

Results of the 1996 AUET and 1995/1996 I-TOEFL Tests
Ken Matsuta and Joseph Gondar
Asia University

This article reviews and explains the results of the Asia University Entrance Test (AUET), administered at Asia University in April and December of 1996, and of the Institutional Test of English as a Foreign Language (I-TOEFL), administered during 1995 and 1996. Weaknesses and inconsistencies in the testing process and in the results analysis process are also examined. Finally, recommendations for future testing processes, and the results analysis process.

1996 AUET

The AUET was administered to 1,677 entering freshman students in April 1996 and to 1,308 freshman students in December 1996. The April test was used as the main method of placing students into various levels of Freshman English. The December test results had been used previously to place students into sophomore English classes taught by the English Language Education Research Institute (ELERI) Visiting Faculty Members (VFMs). Currently, the December test results are used as part of the placement process for students who will attend the Asia University America Program (AUAP) and in considering student achievement on an aggregate basis.

As measured by the mean scores of students who took the April 1996 and December 1996 AUET tests, there was a slight improvement in student results. However, a different number of students took the test in April than in December but no adjustment was made to account for the students who did not participate in both test sessions. For this reason, an

analysis of the two sets of test data cannot present an accurate comparison. It is recommended that student by student results be compared in the future. This will generate more accurate comparative data than the present aggregate group comparison. It is also recommended that for validity of test results, the method of test administration should be identical. The test should be administered by Japanese proctors in large lecture halls with a full one hour for completing the test.

The 1995/1996 I-TOEFL

The I-TOEFL was given to all freshman students who planned to participate in the AUAP program in the 1996/1997 school year. The test is administered primarily for placement purposes in AUAP. After the students return from their semester in the US, they are again given the I-TOEFL for evaluation purposes. International Relations and Economics majors in the AUAP program go to the US in the first semester of their second year (Cycle 1), and Business Administration and Law students go abroad in the second semester (Cycle 2).

1995/1996 I-TOEFL (Cycle 1)

Graph 1 and Graph 2 show the results of the I-TOEFL given to International Relations and Economics students who participated in the 1996 AUAP program. The test was administered in April and December 1995 during their Freshman year and again in September 1996 after they returned from the US.

The scores of International Relations students, as measured by the mean, showed a steady improvement. The average score increased from 413 in March 1995 to 447 in September 1996. Another substantial statistic for the International Relations

students was the increase in the number of students scoring over 500. The number of students who scored over 500 increased from two in March 1995 to 15 in September 1996.

Improvements in the test scores of Economics students is less striking than that of the International Relations students. No Economics majors scored over 500 in any of the test administrations and the mean score increased from 380 to 401 between March 1995 and September 1996.

1995 I-TOEFL (Cycle 2)

Graph 3 and Graph 4 show the results of the I-TOEFL given to Business Administration and Law students who took Freshman English in the 1995/1996 school year and planned to participate in the AUAP program in the 1996/1997 school year. Post AUAP scores are not included because these students have not taken their post-AUAP I-TOEFL as of publication date.

No Law or Business students scored over 500 on either of the test administrations. For Law students, the mean test scores increased 14 points during their Freshman English year, an improvement consistent with the performance of International Relations and Economics majors. Mean scores of Business Administration majors, however, improved only two points from April to December 1995. The lack of change in mean scores can be partially explained by the significant decrease of Business Administration students who took the test in December. Although 130 Business majors took the I-TOEFL in April 1995, only 88 took the test in December 1995, a decrease of 32%.

Conclusion

Since it has been decided that the AUET is not a valid test for Freshman English students and a new placement test will be

implemented in April 1997, the graphs of test results for 1996 are not included in this article.

Concerning review of the I-TOEFL results, mean scores for the tests, particularly for Business, Economics, and Law students, do not show substantial increases. There are two possible reasons for these results.

The population of students who took the I-TOEFL was not the same on all test administration dates. Although 476 students took the I-TOEFL in April 1995, only 411 took the December 1995 test. For the group who showed the smallest increase in mean scores, Business Administration, the decrease in the number of examinees taking the test in April and in December was the most striking. One hundred and thirty students took the test in April 1995, but only 88 students took the test in December 1995.

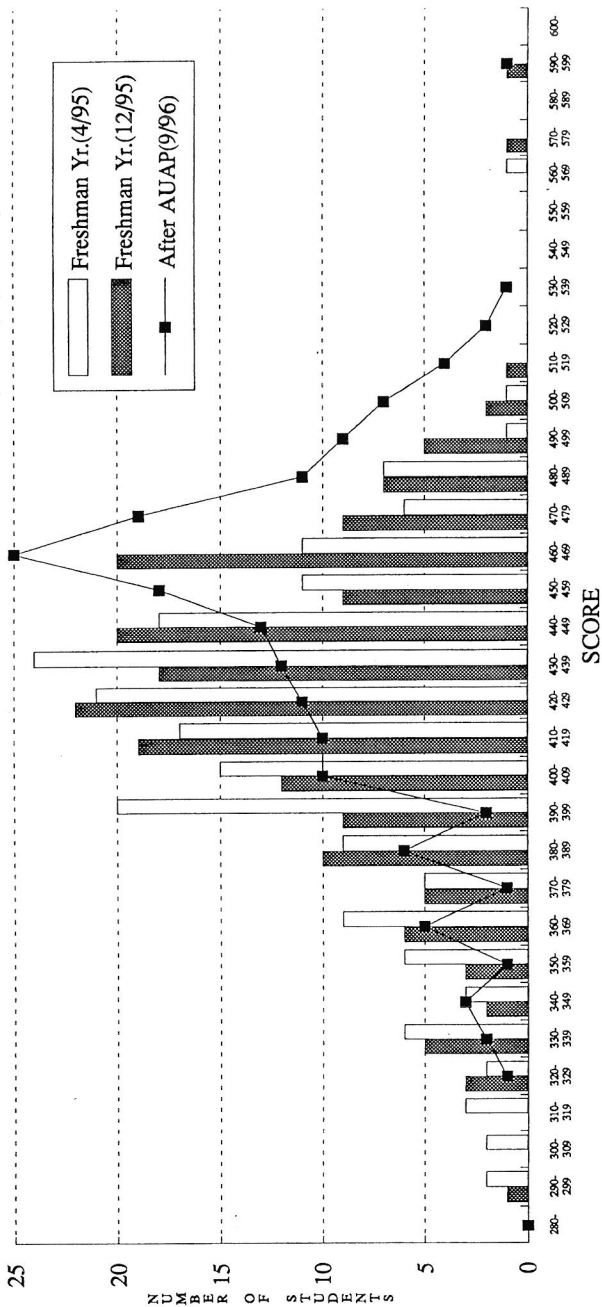
Furthermore, the I-TOEFL should not be used for measuring Asia University Freshman English students' English language improvement. Students scoring in the low 400's on the TOEFL would rank in the lowest 10 percentile of TOEFL examinees. A norm-referenced test such as the TOEFL is not a consistently valid tool when used to measure the performance of examinees scoring at either extreme of the bell curve.

GRAPH 1

I-TOEFL '95/96

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

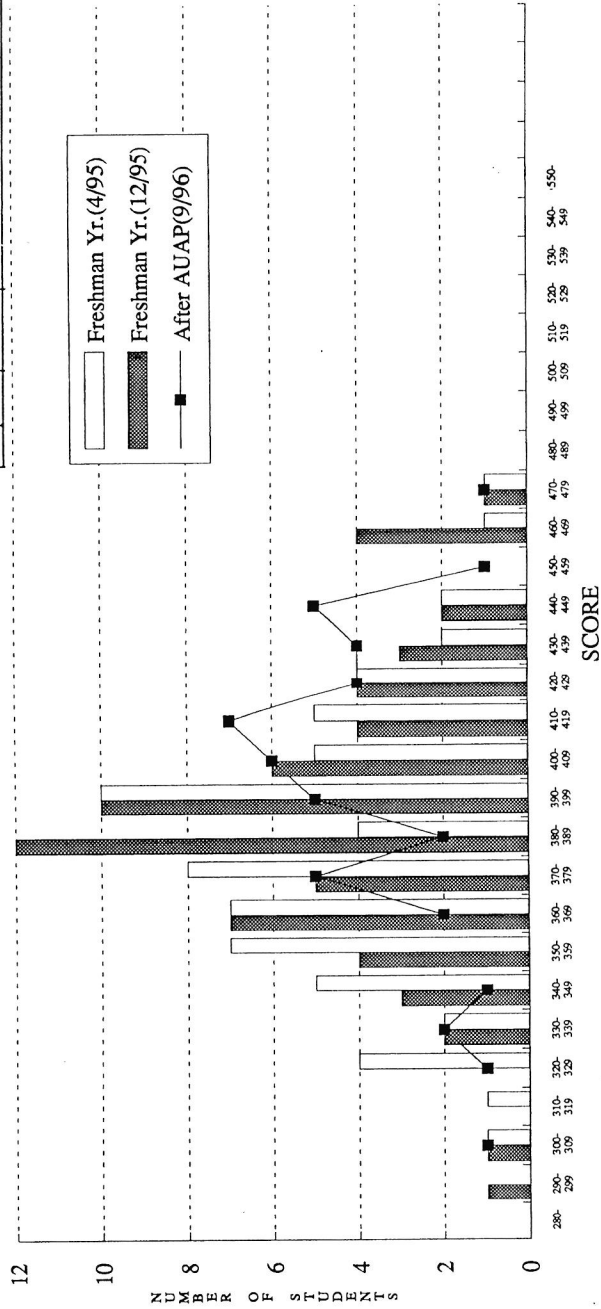
DATE	MEAN	# of Students scoring over 500
Mar-95	413	2
Dec-95	426	5
Sep-96	447	15



GRAPH 2

I-TOEFL '95/96
ECONOMICS

DATE	MEAN	# of Students scoring over 500
Mar-95	380	0
Dec-95	390	0
Sep-96	401	0

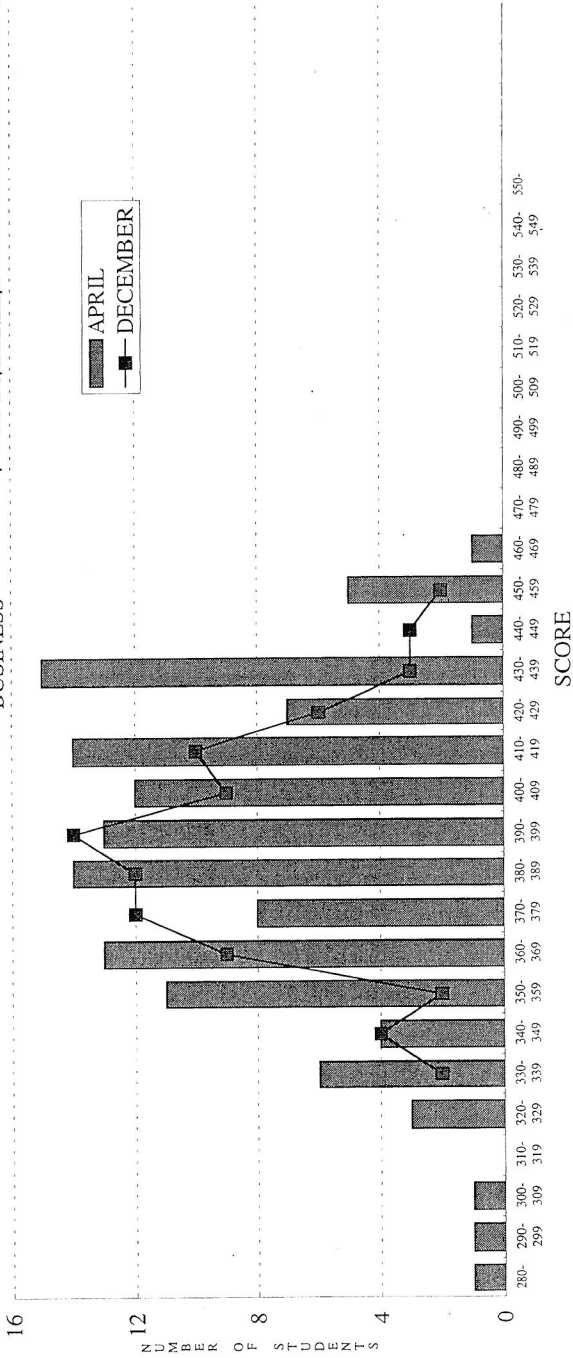


GRAPH 3

I-TOEFL '95

BUSINESS

DATE	MEAN	# of Students scoring over 500
Mar-95	389	0
Dec-95	391	0



GRAPH 4

I-TOEFL '95

DATE	MEAN	# of Students scoring over 500
Mar-95	391	0
Dec-95	405	0

