

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The new *International Student Admissions Test* (ISAT) has been developed to assist universities in their selection of international applicants for university entry. It provides two measures of reasoning ability to complement measures of applicants' English language proficiency (eg, IELTS scores).

ISAT provides measures of:

- Critical Reasoning (CR) ability, and
- Quantitative Reasoning (QR) ability.

This report summarises the results of an ISAT trial conducted early in 2001 with 603 international students. The purposes of the trial were to: (i) establish the technical properties of test items developed for ISAT; and (ii) establish how international students are likely to perform on ISAT (and hence the test's appropriateness for this target group).

A pool of items was developed for each of the two ISAT dimensions (CR and QR) and the items in each pool were subjected to a number of quality checks. Statistical analyses were conducted to check on:

- the extent to which the items in each pool worked together to provide valid measures of the intended dimension;
- the appropriateness of the item difficulties for international students;
- items with possible gender bias; and
- items with an unintended dependence on students' levels of English language competence.

The conclusions of these analyses were that, while a small number of items displayed potential problems, the vast majority of items in each item pool worked together well as a set and showed no obvious item bias. Problematic items identified through the trial will be removed from the pool and not used in ISAT.

There is also evidence that ISAT, with its deliberately lower English language demands, provides better measures of critical and quantitative reasoning than a test such as the Special Tertiary Admissions Test (STAT) which is designed for university applicants living in Australia.

### **Conclusion**

ISAT provides valid and reliable measures of the critical reasoning and quantitative reasoning abilities of international students applying for entry to Australian universities.