

Best Practices in Setting Score Requirements for Academic Language Proficiency

Panel Discussion: Institutional Perspectives on Setting Academic Language Proficiency Score Requirements

Moderator



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Speaker 1



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Agenda

Presentation by Spiros 20 mins

Interactive Panel Discussion and Audience Q&A 30 mins

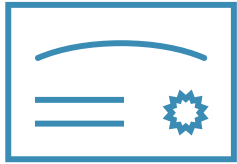
Best practices in setting score requirements for academic language proficiency

Spiros Papageorgiou, Ph.D.
Educational Testing Service (ETS)

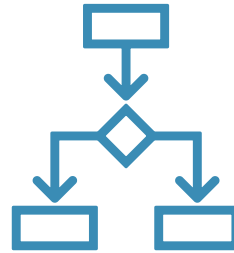


Languages Canada Annual Conference, February 28-March 2, 2024, Vancouver, BC

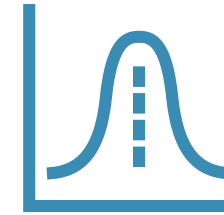
Language scores, decisions and consequences



Language test scores facilitate decisions about language proficiency

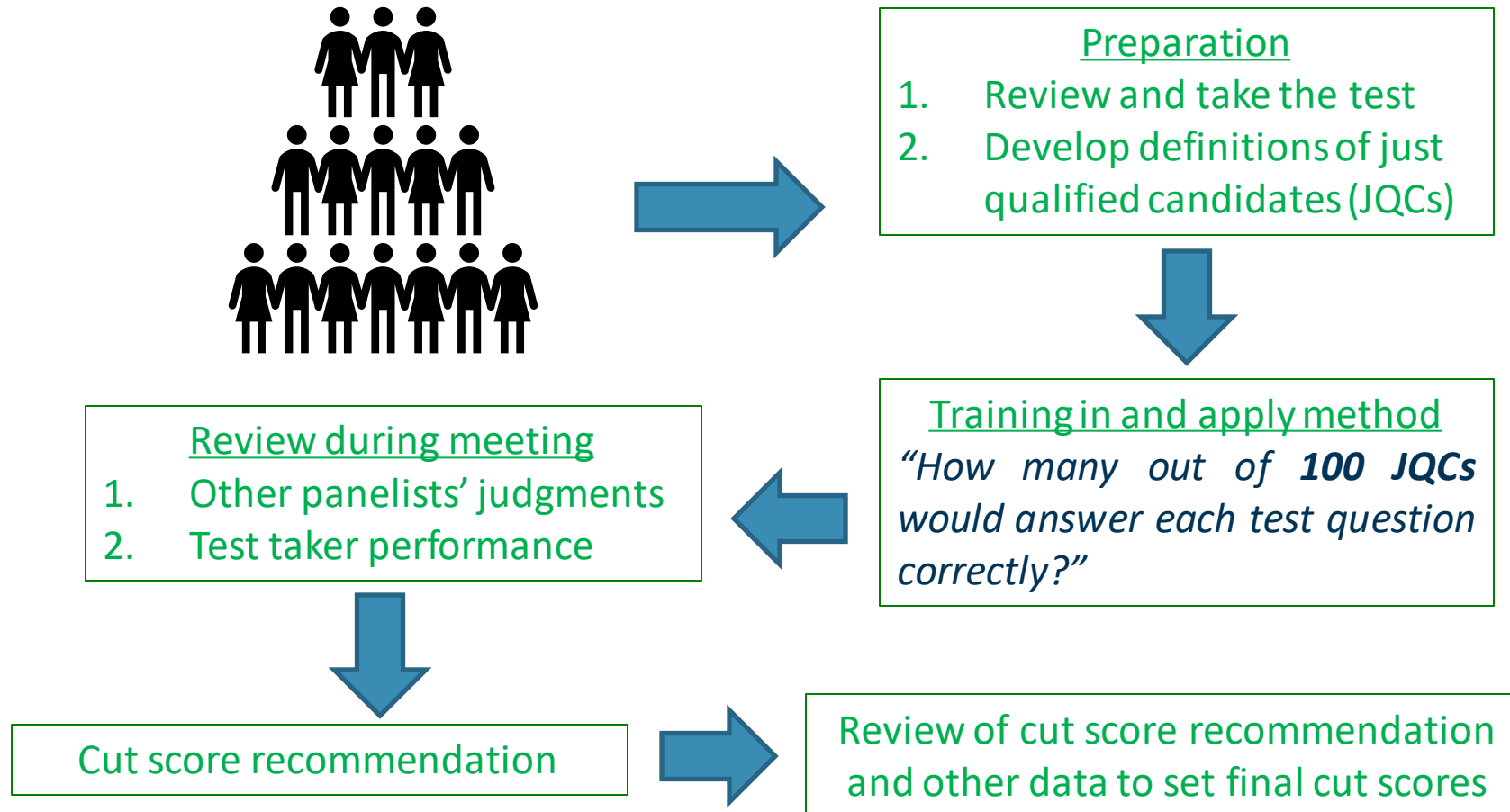


Decisions can be extremely consequential



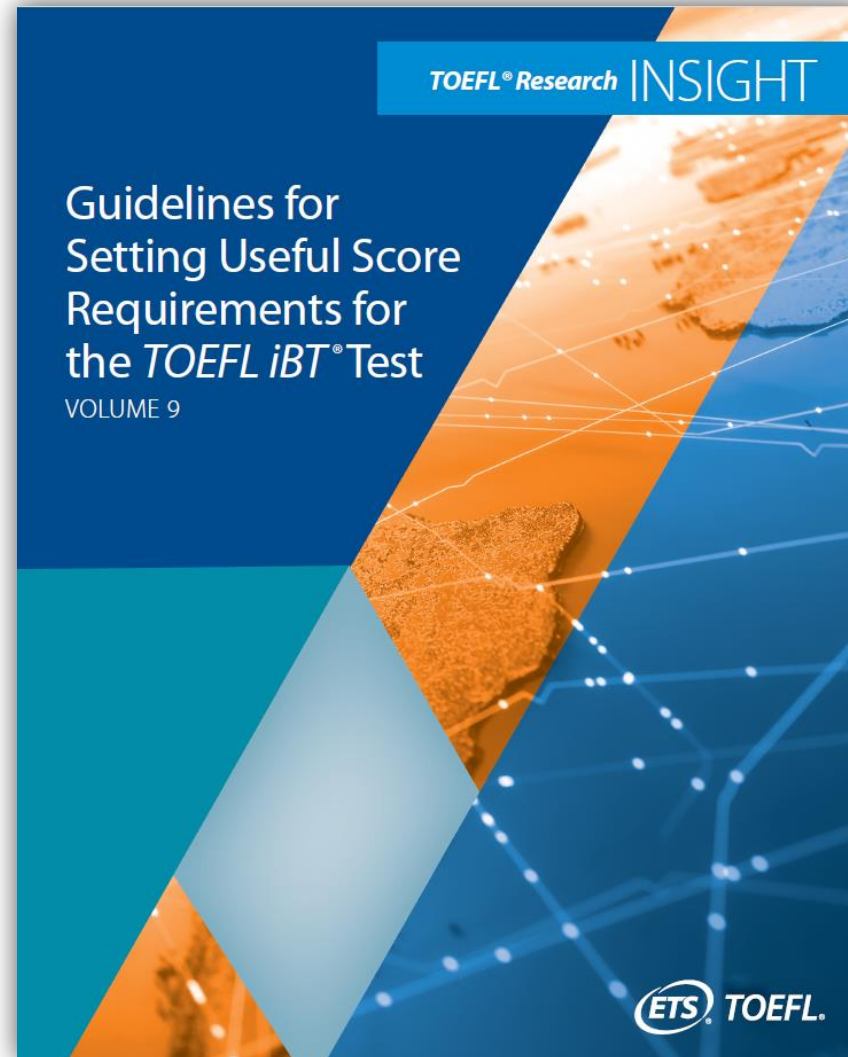
A cut score translates a test score into a decision

Overview of the standard setting process



Standard setting is resource-intensive!

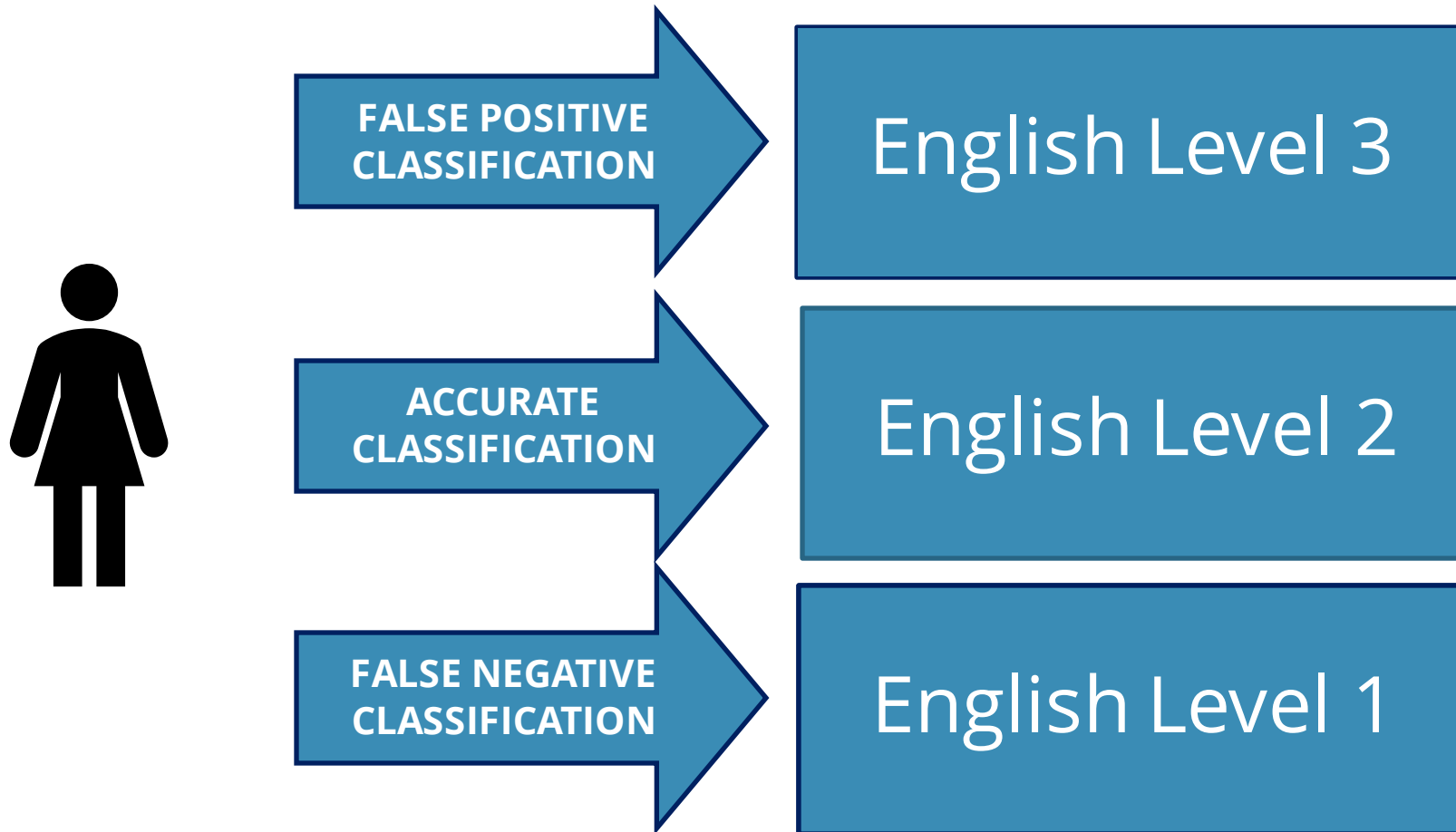
TOEFL Research Insight Series Vol. 9



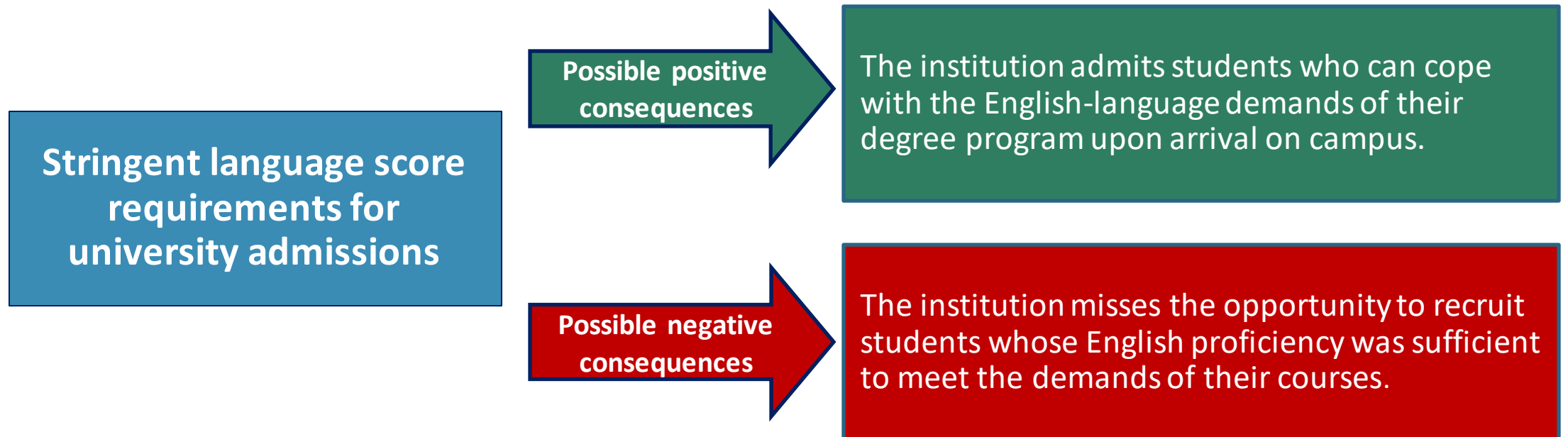
SCAN ME



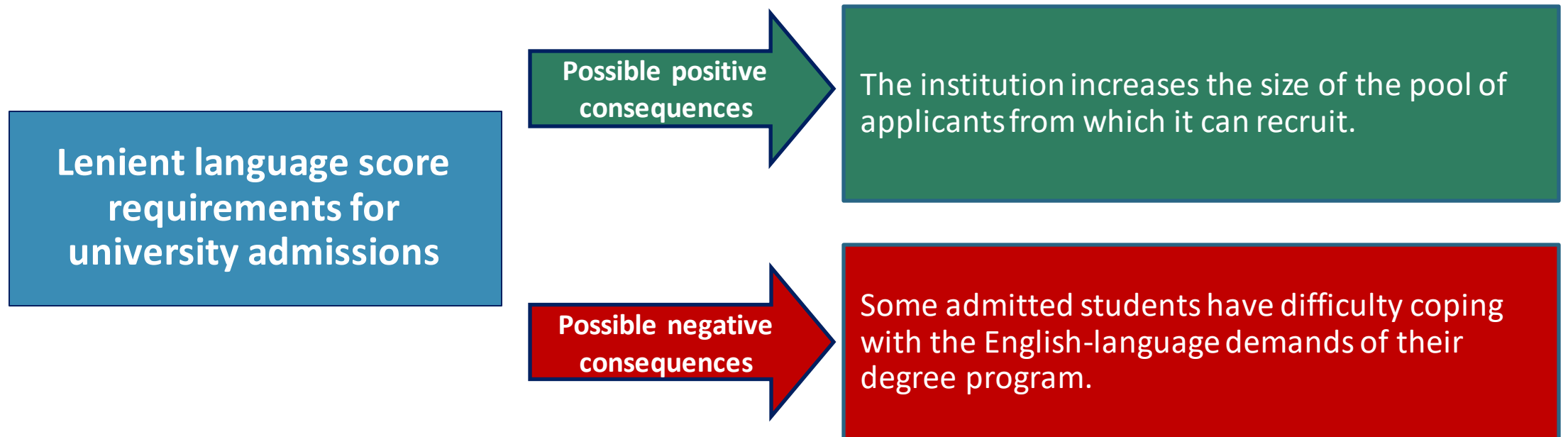
Cut scores and classification decisions



Consequences of language score requirements reducing false positive classifications

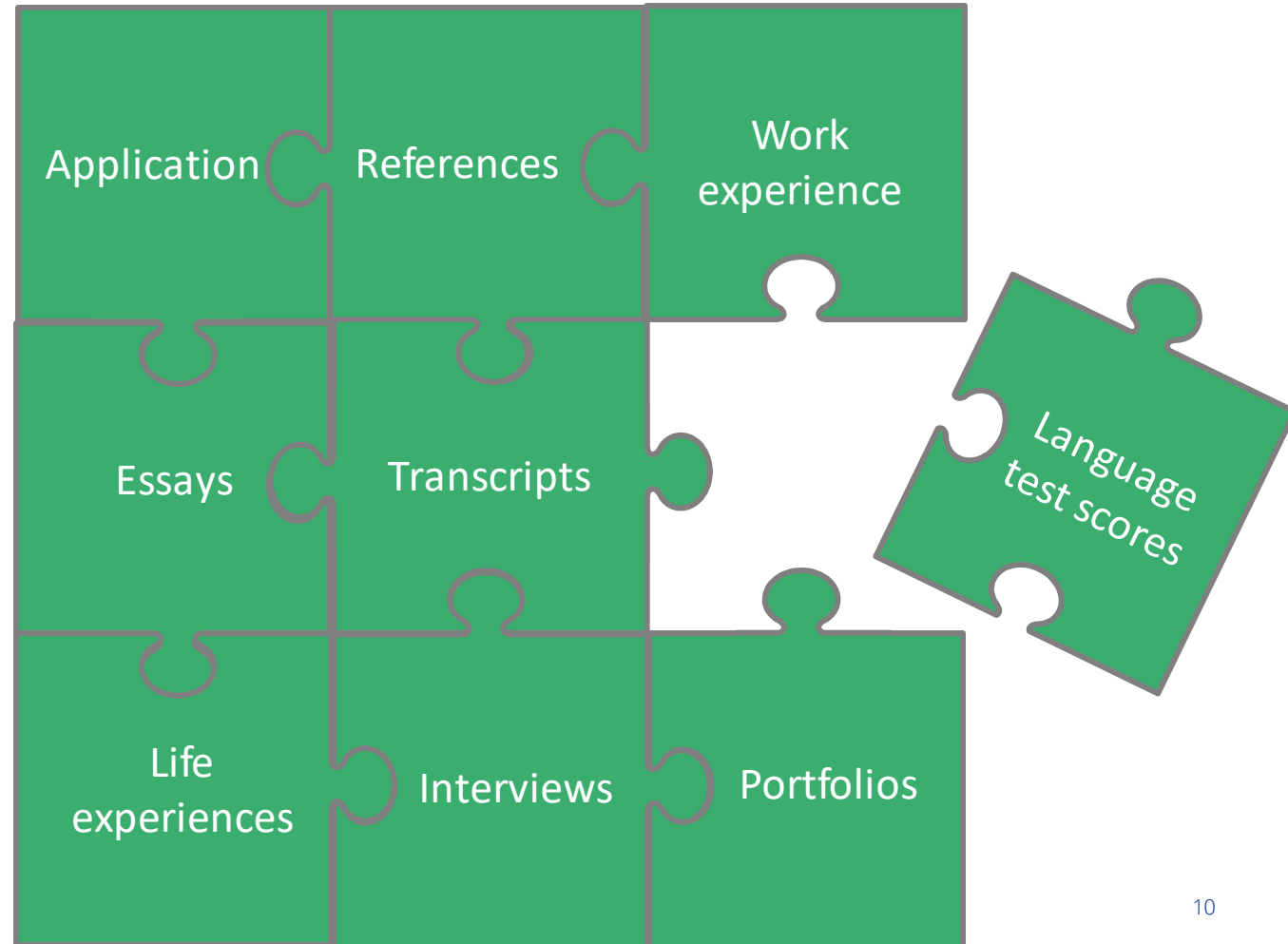


Consequences of language score requirements reducing false negative classifications



Language proficiency tests and other sources of information in educational contexts

- Language proficiency is necessary but not sufficient for academic success
- Other factors will affect academic success
- A language test is not intended to measure abilities beyond language proficiency.
- Some students might still fail academically for reasons unrelated to their language proficiency.



Resources



Total and section test scores

Student	Listening (0-30)	Reading (0-30)	Speaking (0-30)	Writing (0-30)	Total (0-120)
Mary	25	25	15	15	80
John	15	15	25	25	80
Sarah	22	21	18	19	80

Article

LANGUAGE TESTING

Interpreting the relationships between TOEFL iBT scores and GPA: Language proficiency, policy, and profiles

Language Testing
2018, Vol. 35(2) 271–295
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Article

LANGUAGE TESTING

Predicting grades from an English language assessment: The importance of peeling the onion

Language Testing
2016, Vol. 33(3) 307–318
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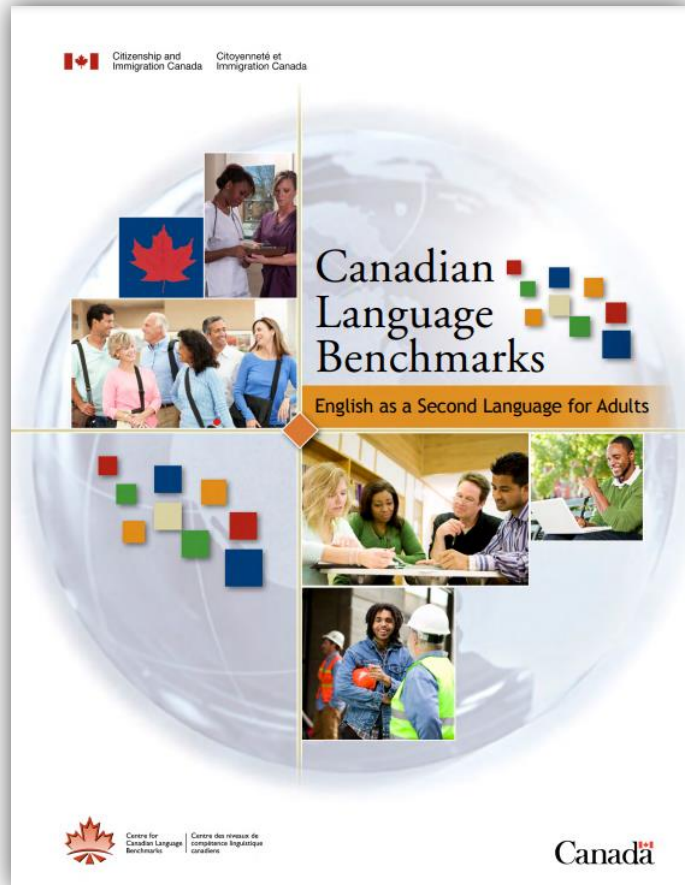


Percentile ranks

- Percentile ranks show the percentage of test takers at or below a score

TOEFL iBT total score (0-120)	Percentile rank for all test takers in 2022	A cut score at this level means that
100	69	31% of test takers in 2022 would have been eligible to apply.
92	49	51% of test takers in 2022 would have been eligible to apply.
80	26	74% of test takers in 2022 would have been eligible to apply.

Score mapping to proficiency levels




LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT QUARTERLY
2018, VOL. 15, NO. 1, 59–74
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15434303.2017.1350685>

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group

 Check for updates

Linking Tests of English for Academic Purposes to the CEFR: The Score User's Perspective

Anthony Green 

University of Bedfordshire, Luton, UK

“one [testing] agency’s B2 may be another’s A2/B1: the outcomes of the different linking approaches do not support each other closely and do not provide convincing mutual validation”

Don't use language frameworks to compare scores from different tests!

Score concordance tables

TOEFL iBT Score (0-120)	IELTS Band (0-9)
118	9
115	8.5
110	8
102	7.5
94	7
79	6.5
60	6
46	5.5
35	5
32	4.5
0-31	0-4

Shading indicates score comparisons with the highest degree of confidence.

- Are the tests used for similar purposes?
- Do the tests assess similar language abilities?
- Are scores reported in similar ways?
- Has the score concordance been revised recently?

Recommended steps

Recommended steps for setting cut scores

Evaluate the consequences of false classification decisions when setting cut scores too high or too low



Consider the English language demands of instruction and the amount of English language support available to students after admission



Consider all relevant information about English language proficiency when evaluating applications, particularly for students with language test scores close to the minimum requirement



Set cut scores on the total and section test scores, so that decisions about language proficiency are based on a comprehensive picture of the individual's language ability



Include other information about test taker performance available from the test provider (e.g., percentile ranks, score mapping, score concordance)



Review score requirements regularly and adjust as needed

Thank you!

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