

Table 1: Studies funded under round 13 of the IELTS Joint-funded Research Programme

Researchers	Research Title
Roger Hawkey, Tony Green and Aylin Unaldi, The University of Bedfordshire, UK	An investigation of the process of writing IELTS academic reading test items
Gaynor Lloyd-Jones, Charles Neame and Simon Medaney, Cranfield University, UK	A multiple case study of the relationships between students' plural academic progress and IELTS scores at an international postgraduate university
Guoxing Yu, Pauline Rea-Dickins and Richard Kiely, The University of Bristol, UK	The cognitive processes of taking IELTS academic Writing Task 1
Andrea Dlaska, Ewan Dow and Sarah Michelotti, The University of Surrey, UK	From IELTS to graduation: An investigation into IELTS as a predictor of postgraduate academic success at the University of Surrey
Catherine Doherty, Margaret Kettle and Allan Luke, Queensland University of Technology, Australia	Examining academic spoken genres in university classrooms and their implications for the IELTS speaking test
Tim Moore, Janne Morton and Steve Price, The University of Melbourne, Australia	Construct validity in the IELTS academic reading test: a comparison of reading requirements in IELTS test items and in university study
Glenys Merrifield, GBM and Associates Australia	An impact study into the use of IELTS by professional associations and registration entities: The United Kingdom, Ireland and Canada
Michael Singh and Wayne Sawyer, The University of Western Sydney, Australia	The efficacy of IELTS in choosing potentially successful students for teacher education courses: What is an appropriate score?

Call for funding proposals: Round 14 of the IELTS Joint-funded Research Program

IDP: IELTS Australia and the British Council are once again making funding available for research projects in 2008/9. Each year an annual amount is set aside for external researchers to submit research proposals relating to the IELTS test. All IELTS research is managed by a Joint Research Committee which agrees on research priorities and oversees the tendering process. Researchers are now invited to submit funding proposals for Round 14, 2008/9. Details of the call for proposals for Round 14, together with guidance on topics and application forms, can be found on the IELTS website: www.ielts.org

IELTS Masters Award 2007 winner

The IELTS Research Committee, comprising the three IELTS partners: the University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations, the British Council and IDP: IELTS Australia met in November 2007 to review the shortlisted submissions for the IELTS Masters Award 2007. The winner was Talia Isaacs from McGill University in Montreal, Canada. Talia studied in the Department of Integrated Studies in Education and her supervisor was Dr Carolyn E Turner.

Talia's dissertation, entitled *Towards defining a valid assessment criterion of pronunciation proficiency in non-native English speaking graduate students* offers a valuable contribution to L2 pronunciation proficiency research. Talia Isaac's full abstract appears below:

This exploratory, mixed-design study investigates whether intelligibility is "enough", that is, a suitable goal and an adequate assessment criterion, for evaluating proficiency in the pronunciation of non-native English speaking graduate students in the academic domain. The study also seeks to identify those pronunciation features which are most crucial for intelligible speech.

Speech samples of 19 non-native English speaking graduate students in the Faculty of Education at McGill University were elicited using the *Test of Spoken English (TSE)*, a standardized test of spoken proficiency which is often used by institutions of higher learning to screen international teaching assistants (ITAs). Results of a fine-grained phonological analysis of the speech samples coupled with intelligibility ratings of 18 undergraduate science students suggest that intelligibility, though an adequate assessment criterion, is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for graduate students to instruct undergraduate courses as teaching assistants, and that there is a threshold level (i.e., minimum acceptable level) of intelligibility that needs to be identified more precisely. While insights about the features of pronunciation that are most critical for intelligibility are inconclusive, it is clear that intelligibility can be compromised for different reasons and is often the result of a combination of "problem areas" that interact together.

The study has some important implications for ITA training and assessment, for the design of graduate student pronunciation courses, and for future intelligibility research. It also presents a first step in validating theoretical intelligibility models which lack empirical backing (e.g. Morley 1994).

Talia will be presented with her award and a cheque for £1000 at the Language Testing Research Colloquium (LTRC) being held in Hangzhou, China from June 25–28, 2008.

Call for entries for IELTS Masters Award 2008

Each year the IELTS partners sponsor £1000 for the Masters level dissertation that makes the most significant contribution to the field of language testing. Submissions should be for dissertations written in partial or total fulfilment of the requirements for a Masters degree or its equivalent. Dissertations will only be considered eligible if they were submitted and *approved* by your university in 2007. The IELTS Research committee reviews the submissions and shortlists potential award winners.

Submission and evaluation procedures for 2008, along with details of the application process and timetable for submissions, can be found on the IELTS website: www.ielts.org