



## Setting language standards for International Medical Graduates

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## Acknowledgements

Barry O'Sullivan

Sandra Rugea

*Identifying the appropriate IELTS score levels for IMG applicants to the GMC register.* Report submitted to the General Medical Council, February 2013.

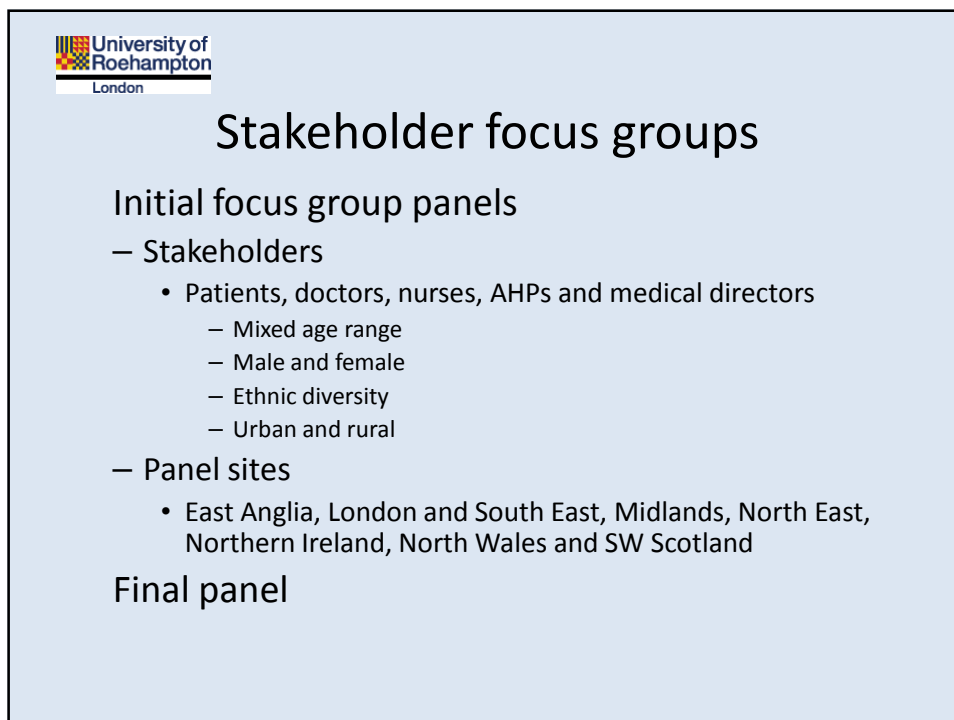
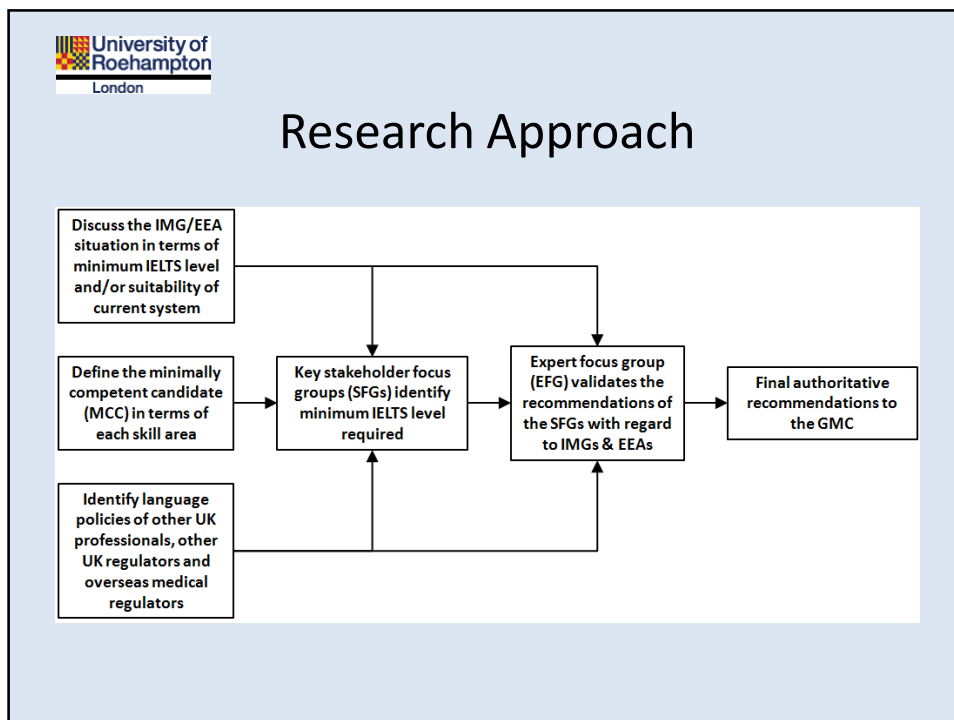
This presentation reports on research using examination materials provided by Cambridge ESOL

## Aims of the study

- to address concerns regarding the language competence of non-native speaker medical practitioners in the UK
- to investigate the issue of requiring evidence of English language ability from all non-native speaker medical practitioners seeking admission to the GMC register

## Objectives

- to determine if the current overall IELTS score of Band 7, with no separate skill score lower than Band 7, is adequate as a preliminary language screening device for International Medical Graduates (IMGs)
- to determine if European Economic Areas graduates (EEAs) should provide the same evidence as IMGs if evidence of English language competence should ever be required in order for them to be admitted to the GMC register
- to determine if the IELTS test provides an adequate measure of English language ability for overseas medical practitioners seeking admission to the GMC register





## Approaches to standard-setting

### Two approaches

- Test centred
- Examinee centred

### Decisions

- The approach should reflect the format of the test papers under review
- Number of judgements which contribute to the final recommendation should be large enough to ensure meaningful decision, be organized in such a way as to limit group dynamics effect, and be representative of the stakeholder population



## Conducting the panels

- Developing 'can do' statements
- IELTS reading, writing, listening, speaking papers
- Matching IELTS to 'can do' statements
- Judgements

## Stakeholders comments

- Reading
- Writing
- Listening
- Speaking

*“Part of the problem is we are using a test that was originally designed for one purpose for a completely different purpose so it’s never going to be perfect.”*

## Findings and recommendations

Report to be published by the  
GMC later in 2013

## Conclusion

*..... there is no true cut-off score, there is no best standard setting method, there is no perfect training, there is no flawless implementation of any standard setting method on any occasion and there is never sufficiently strong validity evidence.*

Kaftandjieva (2004: 31)

*Thank you!*