

Language Policy

Inspiring Great Minds



Queensland Academy
for Science Mathematics
and Technology





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IB mission statement

The **International Baccalaureate** aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.



IB learner profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

As IB learners we strive to be:

INQUIRERS

We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

KNOWLEDGEABLE

We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

THINKERS

We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

COMMUNICATORS

We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

PRINCIPLED

We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

OPEN-MINDED

We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

CARING

We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

RISK-TAKERS

We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

BALANCED

We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives – intellectual, physical, and emotional – to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

REFLECTIVE

We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

The IB learner profile represents 10 attributes valued by IB World Schools. We believe these attributes, and others like them, can help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national and global communities.



Philosophy

Language stands at the centre of the many interdependent cognitive, affective, and social factors that shape learning (Corson, 1999, p.88)

Queensland Academy for Science Mathematics and Technology (QASMT) is an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School. At QASMT we create a challenging and motivating multilingual environment where the host language and language of instruction is English. We view language as a tool for communication, exploration of personal development, making meaning in the world and shaping individual and cultural identity. We believe that every student has an individual and a cultural set of experiences, skills, and interests, which must be considered in the teaching and learning process. For QASMT, multilingualism and the development of multiliteracies (New London Group, 1996) are considered important factors in fostering international-mindedness, intercultural awareness and global citizenship.

At QASMT, all teachers are language teachers as language transcends curriculum areas. Through the IB language programs, we aim to develop confident, curious, highly proficient and enthusiastic readers, writers, viewers, presenters, speakers, listeners and creators. Language is always taught meaningfully and in context. These contexts vary, but often involve the use of real-life scenarios, native speakers, the local area and a wide variety of text types. We advocate the learning of language through inquiry, allowing students to make connections with context, to explore and investigate. The learning of any language is developmental by nature, building constructively on what each individual student knows to help move them forward.

As a school situated in Australia, we are strongly committed to providing students with access to English language learning and utilising the host country and community to promote language and cultural experiences across the curriculum and school community. We aim to develop language competencies and equally important, is the belief that all students should have the opportunity to maintain and develop their mother tongue(s). We fully support the concept of multilingualism and promote the acquisition of additional languages. This allows students to further reflect upon, explore and understand different cultural perspectives. We believe that this, and the development of multiple literacy skills, contribute to the development of intercultural awareness and understanding in multicultural contexts. We promote the concept of being internationally-minded.

Language Profile

Although Australia is a linguistically and culturally diverse country, participation in many aspects of Australian life depends on effective communication in Standard Australian English.

At QASMT we have approximately 50% of our student population born overseas and 35% of the population from bi/multi-lingual families of 50 different languages.

As outlined in our Admissions Policy, all students entering QASMT, undergo standardised testing, including verbal reasoning, reading category and written expression, and an analysis of national literacy testing data. All students entering QASMT have scored above average in the standardised testing and above national standards. They are assessed as having a high proficiency in the English language.

Language Overview

	MYP Year 7 to 9	Year 10	DP Year 11 to 12
We provide a learning experience for all students, delivered in English.	✓	✓	✓
Assessed as proficient in English language.	✓	✓	✓
We provide language acquisition courses in French, German and Japanese.	✓	✓	✓
We provide a course in Latin.	✓	✓	✓
We view the on-going language development for all students as the responsibility of all teachers, parents and students.	✓	✓	✓
We understand that our students communicate in over fifty mother tongue languages and that the majority of students are multilingual with different language backgrounds.	✓	✓	✓
We teach language through context and relate new information to existing knowledge.	✓	✓	✓
We accommodate different learning styles with differentiated instruction according to individual needs.	✓	✓	✓
We give on-going feedback on students' progress in all languages of instruction.	✓	✓	✓
We provide homework club, study support and learning enhancement tutorials for all subjects.	✓	✓	✓
We provide digital and online support materials for language learning.	✓	✓	✓
We endeavour to provide a representative from each group to support language learning and development of multiliteracies.	✓	✓	✓

Language Practices

Language wraps itself around, in, through and between everything that we teachers and learners do in the classroom. (Ritchhart, 2002, p.141)

At QASMT we are committed to providing an inclusive and equitable learning environment. The following language practices are in place at QASMT and bring our philosophy statement to life to exemplify how the school brings about excellence in language learning.

1. The school places importance on language learning, including mother tongue, host country language and other languages.

At QASMT, language is taught holistically. Each subject syllabus states specific learning outcomes for the strands of speaking and listening, reading and writing, and viewing and presenting. We promote inquiry-based authentic learning through an investigative approach

of different genres and texts. The school invests in qualified, professional language teachers for the language of instruction, and other languages. Students are allowed and encouraged to use their mother-tongue to access the curriculum. For instance, they may complete class work and activities in their mother-tongue, and they are encouraged to share their learning and progress with their parents and other members of the community using their mother tongue. QASMT students speak over fifty different languages and approximately half of all students are multilingual. It is not possible to offer classes in all these languages, but educational research makes it clear that those students who maintain their mother tongue will have improved learning outcomes if they are supported in the use of a second or third language. For this reason, we believe that it is important to provide the opportunity for students to access their first, or mother tongue languages and have a number of mother tongue clubs.

At QASMT, language is divided into Studies in Language and Literature (Language A) and Language Acquisition courses (Language B). A student is required to take at least two languages. One of these must be a Language and Literature course. These courses are offered according to the student's level in the language of instruction. Students may choose from:

- Language A – English Language and Literature or fifty-five Languages as School Supported Self-Taught (SSST)
- Language Acquisition - French, German, Spanish or Japanese (these languages were identified through a survey of feeder school offerings)

At QASMT we use the [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages](#): Learning, Teaching, Assessment, abbreviated as CEFR or CEF or CEFRL. It is a guideline used to describe achievements of learners of foreign languages around the world. Two language acquisition pathways are provided at QASMT, one is for MYP students continuing their studies in the DP and one is for new students entering the Academy at Year 10. The following grades are at the following levels:

Year Level	CEFR Level (MYP entry)	CEFR Level (Year 10 entry)
Year 7	A1	
Year 8	A1/A2	
Year 9	A2	
Year 10	B1	A1
Year 11	B1/B2	A1/A2
Year 12	B2	A2

In addition to this, students participate in language and culture clubs such as Japanese speaking club, Spanish club and French Tarot Game club. We also celebrate mother tongues with an exhibition on International Mother Tongue Day and throughout Harmony Week. The school newsletter is available using *schoolzineplus* which allows students and parents to read the translation in available languages online.

2. The school utilizes the resources and expertise of the community to enhance learning within the programs.

All language teachers are responsible for sourcing and purchasing a range of quality texts so that students can explore different genres such as recount, storytelling, explanation and persuasive writing in different languages and at different levels. Students also have access to a variety of dictionaries. The Digital Library, provides texts in different mother tongue languages as well as classroom and supplementary resources.

All staff participate in weekly professional development through our Synergy meetings. Professional development is scheduled in identified areas of pedagogy for language learning though the QASMT Pedagogical Framework, the QASMT Literacy Framework and the Approaches to Learning, specifically communication and research skills.

Students have access to subscription-based resources such as newspapers and magazines

in a variety of languages via an online database. This helps them to be aware of current affairs, foster an interest in reading, and develop confidence, fluency and comprehension. The use of ICT is an integral language learning tool for flexible learning. The school subscribes to Linguascope and Education Perfect, and all students access this program to facilitate language learning. Diploma Program students have access to InThinking which provide group and subject specific resources aligned to the IB program. Games, art, music, maps and artefacts are used to help students make connections in their language learning.

The community is considered a valuable resource to aid language learning. Students go on numerous field trips such as to universities, libraries, theatres and cinemas where they have an opportunity to use the host country language in context and gain insight into the host country culture. QASMT engages in a biannual STEM Tour to the European countries of language acquisition and Japan, students have the opportunity to experience a homestay in these countries and immerse in the culture and language. Throughout the year, students are exposed to numerous celebrations linked to the diverse cultures within our community to promote international mindedness and an appreciation of the host country's culture. QASMT has also undertaken a commitment to support our language acquisition learners through the employment of teacher aides to assist in language classrooms in providing differentiation for our learners.

The involvement of parents is important in our school. Students are exposed to different mother tongue languages through visits during days such as Harmony Week, Arts Showcase and Book Week. Presentation and communication skills in the host language are showcased to parents and the community through projects such as the International Science Schools Network, Community Project presentations, NOBEL (publication of Extended Essays) and school celebrations.

Staff expertise is utilised for students to participate in language and culture clubs such as Japanese speaking club, Spanish club and French Tarot Game club. We also celebrate mother tongues with an exhibition on International Mother Tongue Day and throughout Harmony Week.

3. Collaborative planning and reflection recognize that all teachers are responsible for language development of students.

Since students learn about language and through language, we understand that all teachers are responsible for the language development of students in the school. As a result, intentional collaboration and reflection is built into the regular staff schedule to address school-wide language and literacy development. This may take the form of whole staff meetings or group meetings (departmental groups, language groups or interdisciplinary groups). During these meetings, teachers plan what will be taught, reflect on best practice and consider the needs of individual students. Language needs and corresponding differentiation strategies are detailed in unit plans and supported by the use of the QASMT developed Managebac Unit Planning Guides. In this way, we develop links between different subject areas and departments across the school.

4. Teaching and learning addresses the diversity of student language needs, including those for students learning a language(s) other than their mother tongue.

Differentiation in language lessons is based on best practice according to the standards and practices of the IB. All teachers respond to students' needs and provide individualised instruction guided by specific learning goals in Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) and Educational Adjustment Plans (EAPs). Teaching strategies include working in small groups, flexible ability groups, reading ability groups and mixed ability groups as needed. The school uses a variety of resources with different levels of language complexity, as well as alternating levels of questioning and differentiating tasks according to the needs of individual students. Teaching and co-teaching teams are used to create a flexible and differentiated learning

opportunities for students. The school uses breakout spaces, classrooms and open spaces in a variety of ways to meet the needs of student groups, which have diverse language needs.

The school follows the IB recommendations on student placement. All students' language needs are determined through an initial survey at enrolment and ongoing formative and summative assessments. Teachers differentiate for a range of abilities in a variety of ways.

5. Teaching and learning demonstrates that all teachers are responsible for language development of students.

QASMT focuses on the transdisciplinary nature of language learning by recognizing and modelling the role of language in all subjects. This includes recognising the language of instruction, host country language and other languages, and developing an understanding of the IB objectives and pedagogical language of the programmes.

The basic skills for all types of communication - oral, written and visual - are explicitly mapped across all faculties in scope and sequence documents. There is an understanding of the productive (speaking and writing) and receptive modes (listening and reading) of communication. Teaching and learning involve using a range of these modes in each lesson to ensure students develop their skills concurrently.

When students are acquiring a language, our teaching is informed by incorporating four concepts: context, culture, reflection and fluency. Students are encouraged to think for themselves, recognize patterns, develop theories and construct meaning as they investigate language. Teachers enable students to see language as a means of self-expression, exploration of self and others, as context driven, having multiple meanings, and involving all levels of discourse.

Language learning and development, and literacy development, are interrelated and overlap. The host language, English, is supported by a Literacy Framework (see image next page) that describes the essential skills and understandings students require to be successful IB learners from Years 7 to 12. Students and teachers understand that there are multiple literacies such as reading comprehension, critical reading, visual, digital, research, academic and assessment literacies. Diagnostic tests for reading comprehension from Years 7 to 10 annually is used by all staff to identify support and enrichment needs, particularly as indicators of giftedness.

Throughout the school there is an expectation that in order to foster an enjoyment and love of reading, students are to read widely and regularly at home from informative texts to quality literary works. Our Home Learning Policy states that, "Students in Years 7-9 are expected to read books of their choice for a minimum of 20 minutes each night" (2019, p4). Students read a wide range of literary and non-literary texts across learning areas to explore language features and conventions. Students have access to supplementary physical texts, including a wider reading space and digital library.

QASMT promotes the idea that all teachers are teachers of language through professional learning, co-teaching and collegial engagement. Training on using the IB criteria and command terms, creating assessment tasks, developing inquiry statements and questions and writing task specific criteria is provided throughout the school year. A variety of reading strategies are used by teachers to support deep comprehension of meaning in texts. These include recognising patterns in text, decoding, encoding, making inferences, explicit teaching of terminology, and developing etymological understanding.

The writing process of planning, drafting, editing and finalising is undertaken in all languages. The use of literature, games, role-play and multimedia will support students' understanding of different genres as well as developing their vocabulary, sentence construction, correct use of

tense and punctuation. Using the text as a model, students and teachers analyse the features of different genres before jointly and individually constructing written or presented pieces. During the revision process, students are encouraged to develop their knowledge of grammatical and spelling conventions using teacher and peer-feedback and self-correcting. Writing may involve students sharing writing with others, self-editing and publishing for a specific audience.

Students are introduced to different strategies to investigate words and groups of words, including a range of spelling strategies. Students develop a deeper understanding of language in context through collocation and discourse. Teachers encourage students to make connections between words in different languages and use translators for key concepts and terminology. All teachers work with the other school departments to:

- collaborate on vocabulary, concepts and command terms across the curriculum
- use a common language about language learning and development
- teach the conventions of APA referencing, and citing through our common referencing guide provided in the Digital Library
- apply the principles of academic integrity.

6. Assessment at the school aligns with the requirements of the programme(s).

Assessment is integral to teaching and learning at QASMT and our philosophy, including fairness and bias, is outlined in our Assessment Policy. Using a range of tools and strategies, teachers determine students' knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes towards language.

At the school, teachers use pre-assessment to determine what students already know, can do and understand. They also use post-assessment to track and monitor student progress. Formative assessment is used to give constructive feedback. Summative assessments are used to gather evidence about student's learning.

Parents attend parent-teacher interviews twice per year to discuss student progress and achievement in each learning area and to facilitate further learning. Achievement of different learning outcomes is recorded each term.

Assessment is in line with the requirements of the IB programs and is comprehensively outlined in the Assessment Policy. Criteria are course and level specific. SSST courses in the DP also follow the above guidelines.

Students may complete additional assessment to enable teachers to gain as much information as possible about a student's strengths, interests and development and to monitor progress. As outlined in our Inclusion Policy, aligned with the Department of Education (Queensland) and IB requirements, Educational Adjustment Plans (EAPs) are developed by the guidance officers, advisory visiting teacher (AVT) and the Inclusion Aide for individual students depending on their individual learning needs. This may include modified assessment criteria for the student. These plans are discussed with the student, parents, respective IB program coordinator and House Deans.

Additional publications

The following QASMT and IB publications provide additional details related to this Language Policy. QASMT documents are available on the school One Portal site and IB documents are available in My IB.

- QASMT Inclusion Policy
- QASMT Academic Integrity Policy
- QASMT Assessment Policy
- QASMT IB DP Assessment and Guidance Handbook (reviewed annually)
- QASMT IB MYP Assessment and Guidance Handbook
- IB *From principles into practice* (MYP and DP)
- IB Subject guides (MYP and DP)

Communications about assessment with the QASMT community

The following communication processes are used to ensure our community is informed about all aspects of student assessment at QASMT.

1. This policy (and accompanying documents) is available to staff on the QASMT One Portal -> Local Policy, Procedure, Forms, Frameworks and Handbooks.
2. This policy is available and students and parents on the school website Our School -> Policies.

Policy review

- This policy was reviewed in 2020-2021 in consultation with school leaders, teachers, students, parents, and approved by the executive leadership team.
- Policy endorsed on 12 May 2021.
- The next review will be carried out in 2026.