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Abstract

As access to a university education has increased globally, there have also been increases in the number of universities that use English as a medium of instruction (EMI) and in the number of non-English-speaking students studying in English-speaking countries. Correspondingly, the English language proficiency of students studying in EMI environments is becoming increasingly significant. Using a large sample of 953 undergraduate students at an EMI university in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), this paper examines the predictive validity of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) as it pertains to the academic success of students as determined by grade point average and addresses implications and appropriateness of further language support. Results indicate that IELTS scores are a meaningful predictor of academic success, especially in the EMI environment that exists in the UAE. Lower than the IELTS guidelines, an IELTS 6.0 seems to be a key benchmark that predicts academic success. It may be that this more moderate English proficiency score is a better fit for non-English-speaking countries, but that further language support embedded into degree

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programmes is necessary except at the highest proficiency levels, and that a bilingual option should be considered at the lowest proficiency levels. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)