

## Purpose

The QACI Language Policy is designed to be consistent with the stipulated practices and principles of the IB and aligned to the Department of Education philosophy, and current language trends. It is a working document developed by staff and the Leadership Committee outlining QACI's linguistic and academic goals and defines the programme to enable students to attain these goals.

This policy is intended to provide an overview and guiding principles for language learning at QACI which permeates the entire school curriculum through authentic contexts in a culturally rich and diverse environment. The policy is a statement of agreement - one in which the staff and the community are asked to commit in order for QACI to achieve its goals.

## Aims

We aim to nurture an appreciation of the richness and diversity of languages. By offering the acquisition of more than one language, we aim to foster in students the ability to think, express themselves with precision, clarity, confidence and imagination. In line with the International Baccalaureate's commitment in supporting multilingualism as fundamental to increasing intercultural understanding and international-mindedness, this policy is equally committed to extending access to an IB education for students from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. We strive to address the particular challenges of those students who are learning in a language other than their mother tongue by providing appropriate second language support in English.

With these aims in mind QACI has instituted its language policy to provide a framework that will ensure the IB's values and aims in relation to multilingualism and access are reflected in its activities.

**The language policy aspires to fulfil each aspect of the QACI's core principles as follows:**

## Clever

Our vision to be internationally recognised for academic excellence applies in full to our focus on language learning. We aim for our students to be world class in their mother tongue (usually English), and to be outstanding learners of other languages. The language policy recognises the transfer of cognitive skills from mother tongue to English and vice versa and the acquisition of other languages. This process encourages the acquisition of higher order thinking skills and development of multiple perspectives. The policy also recognises the importance of all teachers differentiating instruction for students at different levels of language acquisition. These approaches also link well to our QACI pedagogy framework, including the concept that we need to explore how knowledge is formed and to test knowledge claims.

## Creative

Learning a foreign language requires us to construct and negotiate the unique architecture in which it consists. QACI's language policy recognises the creativity needed in making these connections and defines creativity as a participant's capacity for what is known as "divergent thinking" in four key areas: fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration.

## Global

QACI values a core philosophy, the belief expressed by Wittgenstein, that "the limits of my language are the limits of my world." The centrality of language learning is essential to our students gaining and maintaining an internationalist perspective of their world. QACI's language policy reflects the three aspects of multilingualism, intercultural understanding and global engagement essential to the development of international mindedness, a central aspect to an IB education. The policy embraces understanding and respect for all cultures and validates the equal status of all languages. It endorses proficiency of English as the "international language", as well as proficiency in other languages (including mother tongue of students whose first or family language is not English) and meets the demands of Queensland and Australian imperatives for our students to be internationally focused.

## Language Program Overview

At QACI, we recognise that all teachers are language teachers and therefore responsible for supporting and reinforcing student's language development. As language teachers, pedagogical attributes will ensure all students have equal access to the curriculum by (i) activating prior knowledge, (ii) differentiating through scaffolding and (iii) affirming the student's identity.

### Activating Prior Understanding

- Our students are selected from a range of school backgrounds and therefore come to QACI with a wide variety of skills and experiences. Teachers must take this into account in their planning, and it is important that the language skills of the students be taken into consideration in class.
- Where a student is less proficient in English than in their mother tongue, appropriate support needs to be provided. Consideration needs to be given to specific tutorial support in language development, as well as in focus on content and skills.

### Differentiating (Scaffolding and Extension)

- Lessons and units need to be planned accordingly to incorporate tasks and activities that are differentiated, where appropriate, to support language needs for all. All three areas of differentiation of IB units need to be addressed, namely Gifted and Talented / ESL / Differentiation. Some strategies could include, but not exclusively, using visual aids, graphic organisers, demonstrations, dramatisations, collaborative group work (including groups of same mother tongue, where appropriate).
- All student profiles should, where appropriate, indicate planning support for future learning.
- The use of a mother tongue is encouraged to carry out research if it would be impossible in another language. QACI supports appropriate multilingual approaches in classroom environments which aid learning through language.
- All aspects of language are taught (including clarity, pitch, written summaries, avoiding colloquial expressions where appropriate, metalanguage—discussion of cultural dimensions to language, especially English; celebration of the other languages used at QACI).
- All four communicative language skills are assessed (reading, writing, speaking and listening).
- Independence of language learning is fostered as a priority.
- Practice of a wide range of written genres is to be encouraged, and appropriate scaffolding is essential.

### Affirm Identity

- QACI believes the development of one's mother tongue can accelerate the rate of language acquisition, support achievement in all subject areas, increase self-esteem and enhance intercultural understanding and international-mindedness.
- QACI supports additive bilingualism (where another language and culture enhances their mother tongue and culture).
- Classroom and whole-school environments embrace celebrating diversity of cultures

### Group 1 – Studies in Language and Literature

English Literature or

English Language & Literature

School supported and special request language A (SSST)

To fulfil the requirement of the IB Diploma Programme, all students are required to study a literature or a literature and language course. English is the A1 language at QACI, being both the national language of Australia and the language in which all students are currently proficient (to a greater or lesser degree). Predominantly all students currently study English at a Higher Level as their A1.

In line with our aim to support multilingualism, the provision for an individual to study an A1 in a language other than English has been introduced. Students have the opportunity to select 2 Group 1 subjects, each in a different language. Students who choose this pathway are offered this course as a school supported self-taught programme (SSST) and provisions are made to assist self-taught students with specific aspects of their studies.

Fluency in English is an expectation at QACI and appropriate language support is essential to ensure that all students are sufficiently competent to use English for academic (tertiary) purposes and to successfully complete their IB Diploma.

International students (under EQI policies and guidelines), will be provided with appropriate second language support in English. This may take a variety of forms, including in-class support, withdrawal classes etc.

## **Group 2 – Language Acquisition**

Studying a second language is a requirement for all IB Diploma students. Students at QACI have the choice between 3 languages that are offered at an ab initio level or as a non-mainstream language.

**Mainstream Languages:** QACI offers the opportunity for students to study the following mainstream languages:

- French ab initio
- Spanish ab initio
- Mandarin ab initio

**Non-mainstream Languages:** Students also have the opportunity to choose a non-mainstream language at a Standard or Higher Level. Non-mainstream languages are those not offered at QACI but available in the IB curriculum offerings. The following criteria are considered via application to study a non-mainstream language:

- A student can demonstrate extensive experience in the language
- A student can speak the language fluently
- A student's reading and writing competency is evident in Language B SL exam paper

## **Review Process**

QACI's Language Policy supports the following:

- Maintenance of all the above languages to ensure that any student, who begins a course in one language, has the ability to study at the highest appropriate level through to IB Diploma.
- The Senior Leadership Team, will review this policy regularly as part of the curriculum review cycle and as part of the whole school improvement plan. The offerings made by QACI should take into account the ongoing viability of a particular language, and should reflect changes as they occur in the composition of the student cohort and their language needs and backgrounds. Reviews should consider the efficacy of certain second languages in terms of their "usefulness" for future study patterns of students.
- The policy will be communicated to the community through multiple mediums including staff meetings, P&C / School Council meetings, Parent Teacher meetings, QACI website and newsletters.
- Further consideration needs to be given to the linguistic "footprint" of our student cohort. In the meantime, it is imperative that provision be made for students to maintain mother tongue proficiency, and that linguistic diversity be celebrated through selections of our publications, as appropriate. An example of this might be occasional publication of important documentation in multiple languages, reflective of our community languages.
- All QACI stakeholders need to be cognisant and supportive of QACI's language policy. This includes involving staff in professional development in the fields of language learning, where appropriate, and to ensure that this document becomes a working document, reflecting the dynamic environment of QACI. Ongoing support for first and other language development should remain a priority for QACI.

## **References**

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