5 or more. The most common overall scores were 7 and 6.5 with 68% scoring 6.5 or more and 46% scoring 7 or more.

Figure 3. Frequency distribution for IELTS Listening skill score of international students; $n = 155$.

Figure 4. Frequency distribution for IELTS Reading skill score of international students; $n = 155$.

Figure 5. Frequency distribution for IELTS Speaking skill score of international students; $n = 152$; some candidates did not attempt this paper.

Figure 6. Frequency distribution for IELTS Writing skill score of international students; $n = 154$; some candidates did not attempt this paper.

Figure 7. Frequency distribution for IELTS overall score of international students; $n = 152$; some candidates did not complete the test.

To summarise, there was a wide range of scores for each skill with relatively normal distributions for each (Table 1). There was a wider standard deviation (SD) for the Speaking skill, whilst the narrowest SD was in the Writing skill.

Table 1
Range of Scores in Exit Test Trial

	Listening	Reading	Speaking*	Writing	Overall*
Min	4.5	4	4.5	4.5	5
Max	9	9	9	8.5	8.5
Average	7.07	6.5	6.74	6.09	6.75
SD	0.99	0.98	1.01	0.82	0.8

*Indicates some candidates were absent

Scores by degree level. Subscores were analysed to compare undergraduate results with postgraduate results. As the entry requirement for postgraduate programs is higher than for undergraduate entry, the expectation might be for postgraduate students to outperform undergraduates at exit. However, it was found that there was only a marginal difference in scores between the two groups except in the Writing skill, where postgraduates scored better on average than undergraduates (Figure 8). This marginal difference between undergraduate and postgraduate outcomes could be attributed to the difference in course length (three years for undergraduate degrees; one year for postgraduate programs).

Figure 8. IELTS scores gained by undergraduates compared to postgraduates.

Scores by nationality. Averaged overall scores for all participants by nationality for cohorts of more than five from highest scores to lowest show that Malaysian, Indian, and Iranians tended to gain the highest average overall scores while lower scores were typically gained by Chinese, Taiwanese, Korean, and Indonesian students (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Overall IELTS exit test scores by nationality; number of students in brackets.

Scores by main entry pathway. Entry into university programs in the Australian context is complex; there are a variety of means by which international students may provide evidence of meeting the set language condition. These means include, but may not be limited to, the following:

1. a minimum score on a recognised proficiency test such as IELTS
2. successful completion of a recognised “pathway” program (e.g. Foundation, Diploma or an English language Direct Entry Program) in which assessment is embedded
3. evidence of having previously studied extensively in the medium of English, thus coming under the “language of instruction” (LOI) policy

Students entering tertiary education are therefore not assessed using one standardised testing instrument; indeed, some are not tested with a formal proficiency test at all. Research such as this is fraught with issues due to the number of variables connected to entry conditions for which we cannot control. It can be assumed that proficiency levels vary at commencement. However, it was expected that students granted entry under the LOI policy would score better than those entering by other means, as they were admitted on the assumption that they had strong language competence. This was found to be the case (Figure 10), though the LOI cohort was small at 13 students. Those who entered by test were also expected to perform better on average than those who entered by a pathway program, as their proficiency levels will vary at entry from the minimum threshold to well above. In this study, those who entered by test did score better on average at exit than those who entered by pathway.

Students opting to follow a pathway program invariably do so because they have not yet met the language level for admission into their degree program. Typically, pathway programs allow commencement with evidence of proficiency half a band score lower than the degree entry requirement. At normal acquisition rates, by the end of the course, it is assumed that students have reached the minimum entry requirement, but it is unlikely they will have exceeded it by much. The Birrell report (Birrell et al, 2006) concluded that “many international students enter and exit at IELTS levels below the published guidelines,” pointing specifically at pathway programs, where no external validation of proficiency is required. The report added that “no research exists on the level of compromise” (Birrell et al, 2006, p. 107). The university therefore considered the performance of this cohort to be of particular relevance. From the results in Figure 10, it can be seen that scores gained by pathway students from the two main pathway providers were indeed lower on average relative to those who entered under LOI or by test. However, it was found that there was more consistency in their scores with little difference between the two main pathway providers. In general, exit scores gained by pathway students did not appear to warrant concern.

Figure 10. Overall IELTS scores of international students by four main entry pathways; Pathway 1: $n = 16$; Pathway 2: $n = 18$; Test: $n = 92$; LOI: $n = 13$.

Indeed, it was found that the best and worst individual overall scores in the study were gained by those who had entered by test rather than pathway programs. Results may also indicate that familiarity (or lack of) with the test did not affect test scores as candidates who had already taken IELTS on at least one occasion obtained diverse results, including the lowest overall scores of the whole cohort. Figure 11 displays the normal distribution of the scores obtained.

Figure 11. Frequency distribution of overall IELTS scores for international students who entered by test; $n = 92$.

Scores compared to entry requirements. When comparing undergraduate exit scores against entry requirements, it was found that 36 students (58%) scored more than required to enter degree studies while 17 students (27%) scored the same as required to enter. Nine (15%) scored less than required to enter their program. Eighty-five percent of undergraduates in the study therefore scored more or the same at exit than was required to enter the degree program. Of the nine lowest scorers, six scored 0.5 band score below the entry requirement, while just three candidates scored one band less. Further analysis showed that the undergraduates most likely to gain a lower score in this study were Bachelor Business/Commerce (6 out of 9) by discipline, those who entered by a pathway course (6 out of 9), and were either Chinese (5 out of 9) or Korean (3 out of 9) by nationality. At postgraduate level, half scored more at exit than was required to enter and a further twenty percent scored the same as was required to enter, meaning seventy percent scored the same or more at exit than was required to enter. Twenty-seven students (30%) scored less than required to enter the degree program. Of the twenty-seven lowest scorers, eighteen were 0.5 band score below the entry requirement while nine

were one band lower. Further analysis found that the postgraduates most likely to gain lower scores in this study were Master of Commerce candidates (10 out of 27), Chinese (11 out of 27) and were more likely to have entered by test (14 out of 27) than any other means. Postgraduate outcomes were less positive than at undergraduate level, though this may be attributable in part to the higher entry requirement as well as the shorter course of study which allows less time for acquisition to occur.

Summary and Outcomes

Overall, this study found that the lowest scores were in the Writing skill while Listening saw the highest scores on average. A large number of students scored higher at the end of their degree than was required to enter it, but it cannot be assumed that improvement in proficiency will occur during the course of study. A small number of students scored less than required to enter their degree program at exit. In this study, those with a tendency to score lower at exit were found to be postgraduate students, Business/Commerce students and predominantly from China. The general recommendations made to the English Language Working Party were that language support programs being implemented under the GELES should focus on the Writing skill and students identified as being at risk. It was agreed that exit testing would form one part of the GELES for supporting international students and measuring the impact of that support. Large-scale voluntary exit testing using IELTS Academic became available to students from Semester 1, 2009. Students receive a 50% reimbursement of the test fee if they meet the eligibility criteria (international students on a full degree program and taking the test within three months of degree completion). Further information on this initiative can be found at www.griffith.edu.au/ielts4grads.

Limitations of the Study

It was not in the scope of this preliminary study to identify reasons why students might increase their proficiency or otherwise during tertiary studies. Other research has shown that many factors can influence an increase or otherwise in proficiency (Elder & O'Loughlin, 2003; Arkoudis & O'Loughlin, 2009), including motivation, accommodation, self-confidence, the extent to which students used and accessed English both socially and within the academic context. The research detailed below will address some of these related issues.

Further Research

The English Language Working Party agreed that further research was required, particularly in relation to the ELEC, the pivotal feature of the whole strategy. Research is now underway that will attend to shortfalls in the literature through a large-scale longitudinal evaluation of the impact of a for-credit English language enhancement course on international student performance (Borbasi, Johnson, Wyatt-Smith, Haugh, & Humphreys, 2009). The main aim of the research is to measure any change in English language proficiency and educational outcomes of international students who undertake the ELEC. It is hoped that the outcomes will demonstrate that such a course improves longer-term proficiency and educational outcomes when implemented as an early intervention strategy, as recommended in the good practice principles. The qualitative component of the research will allow investigation into the cohorts' experiences in engaging in learning English in terms of their motivation, investment, and outcomes. IELTS Academic will be used for the quantitative component at three stages of the study: at the beginning and end of the students' first semester as well as at exit. Non-ELEC and ELEC sample cohorts will be compared to measure the impact of the ELEC and, indeed, all GELES components. The research commenced in 2009 with the final phase due for completion in 2013. It will complement and go beyond the scope of this preliminary research and provide

evidence in response to the continued focus on the outcomes of international students in the Australian tertiary environment (Healy & Trounson, 2010).

General Recommendations

From this preliminary research, it was found that measuring the language proficiency of international students is fraught with issues due to many variables which cannot be controlled for. However, despite such difficulties, the findings are critical to the development of appropriate language enhancement strategies and it is recommended that institutions gather similar evidence before embarking on the implementation of any such support for international students. It is clear that the language proficiency of students entering Australian tertiary institutions will continue to come under scrutiny in the future as a result of the good practice principles. Pathway providers would be well advised to take note of this increased focus on English language standards. Specifically, this research indicates that academic writing tends to be the macro skill which requires the most attention - a finding corroborated in the O'Loughlin & Arkoudis study (2009) - and should therefore be a focus of pre-sessional or concurrent language support. Institutions may also wish to consider how to monitor and evidence the impact of support through the use of exit testing, along with the analysis of international students' educational outcomes. In summary, institutions may consider developing a range of strategies that meet the needs of their students in their specific context as exemplified by the GELES at Griffith University.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to IELTS Australia for co-funding the preliminary research described in this paper.

Biodata

Pamela Humphreys is the IELTS Manager at the Griffith Test Centre and a member of Griffith's English Language Working Party. Positions she has held in ELT include teacher trainer and Director of Studies. She is the author of the *IELTS Express* workbooks (Cengage) and a materials writer for Cambridge ESOL.

Abbas Mousavi, lecturer and assessment specialist at the Persian Flagship Program, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultures, University of Maryland, USA, gained his PhD at Griffith University. He is involved in research in Applied Linguistics, Language Testing/Assessment and is the editor of *An Encyclopedic Dictionary of Language Testing*, 4th Ed.

References

- Arkoudis, S., & Starfield, S. (2007). *In-course language development and support*. Paper presented at the National Symposium: English Language Competence of International Students. Sydney.
- Berry, B., & Lewkowicz, J. (2000). Exit-tests: Is there an alternative? *Hong Kong Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 5(1), 19-49.
- Birrell, B. (2006). Implications of low English standards among overseas students at Australian universities. *People and Place*, 4(4), 53-64.
- Birrell, B., Hawthorne, L., & Richardson, S. (2006). *Evaluation of the general skilled migration categories*. Canberra, Australia: Commonwealth of Australia.
- Birrell, B., Healy, E., & Kinnaird, B. (2007). Cooks Galore and Hairdressers Aplenty. *People and Place*, 15(1), 30-44.

- Borbasi, S., Johnson, G., Wyatt-Smith, C., Haugh, M., & Humphreys, P. (2009). *Evaluating the effect of a for-credit English language enhancement course on international students at a large Australian university*. Unpublished internal grant application, Griffith University.
- Bretag, T. (2007). The emperor's new clothes: Yes, there is a link between English language competence and academic standards. *People & Place*, 15(1), 13-21.
- Commonwealth Department of Education Employment & Work Relations (DEEWR). (2008). *Good practice principles for English language proficiency for international students in Australian universities – Final report*. Retrieved from <http://www.deewr.gov.au/HigherEducation/Publications/Pages/GoodPracticePrinciples.asp>
- Commonwealth Department of Education Employment & Work Relations (DEEWR). (2010). *Monthly summary of international students enrolment data – Australia – YTD May 2010*. Retrieved from http://aei.gov.au/AEI/MIP/Statistics/StudentEnrolmentAndVisaStatistics/May_2010_MonthlySummary.pdf.pdf
- Elder, C., & O'Loughlin, K. (2003). Score gains on IELTS after 10-12 weeks of intensive English study. *IELTS Research Reports*, 4, 62-87.
- English Tested. (2009, January 28). *The Australian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/letters/english-tested/story-e6frgcox-1111118680938>
- Griffith University. (2009a). University initiatives. Retrieved from <http://www.griffith.edu.au/griffith-english-language-institute/university-initiatives>
- Griffith University. (2009b). English language requirements for entry to Griffith University, Retrieved from <http://www.griffith.edu.au/ua/aa/sta/admission/requirements/home.html>
- Harvey, L. (2000). New realities: The relationship between higher education and employment. *Tertiary Education & Management*, 6, 3-17.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13583883.2000.9967007>
- Hawthorne, L. (2007). *Outcomes, language, employment and further study: A discussion paper for a national symposium: English Language Competence of International Students*. Paper presented at the 2007 National Symposium on English Language Competence of International Students, Sydney, Australia.
- Hawthorne, L. (2010). Demography, migration and demand for international students. In C. Findlay & W. Tierney (Eds.), *Globalisation and tertiary education in the Asia-Pacific: The changing nature of a dynamic market* (pp. 93-120). Singapore: World Scientific Press.
- Healy, G., & Trounson, A. (2010, February 10). Universities told to boost English programs. *The Australian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/universities-told-to-boost-english-programs/story-e6frgcjx-1225828473695>
- International English Language Testing System. (2007). *IELTS Handbook*. University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations, the British Council and IDP Education Australia
- Murray, D., & O'Loughlin, K. (2007). *Pathways – Preparation and selection: A discussion paper for a national symposium: English Language Competence of International Students*. Paper presented at the 2007 National Symposium on English Language Competence of International Students, Sydney, Australia.
- O'Loughlin, K., & Arkoudis, S. (2009). Investigating IELTS exit score gains in higher education. *IELTS Research Reports*, 10. Canberra, Australia: IELTS Australia Pty Ltd.
- Qian, D. (2007). Assessing university students: Searching for an English language exit test. *RELC Journal*, 38(1), 18-37. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0033688206076156>

Trounson, A. (2010, February 17). Griffith makes English refresher mandatory. *The Australian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/griffith-makes-english-refresher-mandatory/story-e6frgcjx-1225831097095>

Zhengdong, G. (2009). IELTS preparation course and student IELTS performance: A case study in Hong Kong. *RELC Journal*, 40(1), 23-41. Retrieved from <http://rel.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/40/1/23>

Appendix

Good Practice Principles for English Language Proficiency for International Students

1. Universities are responsible for ensuring that their students are sufficiently competent in the English language to participate effectively in their university studies.
2. Resourcing for English language development is adequate to meet students' needs throughout their studies.
3. Students have responsibilities for further developing their English language proficiency during their study at university and are advised of these responsibilities prior to enrolment.
4. Universities ensure that the English language entry pathways they approve for the admission of students enable these students to participate effectively in their studies.
5. English language proficiency and communication skills are important graduate attributes for all students.
6. Development of English language proficiency is integrated with curriculum design, assessment practices and course delivery through a variety of methods.
7. Students' English language development needs are diagnosed early in their studies and addressed, with ongoing opportunities for self-assessment.
8. International students are supported from the outset to adapt to their academic, sociocultural and linguistic environments.
9. International students are encouraged and supported to enhance their English language development through effective social interaction on and off campus.
10. Universities use evidence from a variety of sources to monitor and improve their English language development activities.

(Commonwealth Department of Education Employment and Work Relations, 2008)