"Enhancing international students’ experience, informing pedagogical interventions, and recommending appropriate language support"

1. Aims
To investigate the nature of the relationship between the PTE Academic Score Profile and students’ linguistic experience and academic performance in their particular discipline in their first year at university
To investigate language support needs in specific case studies
To explore other non-linguistic factors perceived to influence academic performance

2. Research Questions
1. What is the relationship between the language skills profiles reported by the PTE and students’ subsequent academic performance as perceived by the students, their EAP tutors and their academic lecturers?
2. What roles do language skills play in academic assignments as perceived by students and academic lecturers?
3. How do students from the outer circle, with an education in the medium of English, cope with the English language requirements of their courses in comparison to their PTEA score profile?
4. What are the specific non-linguistic aspects and experiences of students, that are perceived to influence academic performance at university?

3. Concepts
- Readiness (linguistic proficiency) for the linguistic demands of academia
  - Reported scores (PTEA Score Report) compared to actual language behaviour or ‘actual experience’ at university conceptualised as student and tutor perceptions of academic performance in i) academic scenarios or settings and ii) academic assignments (written or spoken)
- Non-linguistic factors contributing to performance such as differences in academic culture and previous professional/academic experience
- Self-assessment using the concept of “rating own language behaviour” (Ingram & Bayliss, 2007) and the CEFR Global Descriptors (2001) linked to PTEA score ranges e.g. PTEA Score range 59-75 (Pearson, 2012a) is estimated to concord with the CEFR as follows:

4. Methodology & Data Collection
Case Study approach
Student Tutorials with 4 cases over 3 terms in 4 different institutions
Documentary evidence from progress reports, written work & other genre assignments
Tutor perspectives from interviews & questionnaires

5. Participants
Individuals with PTEA Overall Scores at B2 or B1+ all from a West African English background with education in the medium of English.

PTEA Score Report

*Full name: Pearson Test of English Academic (referred to as PTEA in my study)*

Funding
- Economic and Social Research Council
- Pearson Education Ltd
- University of Warwick

Stakeholders
- EAP Tutors/BALEAP
- International Students
- University Admissions
- University Subject Tutors
- Testing Organisations

Wider Context
- Tests in the marketplace of international education
- UKBA/Home Office Requirements
- Internationalisation/commercialisation of universities and the debate on entry scores

Outcomes of study
- To inform pre-and in-sessional support and students’ preparation for university.
- To help students to reflect on their test-taking experience and how it relates to their studies
- To provide qualitative research on a new entry to the language testing arena (PTE Academic)