Understanding and Using IELTS for Community Colleges
What is IELTS?

• the original four-skills English language proficiency test – Listening, Reading, Writing, Speaking

• 2 modules: Academic and General study and work purposes

• 3 international test partners
  o Cambridge ESOL: test production
  o British Council and IDP: IELTS Australia: test center management
Global Candidature Growth

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Global Candidature Breakdown 2009

General 25%

Academic 75%
### Top 10 for US-bound IELTS Candidates 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationalities of test takers</th>
<th>Countries where tests are taken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. China</td>
<td>1. China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Philippines</td>
<td>2. United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. India</td>
<td>3. Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>4. India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. South Korea</td>
<td>5. Nepal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Hong Kong</td>
<td>7. Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Thailand</td>
<td>8. Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Libya</td>
<td>10. France</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Test Format
Total time = 2 hours 55 minutes

- **Listening**
  - 4 sections, 40 items (40 minutes)

- **Academic Reading**
  - 3 sections, 40 items (60 minutes)

- **General Training Reading**
  - 3 sections, 40 items (60 minutes)

- **Academic Writing**
  - 2 tasks (60 minutes)

- **General Training Writing**
  - 2 tasks (60 minutes)

- **Speaking**
  - 1:1 oral interview (11-14 minutes)
Listening
30 minutes (40 minutes with transfer)

- 4 sections, 10 questions: focus on social needs and educational or training contexts
- Increase in complexity through the sections
- Variety of native-speaker accents
  - North American, British, Australian, New Zealand
- Content vetted for cultural specificity during production stages
Academic Reading
60 minutes, 40 questions

• 3 passages, 2,000-2,750 words total

• Authentic, non-specialist texts from journals, books, and newspapers

• General interest topics - interesting, appropriate, and accessible to all test takers

• More complex terms glossed
Listening and Reading task types

• Variety of real life task types

• Fairness in language testing
  o matching
  o classification
  o multiple choice
  o locating information
  o sentence completion
  o summary completion
  o short-answer questions
  o choosing headings for paragraphs of a text
  o identification of writers’ views, attitudes, claims
  o notes, summary, diagram, flow chart, table completion
The graph shows the different modes of transport used to travel to and from work in one European city in 1950, 1970 and 1990.

Summarize the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.
Task 2
40 minutes, 250 words
Present a solution to a problem / justify an opinion / compare and contrast evidence or opinions / evaluate and challenge an argument

*It is inevitable that as technology develops so traditional cultures must be lost. Technology and tradition are incompatible - you cannot have both together.*

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer. You should use your own ideas, knowledge and experience and support your arguments with examples and relevant evidence.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 1</th>
<th>Introduction and Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examiner introduces him/herself and confirms candidate's identity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 2</th>
<th>Individual long turn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examiner asks candidate to speak for 1-2 minutes on a particular topic based on written input in the form of a general instruction and content-focused prompts. Examiner asks one or two questions at the end of the long turn.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 3</th>
<th>Two-way discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examiner invites candidate to participate in discussion of more abstract nature, based on verbal questions, thematically linked to Part 2 prompt.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Speaking Example Part 1: Introduction and Interview

Let’s talk about your home town or village.

- What kind of place is it?
- What’s the most interesting part of your town/village?
- What kind of jobs do people in your town/village do?
- Would you say it is a good place to live? [Why?]
Speaking Example Part 2: Individual Long Turn

Describe a teacher or lecturer who has significantly inspired you in your education.

You should say:

• where you met them
• what subject they taught
• what was special about them

Explain why this person inspired you.
Speaking Example Part 3: Two way discussion

**Developments in education**
- (describe) changes over the last ten years in your country
- (compare) your experience of education with that of your parents or grandparents
- (speculate) on likely changes in the next fifty years

**A national education system**
- (describe) your country’s aims for education
- (compare) expectations of today’s school-leavers with previous generations
- (evaluate) advantages/disadvantages of grouping learners by ability

**Different styles/methods of teaching and learning**
- (describe) teaching styles/methods for different age-groups in your country
- (suggest) your preferred method of learning
- (evaluate) advantages/disadvantages of grouping learners by ability
Spoken performance is assessed using descriptors on four analytical sub-scales:

- Fluency and coherence
- Lexical resource
- Grammatical range and accuracy
- Pronunciation
Examiner Comments on Candidate H
Speaking Part 3: Hobbies

**Band 6**

This candidate is able to **keep going** and is willing to give long answers, though he sometimes does not directly answer the examiner’s questions. There is some **hesitation** and **repetition** in his speech, however, and this limits his fluency. He uses a range of **discourse markers**, though not always appropriately or accurately (but on the other side; in nearest future). His **vocabulary is sufficient** to discuss the topics at some length, and in spite of some uncertainty (how to say?) and some inaccurate word choice (It’s of course not very well for family and for health), he generally conveys his ideas and opinions effectively.

He attempts to use a **mix of simple and complex structures**, but his control of grammar is rather **variable**. Omissions of verbs, as well as minor errors, become quite frequent towards the end of the test, although these rarely impede communication. His grammatical control is the weakest aspect of his performance in this part, but his range of structures is sufficient for the higher band. His **pronunciation is his best feature**. It is generally clear, although occasional words are difficult to catch. He maintains effective use of stress, rhythm and intonation, despite lapses.
Scoring

• Nine-point band scoring system. Bands awarded in Listening, Reading, Writing, Speaking and Overall

• Scores reported electronically or by paper Test Report Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Expert User</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Very Good User</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Good User</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Competent User (Miami Dade College 6.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Modest User</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Limited User</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Extremely Limited User</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Intermittent User</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Non User</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Did Not Attempt the Test</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recognition

• IELTS recognized by over 6,000 institutions globally

• More than 2,500 in the US, including
  o universities
  o 2-year colleges (over 200)
  o business schools
  o law schools
  o high schools
  o professional registration bodies
Benefits for Recognizing Organizations

- Electronic score downloads
- Test Report Form Verification site
- Assist international student recruitment
Who accepts IELTS?

**Detailed Search**

**Miami Dade College**

- **Region:** Americas
- **Country:** United States of America
- **City/State:** Miami, FL
- **Website:** [http://www.mdc.edu/internationalstudents/information.asp](http://www.mdc.edu/internationalstudents/information.asp)
- **Organisation type:** Educational Institution

**Courses:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Type</th>
<th>Min Academic</th>
<th>Min General Training</th>
<th>Academic Restrictions</th>
<th>Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two Year College</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Admissions</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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Secure Score Reporting

Paper or electronic scoring

Sent from the test center to the receiving institution

Test takers can request score copies up to 2 years from test date
TOEFL Alternatives

The following students can be accepted to Highline without the TOEFL:

1. Students who attended a high school with 100% English instruction.
2. Students who graduated from any U.S. high school or a school with which Highline has established an agreement.
   - Malapina International High School (Canada) - Graduation with recommendation letter
3. Students who scored at the level indicated on the following tests:
   - Kaplan TOEFL Practice Test score of 480/157
   - SPEAK Test, Proficiency Grade level
   - Hong Kong Certificate of English Examination (HKCEE): D level or better on the English test
   - IELTS: 6.0 with no band lower than 5.0
   - Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE): a score of C or better
Submit the following documents to the International Student Admissions office at BC:

1. Completed and signed BC International Student Application form;
2. A non-refundable $50 application fee;
3. Official bank statement with a minimum balance of $19,784 (add $5,000 for each dependent). Statement must be less than six (6) months old. If a student has a sponsor in the U.S., an I-134 form (Affidavit of Support) is required. The I-134 form can be downloaded from www.uscis.gov.
4. Copy of passport
5. Copy of dependent's passport if travelling with you to the U.S.
6. Official transcript in English from your previous school(s)
7. One page essay stating your academic and career goals
8. English language proficiency.
   i. A TOEFL score of 61 (internet), 173 (computer), or 500 (paper);
   ii. An IELTS overall band score of 5.5;
IELTS Standards Setting

- DVD IELTS Scores Explained
- Presentations and support from IELTS International
- Peer institutions
- To consider:
  - What is the minimal level of English needed?
  - How does this minimally acceptable level translate into IELTS scores?
Miami Dade College and IELTS: A Case Example

Silvio Rodriguez
Director of Test Administration and Program Evaluation

1. Why MDC recognized IELTS

2. The recognition process: Tips and issues

3. The expectations of MDC in terms of IELTS recognition
Why MDC recognized IELTS

• IELTS has become more widely accepted as a non-native speakers (NNS) of English admission’s indicator of language proficiency, both internationally and in the U.S.

• Findings indicate that the IELTS can serve institutions of higher education in a manner similar to TOEFL, a long-standing approved admission’s test for NNS.

• The number of IELTS candidates continues to grow, and these test takers represent a recruitment population of potential international students.
Why MDC recognized IELTS

IELTS is a good partner for MDC because ...

• MDC is the largest undergraduate institution of higher education in the U.S.
  – MDC includes eight campuses with testing departments at each one.

• MDC’s focus is 2-year associate degree programs
  – in addition it offers baccalaureate degrees, certificates, and adult education.
  – 51% of its students are NNS of English.
The Recognition Process: Tips and Issues

CAVEAT #1-
There is no one perfect language proficiency measure.

• “A good garden may have some weeds.”
  Thomas Fuller
  Gnomologia, 1732
CAVEAT #2 –
New test adoption and transition is a slow process
• “Manage” the change
• Pace the transition
• Get support from all sides

CAVEAT #3 –
• Explore concerns and find answers
• Expect concerns to resurface.

IELTS initiative began November 2007 (China connection) and was not institutionalized until June 2009.
Guidelines for Implementing New Tests

Sub-committee Charge:
1. Determine what information they expect to glean from the test.
2. Choose a test(s) to evaluate.
3. Plan how to evaluate test(s).
4. Coordinate the test piloting.
5. Implement pilot.
6. Evaluate the test:
   a. Does the test have reliability and validity?
   b. Is it easy to administer?
   c. Is it easy to score?
   d. What does it cost?
   e. Do the Testing Departments have the resources to implement the test?
   f. What impact will the test have on students?

Sub-committee members
- ITA
- One Director of Testing
- One faculty member from each campus that will administer the test. (These faculty should be from disciplines that will be impacted by the new tests or scores).
- One department chairperson.

Reports to R & T committee throughout the process. Takes suggestions back to the committee.

Reports to campus Testing Directors throughout the process. Takes suggestions back to the committee.

Report to home campus departments throughout the process. Takes suggestions back to the committee.

Reports to department chairpersons at other campuses throughout the process. Takes suggestions back to the committee.

Recommendation

Approval by Discipline Committee.

Approval by Academic Deans.

Approval by Campus CASSC.

Approval by College-wide CASSC.

Implementation

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CAVEAT #5 - Set benchmarks/goals/roles

CAVEAT #6 - Be persistent

CAVEAT #7 - Maximize vendor support

CAVEAT #8 - Expect backsliding

CAVEAT #9 - Be willing to adjust cut-scores and have mechanism in place to do so.
Need for revised cut scores is recognized.

Guidelines for Implementing New Test Cut Scores

Sub-committee members

**1. Evaluate need for changing cut score:**
   a. Why is a cut score change merited?
   b. What data supports the need for a change in cut scores?
   c. What impact will the change in cut scores have on students?
   d. What impact will the cut score change have on Testing and Student Services departments?

**ITA**

**One Director of Testing.**

**One faculty member from each campus that will administer the test.** (These faculty should be from disciplines that will be impacted by the new tests or scores).

**One department chairperson.**

Sub-committee is formed.

Discipline representative on the Research & Testing Committee or ITA initiates request to the Research & Testing Committee to establish a sub-committee.

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Implementation

Recommendation

Approval by Discipline Committee.

Approval by Academic Deans.

Approval by Campus CASSC.

Approval by College-wide CASSC.

C. Benz - 3/28/01

American Association of Community Colleges Annual Convention
III. English Language Proficiency

Miami Dade College courses are taught in English. The College will provide English language training for students who have insufficient language skills. Students may demonstrate their English Language proficiency by submitting original TOEFL scores, IELTS scores or by taking the COMPASS/ESL test. The COMPASS/ESL test is administered at MDC upon students’ arrival at the college. Students requiring English language training may need to attend additional semesters at the college to complete their program of study.

The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is usually administered five (5) times each year at centers in most countries around the world. For Information on TOEFL, visit www.ets.org/toefl. The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) measures ability to communicate in English and for information on IELTS, visit http://www.ielts.org/.
The expectations of MDC in terms of IELTS recognition

- Enhance our marketability to International students from less typical recruitment areas ---
  Asia and Saudi Arabia vs. Latin America ...

- In line with current institutional global outreach to China such as the inauguration of a Confucius Institute at MDC.
  - For example China and Saudi Arabia
Who is exempt from taking an English proficiency placement test?

- The table below indicates the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores used to exempt students from English proficiency placement testing. Note: Institutional TOEFL scores are not used for exemption purposes at MDC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOEFL Exam</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper-and-pencil</td>
<td>550 or higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer-based</td>
<td>213 or higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet-based*</td>
<td>79 or higher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Effective 8/24/2005

- The table below indicates the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) scores used to exempt students from English proficiency placement testing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IELTS Exam</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Band Score*</td>
<td>6.5 or higher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Effective 2/13/2009

- All students who earned a college credit certificate in a MDC program of more than 12 credits or from an institution recognized by MDC are exempt from English proficiency placement testing. Official documentation is required.

www.mdc.edu/testing_information/CPT_CLAST/engldegree.asp
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