



TOEFL® iBT
Standard Setting for Speaking



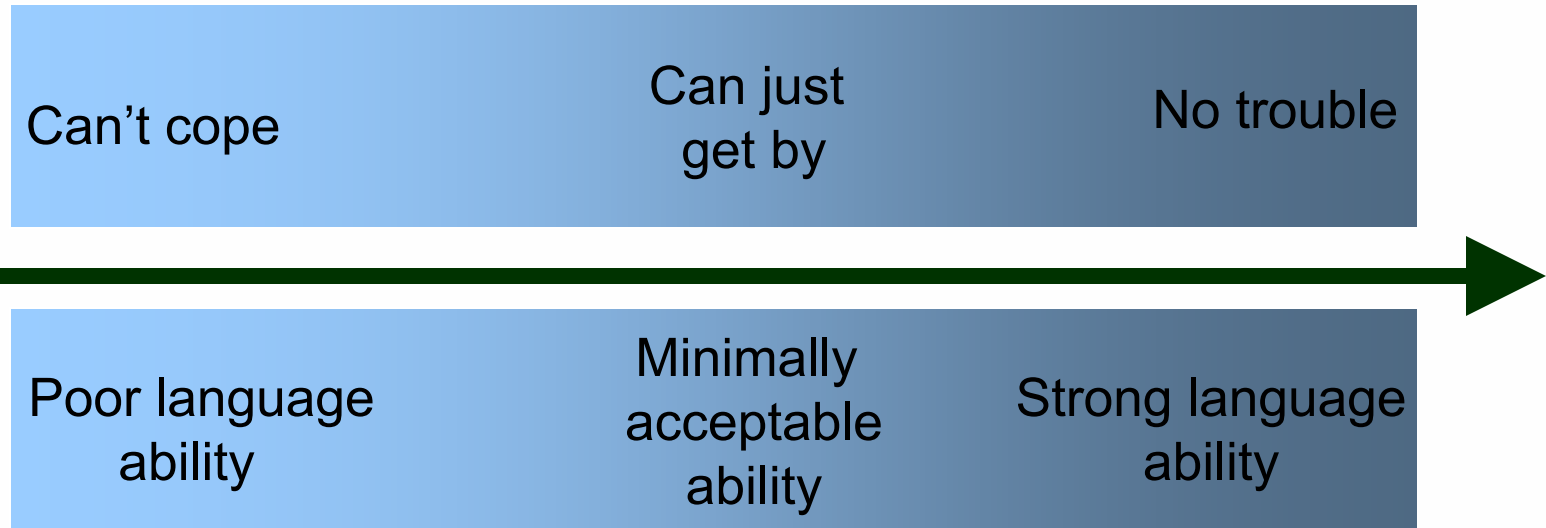
Standard Setting

Also known as determining a recommended score or cut score

- A judgmental process
- Relies on the concept of a minimally acceptable student (not the *average* student)
- In this context, an international student for whom English is not the first language but who has good enough English for academic purposes



Continuum of Ability





A Cut Score – What It Is

It reflects the level of English language ability believed *necessary* for students to possess in order to be able to cope with first-year academic studies.

“How much English language ability is enough to handle first-year studies?”



and What It Is Not

- It is *not* the level of English language ability necessary to get straight As



Standard Setting – Things You Should Know

- Based on expert judgment – Yours!
 - Panel consists of university staff who have contact with international students and who know the requirements of first-year academic work.
- It reflects a set of values, beliefs or expectations about “How much is enough?”
- There is no single “right/correct” cut score.



Meeting overview – all Four Sections of the Test

- 2-day meeting
 - Day 1: Introduction, Writing and Speaking
 - Day 2: Listening and Reading
- Use of a full test form from the 2003-2004 Field Test
- Establish a separate score standard for each of the four sections
- Standard setting for one skill – one morning or afternoon



Makeup of panel

- Panel: One panel for undergraduate OR graduate admission at each institution
- Panel members: 15-20 personnel who are familiar with international students:
 - Content course faculty
 - ESL specialists
 - Admissions staff
 - Deans



For each Language Skill:

- Define language tasks of 1st year students
- Define the minimally acceptable language user
- Practice making judgments
- Make Round 1 judgments
- Discuss Round 1 judgments
- Make Round 2 judgments
- Tally final results
- Raw score converted to a scale score



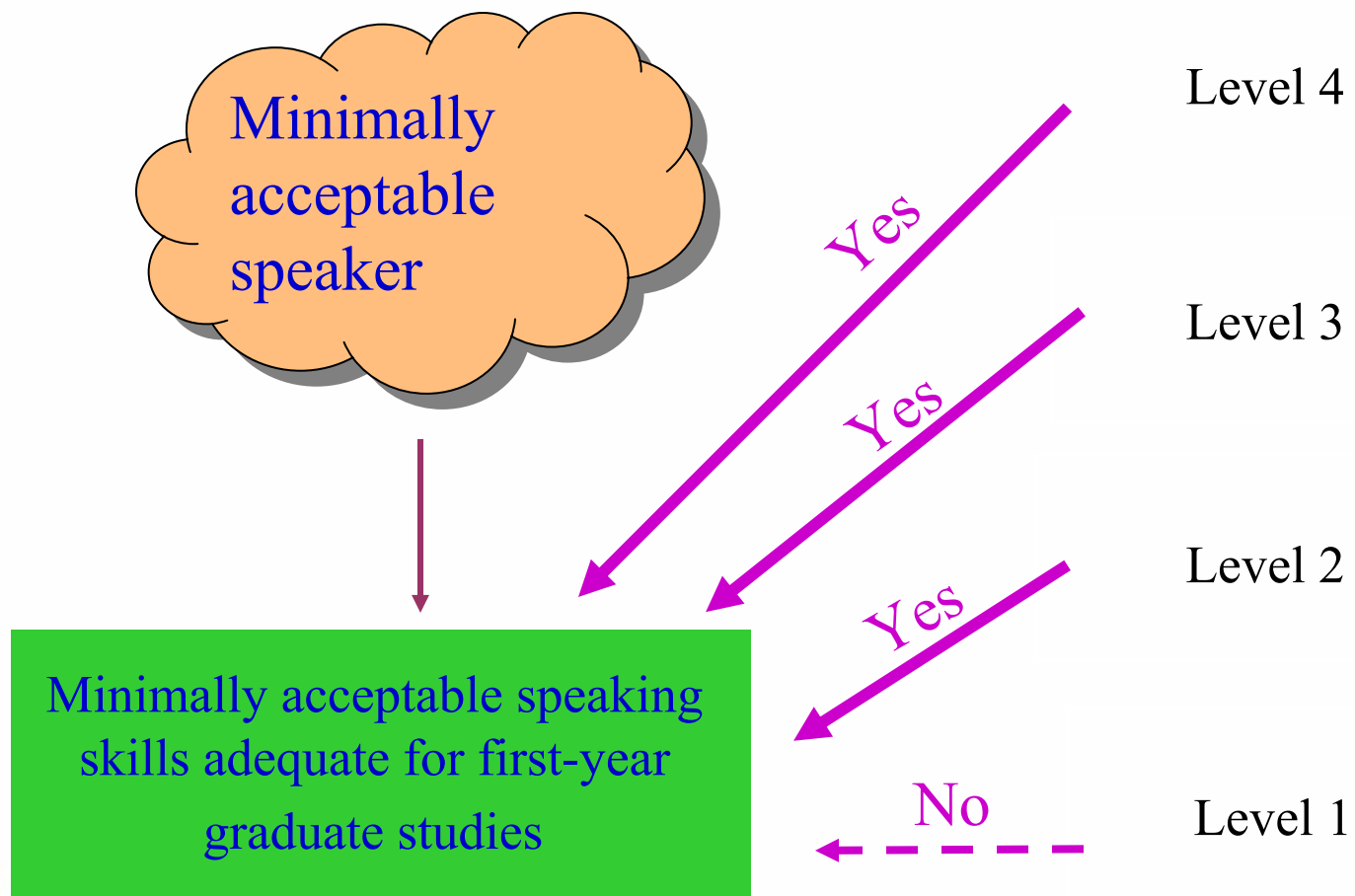
Speaking Section



Overview of Procedure

- Determine the level of study – undergraduate, **graduate**, business, etc.
- Think of an international student who has *just enough* English speaking skills to cope with first-year studies
- Describe this student’s speaking skills
- Listen to one candidate’s responses to 3 (of the 6) TOEFL speaking tasks and answer the question “Has this student demonstrated the minimally acceptable speaking skills adequate for first-year **graduate** studies at our university?”

Judgment Process – Speaking

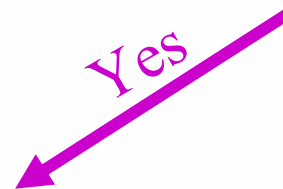


Judgment Process – Speaking

Minimally
acceptable
speaker



Minimally acceptable speaking
skills adequate for first-year
graduate studies



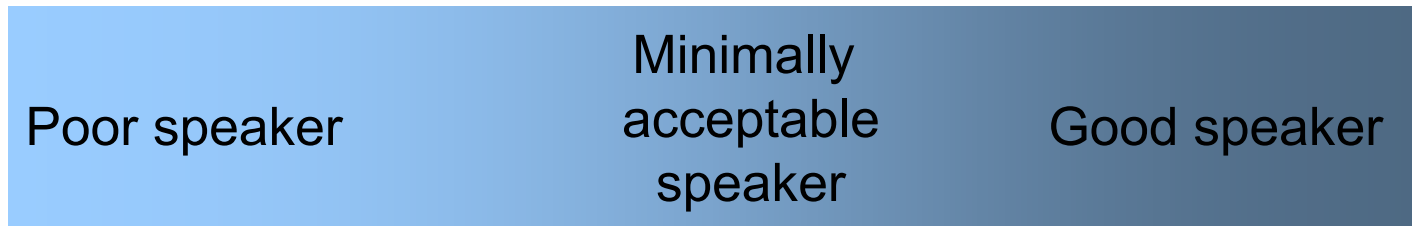
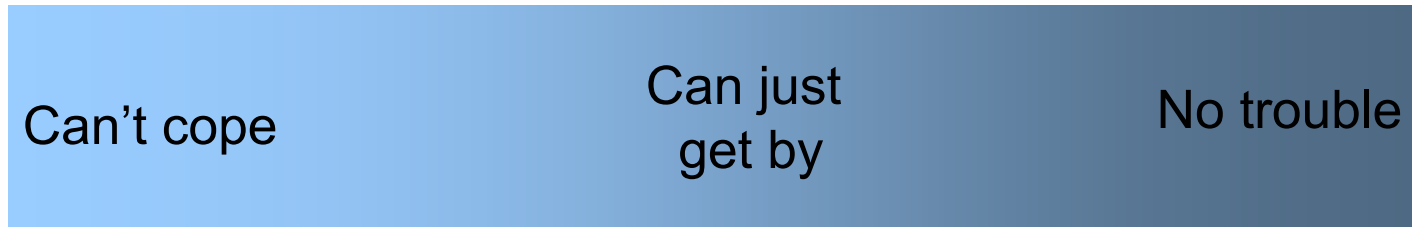
Level 2



Define Minimally Acceptable Speaking Skills – Large Group Work

- Key academic speaking tasks for first-year **graduate** studies
- What distinguishes a good speaker from a poor speaker?

Continuum of Speaking Ability





What Speaking Tasks are Required of Our Students?

Responses from a University Panel

- Ask questions in class
- Participate in study group discussions
- Give presentations
- Participate in peer discussion groups
- Participate in team projects/group work
- Discuss issues with advisors/faculty
- Speak with landlords about living arrangements
- Ask for and understand directions



Minimally Acceptable Speaking Skills – As Defined by a University Panel *

Strong Speaker

- Varied inflection
- Fluid dialogue
- Neutral (not noticeable) accent
- Has multiple, rich resources for vocabulary
- Speech is well organized, tightly structured
- Can use formal and informal speech appropriately

* From university panel, not ETS standards



Minimally Acceptable Speaking Skills – As Defined by a University Panel*

Weak Speaker

- No inflection
- Accent makes it difficult to understand
- Bad pacing
- Poor vocabulary
- Inadequate vocabulary for purpose & audience
- Disorganized speech
- Lacks formality

* From university panel, not ETS standards



Minimally Acceptable Speaking Skills – As Defined by a University Panel*

Minimally Acceptable Speaker

- Accent doesn't hinder communication
- Appropriate use of vocabulary, but not without some errors
- Has some flow, connected dialogue
- Has semblance of organization
- May mix formal and informal speech but meaning is clear
- Reasonable pace

* From university panel, not ETS standards



TOEFL iBT Speaking Section

- Six speaking tasks
- Candidates given time to prepare and compose their response to each task
 - Two speaking tasks about familiar topics
 - Two speaking tasks involving campus situations
 - 1 Listening/Speaking
 - 1 Reading/Listening/Speaking
 - Two speaking tasks involving academic course content
 - 1 Listening/Speaking
 - 1 Reading/Listening/Speaking



Sample Speaking Tasks

- Task 2: Campus (Independent)
- Task 4: Animal Domestication (Academic course content; first read and listen, then speak)
 - Reading
 - Lecture
 - Question
- Task 5: Busy Schedule (Campus situations; listen and speak)
 - Conversation
 - Question



Key Points – Animal Domestication

- Horses are hierarchical in their social structure. They naturally follow a leader. Hierarchical animals will accept a human as their leader.
- Horses are not territorial, so they can live close together/don't fight other herds that enter the same territory.
- Antelopes are not hierarchical.
- Antelopes are territorial and will fight fiercely with each other.
- Application: Thus horses have the traits that make them suitable for domestication while antelopes are not suitable.



Key Points – Busy Schedule

- Problem: The woman has too much work [and is having difficulty concentrating on any one thing].
- Solution: Ask her professors for an extension on the paper or math assignments.
- Solution: Make a schedule for herself and write down definite time periods when she will do what work.
- Preference for solution stated, with reasons why.



Warm Up

Listen to Task Benchmarks

- Become familiar with the scoring criteria (TOEFL iBT Speaking scoring rubric)
- Get a sense of the range of speaking skills of TOEFL test takers
- Get used to listening for differences
- Campus
 - Level 4
 - Level 3
 - Level 2
 - Level 1



Has this student demonstrated minimally acceptable speaking skills adequate for first-year **graduate studies?**

Level	Student	First Round
4	A	
	B	
3	C	
	D	
2	E	
	F	
1	G	
Your recommendation		



Round 1 Judgments

- Level 4 (A): [Campus](#), [Animal Domestication](#), [Busy Schedule](#)
- Level 4 (B): [Campus](#), [Animal Domestication](#), [Busy Schedule](#)
- Level 3 (C): [Campus](#), [Animal Domestication](#), [Busy Schedule](#)
- Level 3 (D): [Campus](#), [Animal Domestication](#), [Busy Schedule](#)
- Level 2 (E): [Campus](#), [Animal Domestication](#), [Busy Schedule](#)
- Level 2 (F): [Campus](#), [Animal Domestication](#), [Busy Schedule](#)
- Level 1 (G): [Campus](#), [Animal Domestication](#), [Busy Schedule](#)



Has this student demonstrated minimally acceptable speaking skills adequate for first-year studies?

Level	Student	First Round
4	A	Y
	B	Y
3	C	Y
	D	Y
2	E	N
	F	N
1	G	N
Your recommendation		3 or 2.5



Second Recommendation

- Listen to critical score levels again

Level 3 (H): Campus, Animal Domestication, Busy Schedule

Level 2 (I): Campus, Animal Domestication, Busy Schedule

- Are there any new perspectives from the discussion that would influence your second recommendation?



Listening Section

Judgment Process – Listening

