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Is performance in English as a second language a relevant criterion for admission to an English medium university?

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Abstract

Since colonial times, many English-medium universities in developing countries require applicants to give proof of a high degree of proficiency in English language. Applicants with (very) good school results, but without the required score in school English are not admitted. This study focuses on the efficacy of such an entry requirement, using the performance of students at the National University of Lesotho. The results show that performance in school-level English is hardly correlated with academic performance, when controlling for the overall school performance. At the same time, overall school performance is a good predictor of performance. The study makes an attempt to quantify the implications of the current emphasis on performance in school English, and concludes that this emphasis cannot be justified, since it actually works to keep a number of very promising students outside the university. Finally, some reasons are suggested for the apparent lack of correlation between performance in school English and performance at university. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Seelen, L.P., E-mail: lp.seelen@nul.ls