1.0 ADMISSIONS POLICY: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

1.1 Internationalisation Advisory Committee, on the recommendation of Griffith International, is asked to consider the use of the Pearson Test of English Academic for admission to undergraduate and postgraduate (coursework and research) degree programs. Ms Lucinda Chappell, Acting Director International and Ms Nicole Brigg, Director, Griffith English Language Institute will speak to this item.

Background

1.2 High stakes proficiency tests are widely used to determine English language proficiency across the four macro-skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. Such tests have traditionally involved a strictly monitored testing environment including identity checks, invigilation, and one-on-one speaking assessment. The best known of these tests includes the IELTS and TOEFL tests. Other tests include the ISLPR developed at Griffith University, and the OET (Occupational English Test) developed at The University of Melbourne.

1.3 In the past two years, developments in programming and processor speed have permitted the design, trial, and now implementation of online, high stakes language proficiency tests. TOEFL has developed a 3 hour high stakes proficiency test (TOEFL ibt) and the Pearson Company, best known for publishing, have now developed the Pearson Test of English.

Pearson Test of English Academic (PTE Academic)

1.4 PTE Academic is a new international computer-based academic English language test. PTE Academic accurately measures the reading, writing, listening and speaking ability of test takers who are non-native speakers of English and who want to study at institutions where English is the principal language of instruction. PTE Academic incorporates integrated and innovative test item types that use authentic, interactive task-based examples from academic settings to provide a realistic reflection of how language is used. Using real-life authentic academic material from a variety of international contexts and scenarios, PTE Academic profiles language ability across all four skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. The test measures the ability of the test taker to analyse, interpret, recount and evaluate English as it is used in an academic setting.

Test Availability

1.5 PTE Academic is delivered at Pearson test centres globally and is currently available in 36 territories including China, India, Japan, South Korea, Australia, Brazil, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, UK and USA. More test centres will open in 2010 including Vietnam and the Middle East.

1.6 In Australia there is one Pearson-owned test centre in Sydney. In other locations Pearson has partnered with the following education institutions to establish test centres – Embassy
CES/StudyGroup (Melbourne), ACE/Navitas (Sydney, Brisbane, Perth), Eynesbury College/Navitas (Adelaide), University of Southern Queensland (Toowoomba). In the coming months test centres will be opening in Hobart, Canberra and the Gold Coast (negotiating with GELI now to offer the test at GELI Australia Fair).

1.7 The Pearson test is conducted in a single three hour session. Most test centres are currently offering the test once a week and this will increase as demand grows. There is no limit to how frequently the test can be offered. A full list of test centres is available at www.pearsonpte.com

Test Security

1.8 Pearson use state-of-the-art biometrics to ensure the security of the testing process for PTE Academic. These include using digital photographs, palm vein scans and signatures to authenticate test takers. Test centre administrators also implement video and audio monitoring in the test centre to provide the highest level of security. To ensure the security of PTE Academic test content, questions are replenished continuously and randomised test forms will minimize item exposure and fraud.

1.9 In addition, test takers are required to provide a Personal Introduction. This response may provide an additional biometric (a voice print) to allow institutions to compare an applicant’s voice with the voice recorded while taking the test. The Personal Introduction is available as a digital sound file and accompanies score reports.

Test Fee

1.10 The cost of PTE Academic varies from USD 150 – 210 depending on the country in which it is taken. In Australia PTE Academic is USD210 which at today’s exchange rate makes it approximately AUD80 less than IELTS. Fully scored PTE Academic Practice tests are available online at a cost of USD20.

Test Scores

1.11 Test scores are available within five business days from the test date and test takers are notified by email when their scores are available. Currently most test takers are receiving their scores within one day. Test takers are able to access their PTE Academic scores online with a secure login and password. Test takers receive an overall score on a scale of 10 – 90 as well as individual scores for Communicative Skills and Enabling Skills.

1.12 Test takers electronically submit their results to recognising institutions via the online score reporting system. Recognising institutions are provided with access to the online score report service to view test takers results.

Test Score Comparison and Recognition

1.13 Information on recognition of PTE is provided in Attachment 1.1. Information on how PTE Academic scores approximately compare to IELTS and TOEFL is provided in Attachment 1.2. Attachment 1.3 includes extracts from Griffith’s current admissions policies for reference. It is proposed that the following PTE academic scores for undergraduate, postgraduate (coursework and research) admission be applied:

- IELTS 6.0 (no score below 5.5) - PTE 54 with no score lower than 50
- IELTS 6.5 (no score below 6.0) - PTE 61 with no score lower than 58
- IELTS 7.0 (no score below 6.5) - PTE 68 with no score lower than 65
- IELTS 7.0 (no score below 7) - PTE 68 with no score lower than 68
Recommendation

1.14 Internationalisation Advisory Committee, on the recommendation of Griffith International, is asked to endorse the use of the Pearson Test of English Academic for admission to undergraduate and postgraduate (coursework and research) degree programs, and the academic scores for undergraduate, postgraduate coursework and research admission, as outlined in 1.13, above to Academic Committee.

For discussion