

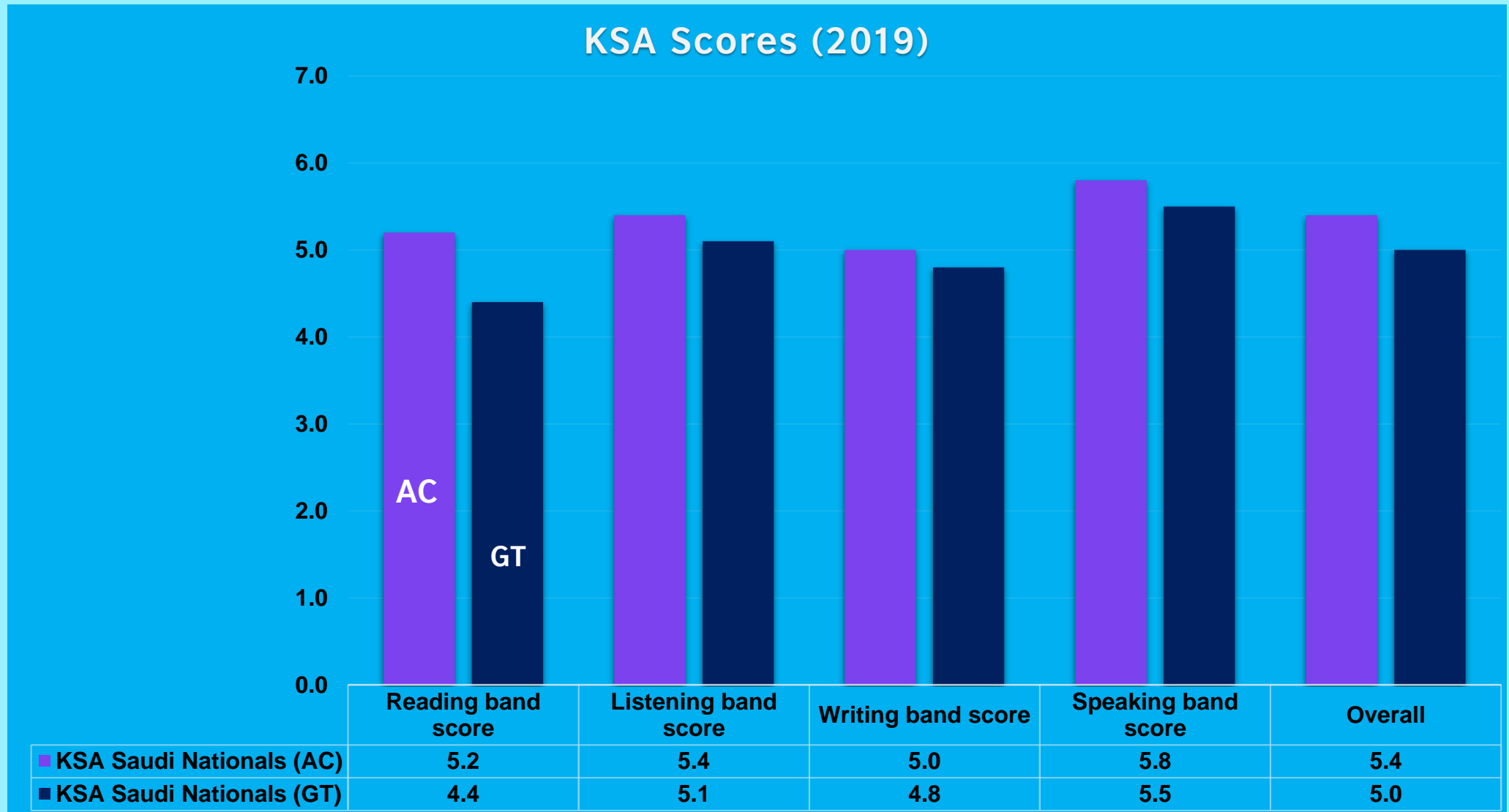
New Directions MENA 2021

Reflections on language proficiency and approaches to assessment in Saudi Arabia

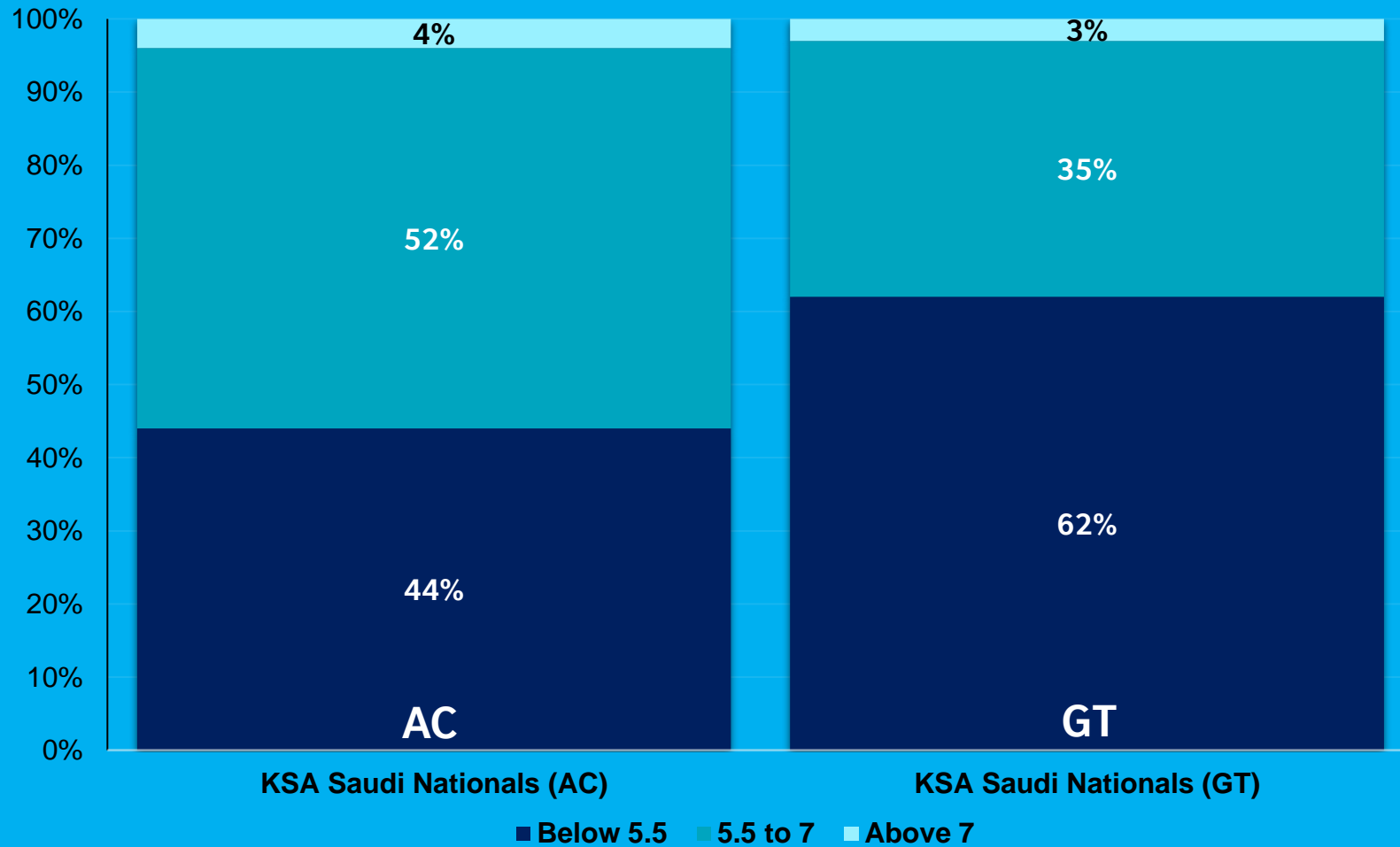
Initial conclusions based on analysis of results in 2019

- The most challenging skills for Saudi students are reading and writing, unlike some countries (for example China, Japan and South Korea) where speaking skills are the most challenging
- Test takers of the Academic paper score higher than those taking General Training
- The majority of test takers score 5.5 and over for Academic IELTS, although a significant number still score below 5.5

KSA Scores (2019)



KSA Score Distribution (2019)



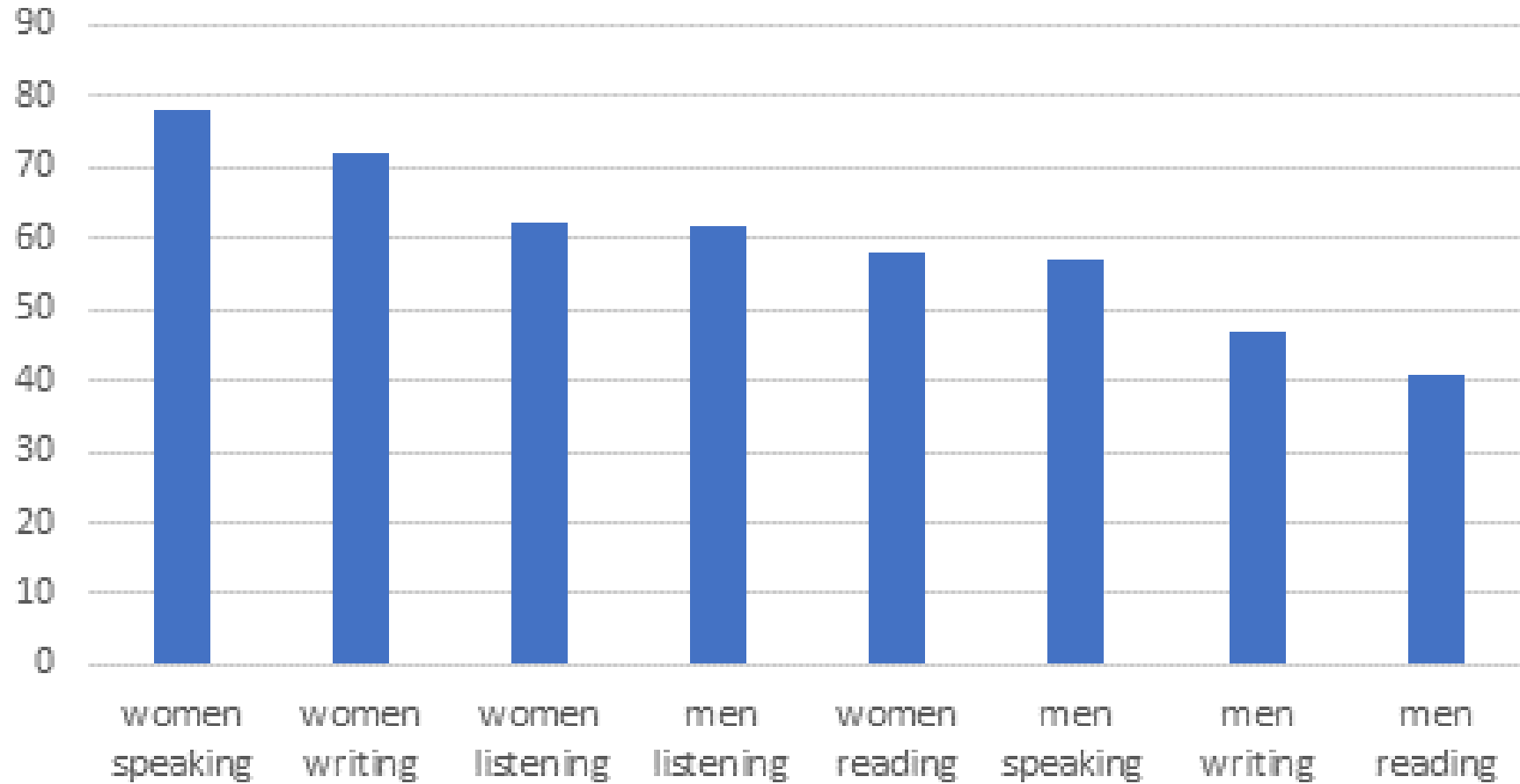
Aptis

- 6,250 test takers across 4 skills 2019/20
- 6,000 male, 250 female
- tested in KSA
- Saudi nationals
- oil, aviation, utilities, logistics, health, education sectors represented
- private and public organisations

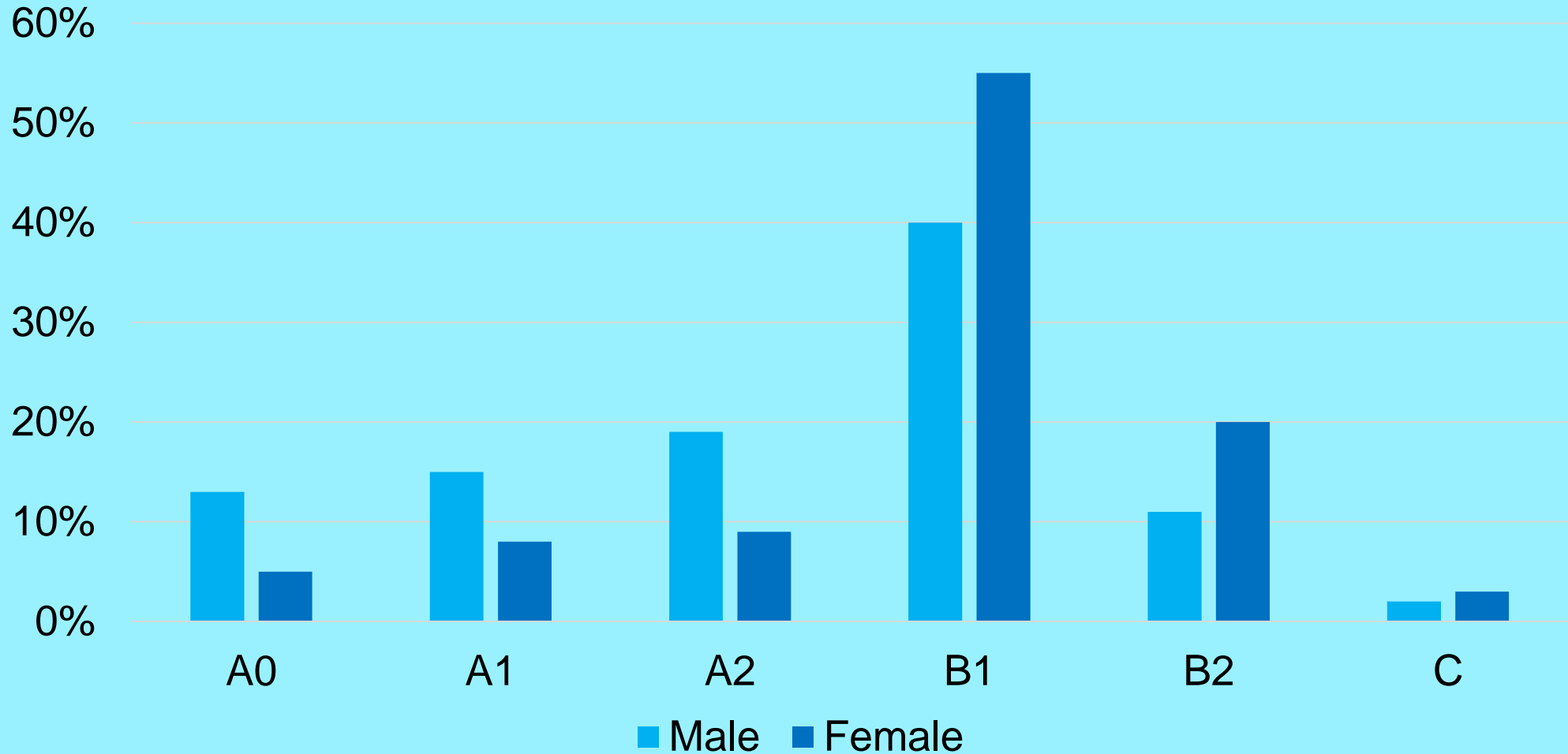
IELTS

- global results
- Saudi nationals
- 40,000 test takers
- 90% for education or immigration
- figures are mean overall and individual band scores achieved by 2019 Academic and General Training test takers from the top 40 nationalities (*ielts.org*)

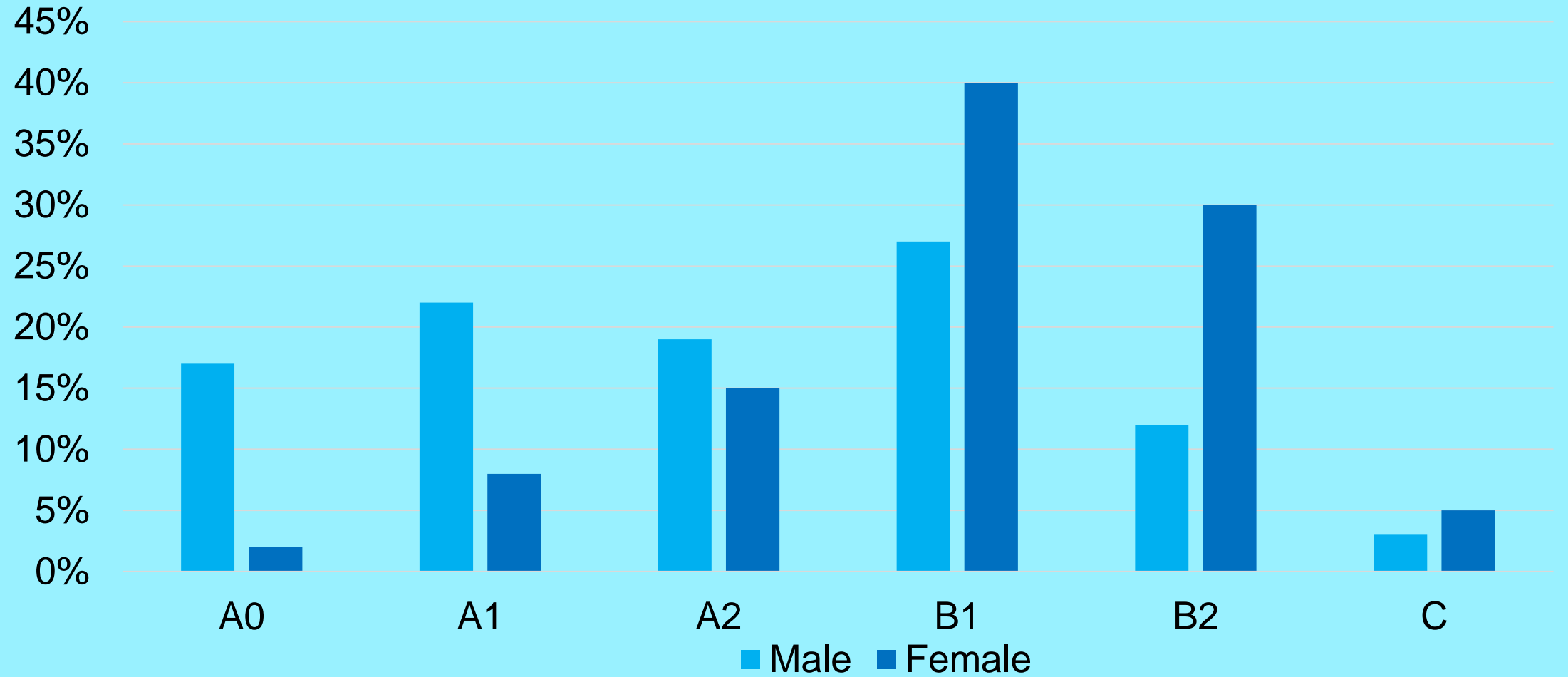
Percentage of candidates scoring at B1 and above



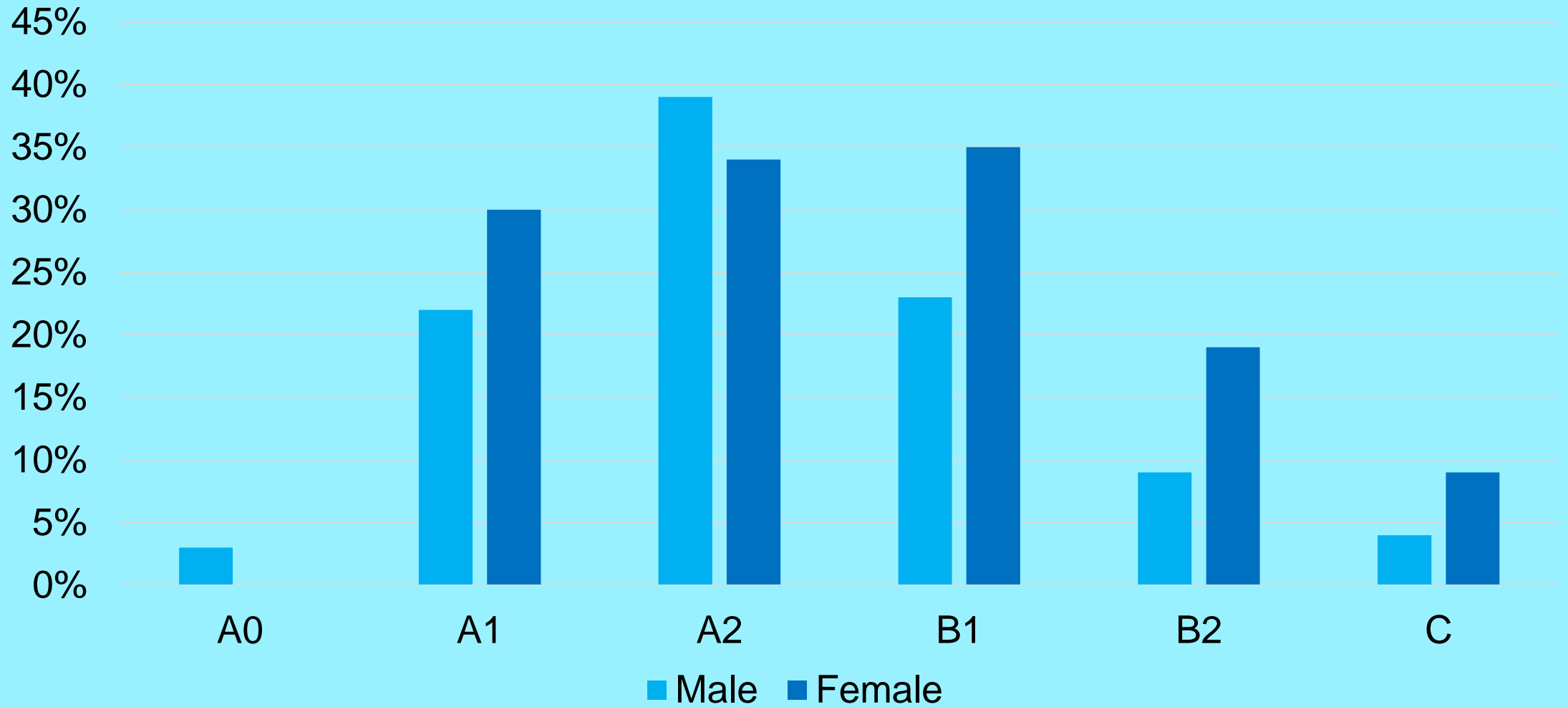
Aptis Speaking M/F



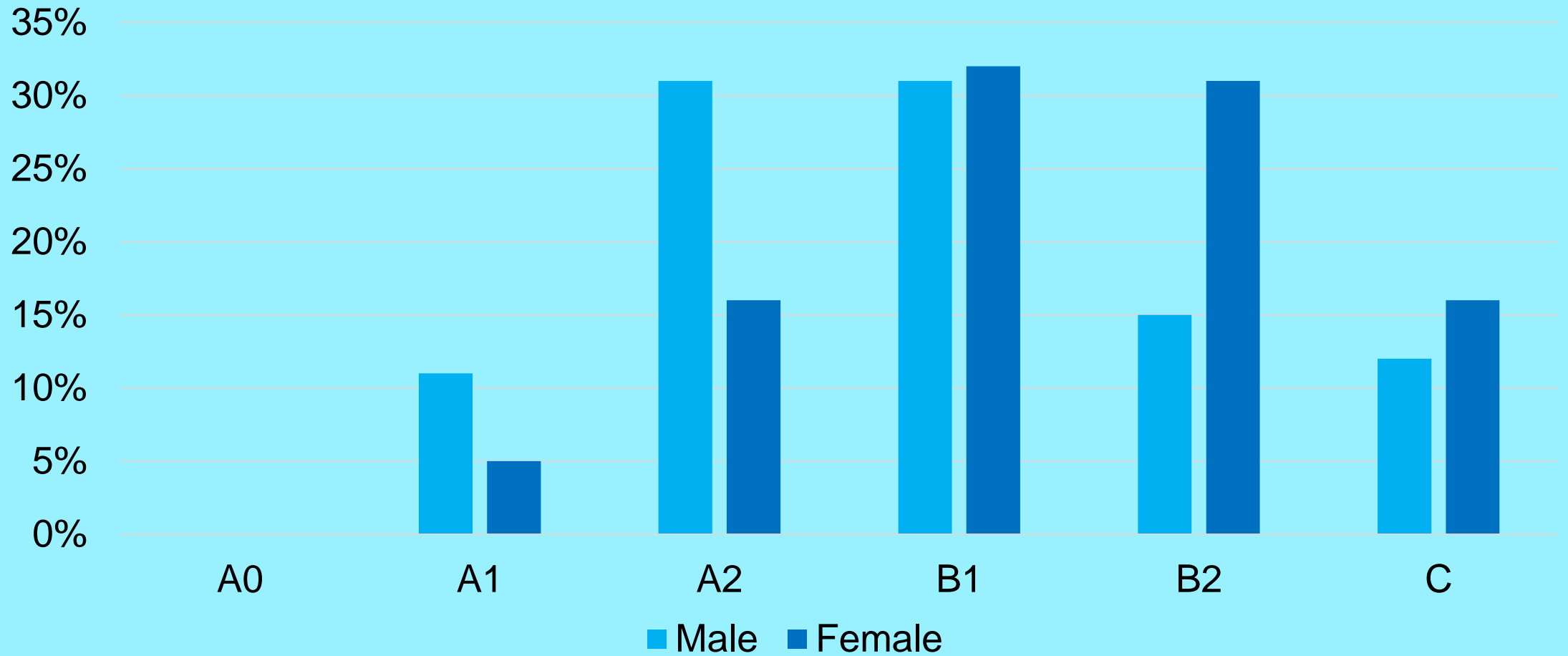
Aptis Writing M/F



Aptis Reading M/F



Aptis Listening M/F



What factors contribute to this score profile for KSA?

- Lack of familiarity with Latin script and keyboard correlates with lower scores, including writing
- Candidates applying for English Medium of Instruction universities in their own country tend to score lower on average than those applying overseas
- Candidates applying for scholarships also tend to score lower

Why do some students perform better than others?

- Students who become autonomous learners in secondary school are most successful (from British Council China IELTS white paper)
- Students whose teachers focus on language practice activities during class are most successful (China white paper)

Some recent British Council lessons learnt globally

- Productive skills -writing and speaking- are less likely to be assessed in state systems because of logistical and quality assurance constraints
- AI can be used successfully to give rewarding, regular formative assessment and feedback
- Employers are starting to say they want more than the ‘four skills’