

**INTO** »



In defence of the Portfolio Approach as a  
viable alternative to standardised testing for  
INTO GCU Pathway students

- Traditionally IELTS has been the gateway to University
- Now INTO GCU is coming under increasing pressure to adapt to fit the needs of the students and the University.
- Large scale testing is no longer a viable option.

- What is the portfolio approach?
- Does large scale testing have a fitness for purpose?
- Stakes are high for INTO GCU to produce criterion based exams which do their job

- Rationale for using the Portfolio approach
- Awareness of using the principles
- Assessment must be in line with desired objectives
- Awareness of the limitations of its use

- Limitations of one off testing
- Portfolio approach allows teachers to see what the students are capable of.
- Limitations of one off timed writings are most apparent in the portfolio approach

- Characteristics of a model portfolio
- GCU “owns” the EAP module.
- Importance of validation
- Implementation is a work in progress

- Comprehensiveness of the portfolio
- A driving factor is the need to be flexible as the EAP outcomes can be complex.
- With more emphasis on student led learning it gives the student control over their learning

- Implications
- Washback – students may be unsure of the rating system as used to exams in own culture.
- Criterion
- Reliability and validity



- Use of CEFR Scales related to IELTS
- Reliability
- Security issues
- Conflict between testing centres and accepting institution

- Conclusion

- Despite pressure on testers, moderators and the Universities .....and little research
- The Portfolio approach is here to stay