



## **From the Non-English Speaking Background student's perspective: The relevance of completing a university bridging program for future academic success.**

### **Key Words**

NESB tertiary students, EAP, bridging programs, academic skills, academic success

### **Abstract**

The University of Otago Language centre offers a bridging course called 'English for Otago' designed specifically for those students who wish to enter mainstream academic studies at the University of Otago. The course content covers a variety of academic skills considered necessary for NESB students to succeed in their academic studies e.g.: academic vocabulary, critical understanding and assessment of reading texts, paraphrasing, summarising, delivery of presentations, research skills, structuring arguments for essays etc. These programmes do not use English language test scores i.e.: International English Language Test Score (IELTS) as an entry requisite into university, rather they have their own curriculum and assessments which students must pass in order to enter their chosen field of study at university. The aim of this research is to look at NESB students' perceptions of the English for Otago bridging program course content in relation to their first year academic studies at Otago University, to find out which aspects of the course students find most useful and how they make sense of the academic skills they have learnt. There will be two phases for data gathering. Phase 1 will involve data gathering from research participants whilst they are enrolled in the English for Otago course. Phase 2 will follow the same research participants through to their first year of academic studies at the University of Otago. My hope is that this research will inform educators' understandings of NESB tertiary students' experiences of teaching and learning at the University of Otago and facilitate improved learning outcomes for students in the university bridging courses and mainstream academic programs. It could contribute to future curriculum planning, teaching practice and academic support being more informed. On a community level International students are important for both Dunedin and the University Of Otago. Quality programmes that are responsive to international students' needs, therefore, are an extremely important factor when these students are choosing their study destination.