Guide to Best Practice in

'Direct Entry' Programs

2017

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Guide to Best Practice in
Direct Entry Programs in ELICOS

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Introduction

Aims of English Australia Best Practice Guides

English Australia regularly prepares **Guides to Best Practice in ELICOS** (Best Practice Guides), collating information provided by member institutions, who represent the full spectrum of provider types, purposes and locations in Australia, and incorporating current English Language Teaching (ELT) research.

Within its overall strategic aim of facilitating higher levels of professional practice within English Australia member colleges, English Australia provides Best Practice Guides in order to achieve five main goals:

a) To ensure that English Australia member colleges are encouraged to reflect on how they deliver quality programs and services to international students;

b) To support English Australia member colleges in the development of their policies, practices and procedures;

c) To provide a benchmarking tool for member colleges;

d) To reassure all English Australia member colleges that they are part of a community of best practice; and

e) To instil confidence in all stakeholders who have dealings with English Australia member colleges.

English Australia takes compliance with the National Code 2007 and ELICOS National Standards as minimum standards.

Best practice in 'direct entry programs'

This document identifies features that characterise best practice in the delivery of direct entry programs (DEPs) - English language programs that provide students who successfully complete the programs with 'direct entry' to further study in secondary education, vocational education and training or higher education without having to further demonstrate proficiency in English. It also provides examples of how English Australia member colleges implement good practice.

The value of direct entry programs

In 2015, 30% of international students who commenced a higher education course were previously enrolled in the ELICOS sector and 37% of international students who commenced a VET course also entered through an ELICOS study pathway.[1] These statistics show the importance of ELICOS to the Higher Education and Vocational Education and Training (VET) sectors in Australia and the potential of the ELICOS sector to contribute to the enhancement of the English language proficiency (ELP) and preparedness of international students in these sectors.

Whilst high schools, VET institutions and higher education institutions may require evidence of a minimum level of English language proficiency as justified by a score from a standardised English language proficiency test such as IELTS, TOEFL, PTE Academic or the Cambridge suite, the outcomes of direct entry programs (DEPs) can also provide receiving institutions (RIs) with evidence that students have the required level of English. As an alternative to formal proficiency exams, DEPs aim to prepare students over time for their future study in terms of knowledge of their target study

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[1] Australian Government Department of Education and Training 'Research Snapshot Study Pathways of International Students in Australia,' 2014-2015 (June 2016)

context as well as the range of linguistic and academic skills needed to achieve their study goals. In this way, DEPs are a powerful way of ensuring that international students are supported in their language and learning needs throughout their Australian study journeys and of enabling students to participate fully in their chosen further education courses and succeed in gaining their qualifications.

Guide contents

Australian ELICOS colleges have been delivering DEP courses for many years and, consequently, there is a wealth of experience, knowledge and expertise within English Australia member colleges, who represent the full range of delivery of direct entry programs including public and private institutions operating in a number locations. This Guide aims to draw together this expertise to share industry best practice and to further raise standards of quality in the delivery of DEPs through the spirit of collaboration.

To illustrate the principles of best practice enunciated in this Guide, English Australia has also included general and specific examples of good practice reported in its member colleges. Whereas many of these describe individual examples, some have been blended from a number of sources and are presented as illustrative examples.

English Australia is grateful to its member colleges for their willingness to share their expertise and practices and make them available to the sector, exemplifying the commitment to quality held by its members.

English Australia recognises that this Guide is a work in progress and that best practice is constantly emerging and evolving and it welcomes comments and suggestions from member colleges and other stakeholders.

Evolution of the Guide to Best Practice in Direct Entry Programs

The original Guide to Best Practice in Direct Entry Programs was developed by English Australia in 2008, building on a document prepared for the association by consultant Judy Colman. It was subsequently updated in 2013 by Katherine Brandon, the English Australia Professional Support and Development Officer at the time, in consultation with a Working Group of expert staff from eight member colleges (listed on the cover page of this Guide).

This current review of the Guide was undertaken to take into account a number of changes in the political landscape of the delivery of DEPs including changes to the Education for Overseas Students (Streamlining) Act (ESOS Act) in December 2015, a re-designed Streamlined Visa Processing (SVP) system in 2016 and the release of the Australian Government's National Strategy for International Education in 2016. Furthermore, the updated Guide has been written at a time when issues surrounding English language proficiency for international students are frequently discussed in the Australian media and on the political stage and have become a key area of focus for for Australian universities.

The 2017 version of the Guide has been endorsed by and collaborated on with the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) and the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), which reflects the close relationship that English Australia has with these regulatory bodies, as reflected in the Memoranda of Understandings signed between English Australia and both of the regulators in 2016.

In this new version of the Guide, most of the fundamental DEP best practice principles from the 2013 Guide have remained unchanged, however, many new *examples* of current practice and thinking have been added, including a focus especially on new examples of the integration of technology into DEP courses.

In addition, the section entitled *ELICOS and the Higher Education Sector* has been re-written by TEQSA to include up-to-the-minute information about the Australian higher education sector and a new section entitled, *ELICOS and the Vocational Education and Training (VET) Sector*, written by ASQA, has been added.

Finally, the current edition of the Guide the Best Practice in Direct Entry Programs includes a new supplement entitled *Guide to Best Practice in Direct Entry Programs in Moderation and Validation*. The supplement was written by a working party of experts who all have considerable experience in the delivery of DEPs and who are English Australia member college managers: Juliana Kendi, Director of Studies, ELICOS Programs, La Trobe Melbourne, Dianne McKeagney, General Manager, VU English, Victoria University and Nick Philippou, Director of Studies – General Programs, Hawthorn-Melbourne, along with English Australia.

Acknowledgements

English Australia would like to thank the staff from more than 30 member colleges who contributed to the development of this Guide in both its original and updated forms and who completed the data collection survey and agreed to be interviewed in detail about their college's practices.

In particular, English Australia would like to acknowledge the members of the 2013 Working Group as well as the 2016 Moderation and Validation Supplement project writers.

English Australia is also grateful to TEQSA and to ASQA. Both of the regulators gave invaluable feedback on the contents of the Guide and contributed chapters on their relevant sectors.

Finally, English Australia thanks the members of its Professional Development Advisory Group, who gave their valuable feedback on the Guide.

Guide to Best Practice in
Direct Entry Programs in ELICOS

Best practice guidelines

Best practice in direct entry programs is facilitated when conditions are met within four main areas:

A.   the **context** for development and delivery of direct entry programs;

B.   the **structure, content and methodology** of direct entry programs;

C.   **student placement** and the **monitoring and reporting of student progress and achievement**;

D.   the **resourcing** of direct entry programs.

A. Delivery context

Best practice occurs when:

1.   The ELICOS provider is seen as an equal and valued partner by the receiving institution in terms of preparing students for further study and is willing to submit its program and outcomes to rigorous scrutiny including quality and assurance reviews by RIs. The ELICOS provider is included in consultation on the development of the policy and procedures used by the receiving institution to accept students from the DEP. Equally, the receiving institution is viewed as a key contributor to the development and review of the ELICOS provider's curriculum, policy and procedures.

2.   Arrangements for direct entry are clearly outlined in a documented Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or similar formal agreement between the ELICOS provider and the receiving institution, which is ratified by informed senior managers from both institutions. The MOU includes a regular monitoring and review process, conducted at least every two years, or more frequently if required by the receiving institution. The MOU details how the direct entry program is managed by the receiving institution and the DEP provider.

3.   There is a clear and open line of communication between the receiving institution and the ELICOS provider, enabling timely updates relating to changes in the RI's administration such as course entry requirements and/or transition arrangements.

4.   Receiving institutions practise due diligence in their evaluation of all aspects of direct entry programs (and related pathway programs). This includes careful scrutiny of course outcomes and of assessment processes used by the direct entry program as outlined in Section B of this Guide.

5.   Student outcomes relating to the achievement of program goals are evaluated against benchmarks set by the ELICOS provider in consultation with the receiving institution, and are reviewed and communicated to partners in DEPs together with student feedback on their DEP experience. Monitoring of student outcomes includes tracking student progress while they attend the receiving institution, and beyond, wherever possible and practical.

The extent to which these conditions are achieved may depend on a number of variables, including the volume of direct entry admissions from a given provider. Where there are larger numbers of students progressing to a receiving institution, such as often occurs with the RI's own language centre, the DEP provider will generally have readier access to effective channels of liaison than is possible for providers who refer only small numbers of students to one or more institutions. Where progressions from a DEP provider are relatively few or intermittent, these

providers are scrupulous in negotiating arrangements with the receiving institution(s) which incorporate realistic periods of study and English proficiency levels and are sure to maintain regular contact with providers to keep channels of communication open .

Similarly, colleges delivering direct entry programs offshore ensure their policies and procedures take account of this context.

Strong relationships between an ELICOS college and a receiving institution are often heavily influenced by individual professionals in both organisations. An academic or senior manager with drive, initiative, an eye for opportunities and an effective communication style able to initiate and sustain constructive dialogue is a vital asset for ELICOS DEP providers, and selection criteria for such positions should take this into account.

Examples of good practice

College H, an institution embedded within a tertiary provider, has formed a DEP Program Management Committee (PMC) comprising high level representatives from their college, an academic manager from another ELICOS college, a TESOL expert from the receiving institution's School of Education and the Director of the Academic Skills Unit of the RI. The PMC has clearly defined terms of reference and is chaired by the Dean of Learning and Teaching of the receiving institution. The PMC meets every three months to monitor the implementation of the DEP, discuss student outcomes and ensure the program remains relevant to the needs of students and the faculties involved. The academic manager reported that, as a result of the close contact and shared understanding that flows from the PMC, the RI no longer sees the ELICOS college as a 'cash cow' that rents rooms on campus, but rather as an integral and valuable part of the institution.

College W was invited by their receiving institution to prepare a unit outline for their DEP, similar in format to that required of all RI subjects, to provide improved clarity and transparency for students, teachers and the academic faculty. The unit outline covers program goals, assessment (including detailed assessment rubrics) and requirements for student attendance and participation and was ultimately endorsed by the RI's academic board, and made available to faculty lecturers and staff at the RI's Academic Skills Unit as well as the international student office. This has given the college's DEP status and gravitas within and beyond the receiving institution.

Key staff members from **College A** present workshops and information sessions to and with faculty staff and academic support staff at the institution which receives its students. Topics have included skills development, aspects of standardised proficiency exams such as IELTS, and how to provide support for students undertaking PhDs. These sessions are valued by all parties not only for their content but also for the opportunities for staff from different areas to meet and to discuss areas of mutual interest.

College Y, a University English Language College, is a founding member of a learning cooperative at the University, which, together with other strategic support units on campus, provides extra-curricula academic support to both domestic and international students in a cohesive and accessible manner. The cooperative provides peer student coaching, targeted workshops and individual language and study support sessions, which are delivered by College staff. The co-operative is run using a collaborative leadership model with College staff actively involved in the steering committee.

College R used a quality and assurance review conducted by one of their large University pathway partners to their advantage by taking extensive notes when the assessor visited the College and using this feedback to enhance various aspects of its DEP course.

College C and its RI both implement the 'i-graduate International Student Barometer,' meeting to discuss the biennial outcomes and working together to use the outcomes to improve their programs and services for all students.

B. Program structure, content and methodology

Direct entry programs aim to provide students with a range of linguistic resources and academic skills, to enable them to undertake further study successfully, whatever their study context. Wherever possible, providers of these programs consult regularly with receiving institutions to ensure the structure, content, outcomes and delivery of their programs remain relevant and effective.

The content of an effective direct entry program includes:
- **spoken and written language** for study contexts, including that required for social situations;
- a range of **research and study skills** appropriate for the education /training context;
- contemporary uses of **technology for study**;
- **cross-cultural communication skills and awareness**, including non-verbal skills;
- **a range of delivery patterns**, in addition to 'lecture mode', involving a variety of learning approaches;
- **a range of assessment types and tasks** appropriate to course content and context.

Details of this content at different levels of study are outlined later in this paper on page 22 in the Curriculum Resource document.

To achieve their aims across this range of skills and content areas, effective direct entry programs:

- Are of **sufficient intensity and duration** to enable the students who have met DEP pre-requisites to achieve the required standard by the end of the program. Program length should take into account the extended timeframes needed for developing conceptual and cultural competencies, and for language skills development at higher levels. Shorter programs may be effective for students with previous experience of studying or living in Australia, provided they have good levels of familiarity with the 'Australian' educational environment, or for those with language proficiency at, or close to, the entry-level requirement of their chosen course/program across all four macro-skills.

- Have **clear outcomes** that are stated in terms of student performance/competence rather than a score or a percentage. Outcomes are transparent to students to help ensure they have a clear understanding of course requirements as well as how their DEP course will benefit their further studies. Where possible and practical, outcomes are aligned to courses the students will undertake at the receiving institution (see page 22 for a guide on how this can be achieved).

- Include focus on **skills relevant to their future study** such as critical thinking, research principles, collaboration and employability skills.

- Incorporate **learning approaches** that students may encounter in their further education experience such as e-learning and blended learning, problem-based learning, self-directed activities and group and individual projects, to complement more formal classroom activities.

- Provide **facilities that support the development of academic skills** including classroom and online technologies, a library, resources for self-access study etc. In this context some access to receiving institution facilities e.g. the library visits, authentic lectures and student social amenities is a considerable advantage. An introduction to a student/learner/course management system such as Moodle is also very helpful for students who may be unused to this form of engagement.

- Include **structured orientation activities** to support initial access and adjustment to the Australian educational, cultural and social environment. ELICOS colleges can achieve this by:

  ➢ offering social events early in the direct entry program to build group cohesion;

  ➢ organising structured contact with previous direct entry program graduates who are now successfully undertaking study at the receiving institution;

  ➢ arranging orientation visits to the receiving institution, with a schedule of regular contact with staff from the RI;

  ➢ running cross-cultural awareness seminars targeted at the education context;

  ➢ scheduling student-teacher interviews early in the course to ensure students are 'settling in' to the program.

- Provide opportunities for students to engage with **language relevant to their proposed academic discipline and/or vocational outcome**, at least at broad subject level (e.g. business, computing, IT, sciences). ELICOS colleges can achieve this by providing:

  ➢ exposure to and analysis of content and language related to the discipline area, including opportunities for lecture and seminar audits;

  ➢ exposure to and examination of the genres used in the discipline area, including the types of assessment required;

  ➢ opportunities for interaction with faculty and students in the discipline area;

  ➢ opportunities for interaction with other future students in the discipline area either in person or via social media.

- Are *internally* reviewed on a regular basis through a process of continuous improvement. This should include a cycle of curriculum review collected through information from teachers, students and college curriculum specialists.

- Seek *external* validation / review of their DEP curriculum content and assessment processes to assist in establishing the program's suitability for recognition by quality education and training providers. This validation / review may come from:

  ➢ an independent TESOL consultant;

  ➢ an academic board or advisory group including members with relevant expertise in the area;

  ➢ departments associated with the receiving institution eg applied linguistics/TESOL faculties or academic literacy support units.

Examples of good practice

Relevant course outcomes

College B carried out a major review of its curriculum. The process was systematic and involved a comprehensive analysis of the English language skills expectations and requirements of destination programs that included Foundation, Diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate study. This preparation enabled the curriculum team to confidently map learning outcomes to the the requirements of their destination programs, as well as external reference points such as the CEFR, and informed the development of weekly plans for each level, course materials and the formative/summative assessment tasks required. The relationship between course content and IELTS requirements was also clear. The project enabled the college to work with their RIs to determine where the 'gaps' in student need might be and to establish strategies that the RIs could implement to support student progress during their programs.

Because **College S** is relatively small and has a number of institutions receiving its students, it does not offer discipline-specific DEPs. However, it provides many opportunities for students to focus on their chosen discipline throughout the course, with resources available to support skill development and discipline-related tasks and assignments. The college reports that classes featuring students with different study goals can be very successful, as there is mutual interest and a genuine desire to communicate and share information.

Skills/learning approaches relevant to future study

In response to requests from the RI faculty for students who can better manage group work, **College P** has developed an online group work 'log'. Groups of 4-5 students share planning, research, note-taking and writing up tasks for designated assignments and the contribution of each member is logged in the CMS (Moodle, in this case). This way all members can see what has been achieved and teachers can monitor levels of individual participation as well as group task achievement.

College L uses a Learning Management System (LMS) to deliver a blended course and introduce students to the type of LMS they may be required to use in their subsequent tertiary study. The blended course was designed to allow for greater use of classroom time for productive and higher order tasks, especially through the introduction of 'flipped' lessons. The LMS is also used as a space to enable collaborative tasks, especially because collaboration is a required skill in tertiary courses. Collaborative tasks include joint writing, staged group work and pre-tutorial discussion board activities. The college reported that student participation in the discussion board activities prior to class has vastly improved student participation in class discussions. The College said that centres that do not have a student LMS can still create joint writing tasks and group discussion boards using Google Docs, wiki spaces or closed Facebook groups.

College G does not have an LMS but instead uses various e-learning tools to develop academic and study skills that will be vital for students in their destination courses. To develop their presentation skills, students make short films of themselves presenting, which are story-boarded and rehearsed prior to filming then uploaded to students' personal blogs (housed on Tumblr), where peers must comment on each other's films to resemble the use of forums. Students also use Twitter to share content on their specific disciplines as well as follow influential people from within their fields, thus facilitating self-directed learning, extensive reading and the establishment of lifelong digital communities of practice.

Facilities that support the development of academic skills

College M students have has access to its University's library databases. To give students practical experience using the databases the college has created 2 animated videos (made using PowToon Software) featuring the librarians giving instructions on how to use the databases. These videos are accompanied by a treasure hunt activity. The college's curriculum also includes a hands-on enquiry-based journal article filtering activity to scaffold students' evaluation skills as regards the relevance of research articles to particular essay topics.

College S does not have library facilities on campus and instead takes its students on an excursion to assist them in joining the local library. Their library memberships give students access to a wide range of online databases, which they are trained in accessing whilst at the library. The students take part in a summative referencing test in the second half of their course in which they not only need to provide accurate references for a text but also referenced paraphrased and quoted evidence.

College K has developed a 10-week DEP for students intending to carry out post-graduate study. The course focuses on developing a thesis, extended research skills, preparing an annotated bibliography and literature review plus delivering conference-style presentations. The college works closely with the RI, and students, teachers and the RI all report high levels of satisfaction.

Cross cultural awareness

College C incorporates cultural topics throughout their course. These include a focus on university culture in Australia, such as how lectures and tutorials are run and what the expectations of students are in these learning environments. At the end of the course, the college invites a representative from each of its RIs to hold a meeting with students where they discuss their campus facilities and orientation arrangements as well as give students an opportunity to ask questions directly.

College T works with the RI to offer optional 1-hour discussion groups once a week. These are run by students from departments in the RI who select the discussion topics, which have an academic theme. DEP students sign up for the small groups of 3-4 people. These discussion groups are popular with both ELICOS and RI students who report significant mutual benefit.

College E is embedded within a tertiary provider and, wherever possible, assigns the student a 'buddy' from a similar linguistic and cultural background who is studying the student's intended course.

College A, also embedded within a university, runs a comprehensive Student Engagement Program based on their Student Engagement Framework. The Program contains 3 main foci: 1) extracurricular and social inclusion activities which support intercultural exchange; 2) online communities which offer opportunities for interactive and inclusive online student engagement; and 3) co-curricular and active learning activities which complement the academic curriculum. Examples of such activities include membership of broader university clubs and societies, access to university events, and pre-arrival online modules which offer information about Australian culture and society as well as practical 'getting started' tips.

The college has devised a gamification system to encourage student participation in the Program, including a level and rewards scheme, and initial data suggests that the gamification has significantly increased student participation in engagement activities - over 50% of the students who were recommended for university participated in 1 hour per day or more of the Engagement Program.

External course validation

College N emails past students a follow-up survey once they have completed their first semester of their destination course. At the same time, the college also invites a group of students back to participate in focus group follow-up interviews. Both of these tracer studies are aimed at tracking student success and confidence levels in their tertiary studies and are a form of externally validating the college's DEP.

College H is a University English Language Centre and it receives performance data about its alumni from the University's Planning and Statistics Team at the end of every semester. An annual report is prepared with the data and this forms part of the Centre's Continuous Improvement Framework. The data is also used to create statistical information about the completion rates of the Centre's to inform the decisions of prospective students and their parents.

C. Student placement, progress and achievement

A key feature of best practice in direct entry programs is the way in which students are assessed for placement and monitored for progress towards their achievement of course outcomes. English Australia has developed a **Guide to Best Practice in Monitoring Student Progress** at ELICOS institutions, available to staff at English Australia member colleges, but there are some aspects of best practice that apply specifically to direct entry programs.

Note: There is a clear difference between language proficiency at a point in time, as measured by standardised tests such as IELTS, TOEFL, PTE Academic and the Cambridge suite, and competency in academic language and skills gained over time as a result of a course of study and assessed by the DEP provider. It is in the provider's best interests to describe and emphasise the outcomes of the DEP to stakeholders in these terms in their course descriptions and outlines, rather than as an 'equivalent' of an external examination score, which is difficult to support and is in fact actively discouraged by some examinations bodies.

General assessment principles

Crucial to effective monitoring of student progress and achievement is implementation of sound assessment procedures and practices based on current theories of ELT assessment. Assessment in best practice direct entry programs is valid, reliable, fair and appropriate.

Assessment methodology and tasks are related to learning outcomes and incorporate course content, which is specifically designed to help students succeed in their studies at the receiving institution. DEP providers expose students to a broad range of the assessment types they are likely to encounter in their future study. Tasks are developed by staff with expertise and experience in assessment task design and go through a **process of validation**, including trialling and ideally including validation by an external expert, before being included in the program (for a detailed look at assessment validation, refer to the supplementary section of this Guide entitled *Guide to Best Practice in ELICOS Direct Entry Programs in Moderation and Validation*.)

Providers are encouraged to incorporate **formative assessment** to provide students with valuable feedback that supports and informs their progress and to enable teachers to adapt their teaching to meet the identified learning needs of their particular student cohorts.

Assessment can include the following, as appropriate for the course outcomes:

- student portfolios, showing development of skills over the course of the direct entry program;
- production of spoken and written academic text types (genres) of appropriate length and complexity;
- listening and reading 'comprehension' tasks based on texts they are likely to encounter in their future study;
- group and individual project work;
- task-based approaches such as case studies.

Providers ensure that teachers responsible for marking any assessment tasks undergo regular **moderation and standardisation** procedures to ensure inter-rater and intra-rater reliability i.e. that all teachers approach all tests and mark all answers with a high level of consistency. This is particularly important for colleges with more than one location. Benchmark texts (examples of particular standards of performance) are available for teacher reference during standardisation and also when marking spoken and written assessment tasks. Writing tasks are double- and/or cross-

marked by different teachers. Samples of assessments are retained and regularly moderated using a structured procedure ((for a detailed look at assessment moderation, refer to the supplementary section of this Guide entitled *Guide to Best Practice in ELICOS Direct Entry Programs in Moderation and Validation*.)

Teachers new to the program and to the associated assessment requirements are given particular support such as mentoring by experienced teachers.

Providers preserve **assessment integrity.** Assessment tasks are kept secure. Providers develop more than one version of a task so that different versions can be rotated. Students are not permitted to keep 'gate-keeping' assessment tasks, i.e. those which count toward final achievement of the course outcomes, and correct answers of assessment tasks are not discussed in class.

Regardless of the assessment used, students are fully informed of course requirements before they enrol and are kept aware of their progress as they undertake the course.

Best practice providers have a clear and accessible procedure for students to appeal assessment outcomes.

Examples of good practice

College J harnesses teachers with interest and strengths in assessment to develop assessment tasks for their DEP. Tasks are developed individually then moderated in groups before trialling with a small group of students. Tasks are then fine-tuned and set again. The outcomes of the new tasks are compared with past student results and if they are satisfactory the tasks join the DEP Task Bank for rotational use. The aim is to have a substantial test bank to enhance assessment integrity.

In order to ensure that their continuous assessment is formative, **College N** gives students a practice task similar to their graded assessment task in the lead-up to that event and gives detailed feedback on the task. Students also receive feedback on each graded assessment task which means that, because the weighting of marks for assessments increases during the 10-week course, the lower-weighted earlier assessments contribute to increased success in the later more substantially-weighted tasks.

College H holds a formative assessment event during the first half of its direct entry course where students are given an extended in-class written task. Students participate in a process of self and peer assessment of this task before it is assessed by the class teacher, which increases student involvement in the assessment process.

College F is part of a national chain of colleges so is able to carry out structured moderation of tasks across all of its campuses. For its six assessment events each college selects three samples of student work and these are circulated for discussion and comment. The college moved from using 'benchmark' texts at Clear pass, Borderline pass and Fail to using random samples, as it found these encouraged greater discussion.

Teachers at **College N** are required to complete self-access assessment rating standardisation tasks, which are housed on the college's LMS, before all writing and speaking assessment events. These tasks include benchmark response samples. After rating the samples individually, teachers meet with their team and team coordinator to compare and discuss ratings.

College Y holds joint writing assessment moderation meetings involving the ELICOS college staff with Foundation Programs teaching staff. This has been very successful and has led to increased shared understanding of the demands of assessment and the nature of student language use.

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Student placement

Pre-enrolment assessment

Effective providers of direct entry programs ensure students demonstrate appropriate English proficiency levels before enrolment at the institution and confirm these levels on arrival.

An appropriate pre-departure assessment tool is used to recommend a realistic period a student needs to study ELICOS before they enter their nominated course of further study. As a range of factors may impact the reliability of offshore assessment outcomes, and the progress individual students make can vary considerably, any recommendation or determination regarding length of study clearly states that the assessment is a guide only to the approximate number of weeks a student may need to achieve a particular level. Enrolment information clearly informs students that they will be assessed again on arrival and that this may mean a variation in the length of their English language study required before they can study in a DEP, or that it may take them longer than the prescribed length to complete the DEP.

Appropriate tools for assessment of students before they enrol relate to the levels of the accepting ELICOS provider and include one or more of the following:

- **the outcome of an internationally recognised language proficiency test** such as IELTS, TOEFL, PTE Academic or Cambridge English, undertaken in the previous 12 months (two years is the maximum recommended);
- a commercially-developed **online placement tool** such as Versant, OPT or Password;
- a centre-devised language proficiency assessment tool.

In all cases these tools will have the following features:
- a test of grammar, vocabulary and use of English;
- a component that tests students' reading comprehension;
- a component that tests students' writing.

Writing assessment tools designed to be used outside an institution:
- assess a student's use of grammar, vocabulary (accuracy and range) and discourse features of written English as well as surface features such as spelling and punctuation;
- are supported by clear assessment criteria to guide marking;
- are assessed by TESOL specialists at the language centre in Australia.

Offshore assessment is often administered by people untrained in aspects of language assessment. Best practice therefore indicates that ELICOS providers offer guidance and support in the administration and marking of tests including the following:
- guidelines in plain English for the secure administration of the test;
- test papers;
- a clear answer key.

In order to ensure secure conditions of assessment, the offshore agency requires the following:
- candidates provide photo identification as verification of identity;
- the test is only administered by authorised persons;
- dispatch of test papers requiring marking in Australia is confidential and carried out by a nominated person.

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In general, assessment tools devised by centres demonstrating best practice:

- undergo a process of trialling to ensure validity and reliability, benchmarked against centre levels;
- have more than one version available to promote the integrity of assessment outcomes.

Assessment and placement on registration

Initial placement into an appropriate course of study is an important factor in student success. Immigration authorities have taken note of research that suggests that students will on average move up 0.5 of an IELTS band for every 10-12 weeks of intensive English study, particularly at the lower levels, (see Elder & O'Loughlin, 2003) and this expected progression rate is now linked to visa conditions in certain cases.

Institutions demonstrating best practice take account of a number of factors which can impact on students' progress in English language learning in Australia, such as:

- the fact that students tend to make slower rates of progress at higher levels of proficiency;
- the degree of variation in students' proficiency across various skill sub-tests (speaking, listening, reading and writing) where a high sub-score in one area can mask the need for more extensive study in another if an overall score is the only or main measure considered;
- variable levels of student aptitude and application to the language learning task;
- the inhibiting effect on English language development of students' interacting mainly with people who share their preferred (non-English) language and cultural background while studying English in Australia.

Providers of DEPs also acknowledge and make contingency plans for the impact of factors listed above on student progress rates during DEPs when they are placing students in a course of study.

There are clear guidelines for program directors specifying how students may progress from a lower level non-DEP course at an institution to one that enables direct entry for successful students. The institution may require a stated in-house test score or evidence of the required score in an internationally recognised English language proficiency test taken within the previous twelve months.

Best practice in DEP entry will see providers:

- conducting **systematic assessment of students' English language proficiency and other relevant skills on arrival**, or in the orientation phase of DEP, to confirm their readiness for the DEP and to place them in an appropriate program, which may not immediately be a DEP;
- designing **remedial or extension units** to support DEP students arriving with lower proficiency levels or skills;
- ensuring **students and their agents are notified of any discrepancies** in pre- and on-arrival assessment outcomes and the impact of this on the intended study program;
- **counselling** students on their options, which may include alternative study pathways toward their intended further education course.

Example of good practice

Where students arrive with lower proficiency levels than required for their DEP, **College S** places students in a General English course and advises their class teachers of their pathway goals so that

teachers can carefully track their progress. Initially, these students attend a counselling session with a senior teacher who, in collaboration with the student, sets up a systematic plan of of extra homework and self-access study to develop their areas of weakness and fast-track improvement. The college also runs an academic test skills remedial class for students to assist in their preparation for the DEP entry test and maximise their chance of success.

Achievement of course outcomes

Most DEPs offer students direct access to their target study program, or to the next step on their study pathway, provided they achieve a specified set of course outcomes. These outcomes are related to the content of the course, aimed at preparing students for success in further study. Students who fail to demonstrate the stated course outcomes on completion of the DEP may be required or have an option to achieve specified external exam scores for entry to further study or may be offered an additional or alternative program or pathway.

Best practice providers:

- ensure **conditions of progression are clearly articulated to students** before and after arrival in Australia, with students signing an acknowledgement of their understanding of the conditions of progression from the direct entry program and the consequences of not meeting them;

- **monitor student progress** at regular intervals during the DEP[2] and **counsel students at risk of failure** on the implications of failure and the strategies needed to avoid it, ensuring there is sufficient time to effectively **implement intervention strategies**;

- ensure that **student outcomes on DEPs are clearly and accurately reported** to all stakeholders, including the RI, in a timely manner. Outcomes are communicated directly to RIs (rather than supplied by the student);

- regularly **liaise with receiving institutions** on the format, timing and interpretation of DEP student progress reports;

- where warranted, arrange a meeting between informed representatives of the DEP and the tertiary providers to **review borderline student results** and determine appropriate **conditional entry arrangements**, providing the students with additional structured support for at least the first semester of further study.

Examples of good practice

Monitor student progress

College E schedules a meeting with a representative of the receiving institution for all students during the first weeks of their DEP and subsequently at key stages of the pathway. Where students are identified as at risk of failing to make satisfactory progress, the RI representative is informed immediately and included in the identification of intervention strategies, establishing shared ownership of the student's success.

Teachers at **College S** are required to report on their students at 2 different stages of their direct entry course: at the end of the first week and at the course mid-point. Teachers categorise students into 3 groups including 'standard,' 'of some concern' and 'high risk.' This information is entered into the college's student database, which enables the college to monitor student progress and reach out to 'at risk' students early to formulate the necessary strategies needed to ensure course success.

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[2] Formative assessment is ideal for monitoring ongoing progress, especially if combined with regular self-assessment against course learning outcomes.

Report to receiving institutions

College A's pathway courses are 10 weeks in duration. The College sends student progress reports to its main RIs every five weeks to coincide with the beginning and the middle of its courses. These reports aim to keep RIs informed about student progress and they track progress alongside students' individual start dates for their tertiary courses ensuring that RIs are informed right from the start about students whom the college has concerns about or who may not be progressing sufficiently.

Counsel students at risk of failure

In **College G**, every student is counselled by their teacher about their academic progress at Week 3 and Week 8 of their 12-week pathway course. Students at risk of failing are offered support to reach their study goals, and this is recorded in writing. At-risk students are flagged in the college's student management system so that key staff are aware of them and can support and monitor their progress carefully.

Consider borderline student results

College T runs an Intensive Writing Course for students who have narrowly failed their direct entry course primarily due to weaknesses in writing. This small needs-based class is a 60 hour programme run over the 2-3 weeks before the start of a new semester. It includes individual input and direction for students as well as assessments during and at the end of the course that must be passed in order to gain entry into students' tertiary courses. The programme is often enough to bring students up to the level they need for their pathway course when it is run off the back of their DEP.

College M separates its 10-week direct entry course into 2 modules of 5 weeks. If a student fails the course, an academic manager and the student's class teacher analyse their assessment results to see if this was due primarily to their failure in one particular assessment task. In these cases, students are offered an opportunity to repeat the five week module of the course that contains that assessment and to re-attempt the assessment task. By only repeating half of the ten week DEP, these students are more likely to be able to reach their target course on time.

Dealing with Student Failure

For many students the opportunity to enter further study is the pathway to achieving major life goals, which may include employment in Australia or at home, or even residency in Australia, and in this context DEP outcomes are very high stakes.

Students who do not demonstrate satisfactory progress or achievement may challenge DEP teachers and/or managers to modify results or otherwise relax program requirements.

In order to **maintain the integrity of the direct entry program**, best practice providers have in place policies and procedures for:

- **responding firmly yet politely to requests of students** (and their agents) to adjust grades or relax course requirements, mitigating the risk of loss of DEP integrity, including where requests are accompanied by threats;
- **supporting staff** through the process of managing such situations, which may include providing access to trained counsellors.

Example of good practice

College R uses its learner management system to document any discussions teachers have about students' progress and achievement, be it discussions between the teacher and an academic

manager or discussions with the student themselves. In this way, final assessment outcomes are supported by an ongoing 'narrative' as well as the outcome of assignments and other prior assessment events, which can assist when students appeal assessment outcomes. Furthermore, this detailed narrative can be produced at any time during the student's course if extra information is needed by the receiving institution or agents.

D. Resourcing

Teacher experience and qualifications

Direct entry programs make considerable demands on the resources of English language providers. The curriculum structure is complex, extending well beyond the macro-skills and language commonly covered in more general English language programs, incorporating technical learning skills and discipline-specific components, for example.

A best practice DEP curriculum assumes teachers have the following:

a) considerable **classroom experience in teaching and assessing students** at higher levels of proficiency; and

b) a well-developed **theoretical-base in applied linguistics**, on which to build their approach to academic discourse, both spoken and written.

DEP teachers should ideally have **TESOL qualifications at diploma level or higher**, incorporating study of the structure of discourse and issues around assessment. For those teaching students on a pathway to graduate study, master's level qualifications in TESOL or applied linguistics are desirable, unless extensive levels of teacher support are provided.

Support for teachers

Generally, but especially where DEP teachers lack higher-level qualifications in TESOL or have limited teaching experience at higher levels of proficiency, DEP providers will need to ensure:

*   a **detailed curriculum** document, incorporating sound pedagogical approaches to the teaching of EAP (see the curriculum resource on p 18);
*   **experienced lead/senior teacher(s)** or a coordinator/program manager with an extensive knowledge of teaching spoken and written discourse for academic purposes, and experience and expertise in assessment and program support and coordination;
*   appropriate **induction and orientation** to direct entry programs, which includes the relationship between the program and the receiving institution, an outline of assessment tasks and marking and reporting requirements as well as an introduction to the syllabus;
*   extensive print and electronic **teaching resources** to support the curriculum;
*   sound **professional support** for teachers, including guidance in dealing with students who are at risk of failing to demonstrate satisfactory progress and achievement, to ensure the components of the syllabus are well-integrated and student progress is effectively monitored;
*   on-going **professional development** in relevant areas such as assessment techniques and moderation, and skills development;
*   adequate **time for coordinators/program managers** to provide teacher support, manage student monitoring and counselling, and ensure external liaison with tertiary providers;
*   adequate **time for teachers** involved in marking and grading assessment tasks.

Examples of good practice

College U holds a two-part induction for teachers new to their direct entry program. The first part is a focus on reporting, record-keeping and other administrative requirements. The second part introduces teachers to the academic component of the program, looking at the syllabus and supporting resources together with an introduction to the course management software (CMS) and assessment moderation workshops. Support with the technology required to teach the course is also offered on an ongoing basis.

Wherever practical, **College M** schedules teachers to share classes. This approach was implemented following a trial to which both teachers and students responded positively. Teachers new to the program are provided with a dedicated mentor and part-time teachers have access to flexible working conditions. Students benefit from having two different sets of teacher strengths as well as access to more than one professional who can contribute to informed discussion of their progress and achievement.

Teachers at **College P** requested a mentor program, so new teachers are now matched with more experienced mentors. The College schedules paid meeting times once a week for mentors and mentees to come together and a dedicated part of these meetings is spent on co-moderation of assessment tasks, amongst other things.

College U leaves one week between its terms which are paid non-teaching weeks when teachers can catch up on administration and work on continuing projects. During these weeks, the College also holds continuing professional development days for its teachers, which include mini-workshops developed and run by more experienced staff on relevant and timely topics.

College H has developed a Teacher Developer Team who are responsible for conducting micro-PDs, consultative lesson planning, observations, mentoring for new graduates and some teacher training.

As part of a project to renew their EAP curriculum, of which their DEP is a major component, **College D** had considerable success with involving teachers in all aspects of curriculum renewal in order to get maximum engagement and buy-in to any changes. The process enabled teachers to better understand the factors involved in curriculum development as well as to become more familiar with the structure of the curriculum itself and the assessment requirements in particular. The costs in time and personnel for this process were justified in the final outcome, which was a syllabus taken on and 'owned' by staff, who have a desire to be involved in ongoing development and improvement.

College T has divided its DEP into 2 core streams to consolidate teachers' marking loads: 3 days per week, the course runs a Core Skills Stream and the other 2 days students attend a Research and Study Skills Stream. Teachers who work on the Research and Study Skills Stream are paid extra hours for the heavier marking and grading load that they carry.

Curriculum resource

The following represents a comprehensive set of English language and learning options that staff within English Australia member colleges can consider when selecting content for syllabuses for courses preparing students for further study. Content can be selected that is appropriate to the context of the college program together with student needs, and takes into account input from stakeholders including students, teachers and the receiving institution.

1. **Culture of learning in Australia** (integrated throughout the course)

GOAL: High school, TAFE/VET Diploma courses, Foundation Diploma courses	GOAL: Undergraduate and postgraduate study	GOAL: Postgraduate study
Contexts: current and future course of study • outline of study type • roles & expectations of teachers/lecturers/students, individual/group learning • attitude to knowledge, plagiarism and using own words • types and aims of activities to be used in this course • support options while studying on this course • understanding active learning: asking questions, participation, contributing to group-produced assignments	**Contexts**: target course of study • overview of aims, objectives and outcomes for the course • roles & expectations of teachers/lecturers/students, individual/group/online forum learning • attitude to knowledge, plagiarism and understanding voice • workload, types of assessment • fostering self-directed learning • following assessment procedures: word count, deadlines, extensions • support options while studying in future	**Contexts**: coursework masters and higher degree research • Australian academic culture: attitudes, values, behaviours • academic register and discipline specificity • induction into the academic, linguistic and cultural conventions relating to research in discipline specific contexts • fostering autonomy in negotiating research and language outcomes

2. Listening Skills & Strategies

GOAL: High school, TAFE/VET Diploma courses, Foundation Diploma courses	GOAL: Undergraduate and postgraduate study	GOAL: Postgraduate study (Additional syllabus considerations for dedicated post-grad. courses)
Contexts: lectures, tutorials, workshops, classes, interviews as appropriate, non-academic texts e.g. casual conversation, news reports • recognising different stages of text • identifying gist • identifying specific information • developing/using strategies to make meaning e.g. using aspects of pronunciation, guessing meaning • making a record of academic presentations (note-taking etc.) • following a sustained sequence of instructions • listening to, reviewing and discussing relevant news items and contemporary issues as reported and depicted in the media	**Contexts**: more complex lectures, presentations, tutorials, workshops, classes, non-academic texts e.g. casual conversation, news reports • recognising different stages of text e.g. sequence of events • using sequence/discourse markers (lectures, presentations) • identifying gist • identifying specific information • distinguishing fact and opinion • developing/using strategies to make meaning e.g. using aspects of pronunciation, non-verbal communication, guessing meaning • interacting with the presenter e.g. asking for clarification, repetition, further information • listening to academic spoken discourse and taking comprehensive, structured and systematic notes • listening to, reviewing and discussing relevant news items and contemporary issues as reported and depicted in the media	**Contexts**: complex lectures, presentations, tutorials, workshops, classes, conferences, seminars, non-academic texts e.g. casual conversation, news reports • register: formal- informal- understanding audience, purpose, context • demonstrating knowledge of linguistic and meta-linguistic features (verbal cues, paraphrasing, emphasis) • demonstrating effective note-taking strategies to produce meaningful notes for a variety of purposes • critically evaluating information presented

3. Speaking skills & strategies

GOAL: High school, TAFE/VET Diploma courses, Foundation Diploma courses	GOAL: Undergraduate and postgraduate study	GOAL: Postgraduate study (Additional syllabus considerations for dedicated post-grad. courses)
Contexts: presentations, seminars, transactional exchanges with institution staff and peers, casual conversation • initiating, sustaining, maintaining, repairing and extending spoken discourse in academic and general contexts • considering aspects of context, purpose and audience when generating and comprehending oral texts • using stress, intonation, gesture effectively to convey a range of emotions and intentions • developing fluency in academic and general contexts • developing/using strategies to make meaning e.g. using discourse elements, aspects of pronunciation & non-verbal communication • achieving a range of purposes e.g. comparing, explaining, giving viewpoints & opinions (agreeing, disagreeing), describing processes • interacting with a presenter e.g. asking for clarification, repetition, further information • leading a discussion with a group and participating in group discussion	**Contexts**: more complex/challenging presentations, seminars, debates, discussions, transactional exchanges with academic staff & peers, casual conversation • initiating, sustaining, maintaining, repairing and extending spoken discourse in academic and general contexts • considering aspects of context, purpose and audience when generating and comprehending oral texts, adapting the presentation to the audiences needs • using intelligible pronunciation, and stress and intonation patterns to ensure comprehensibility • achieving a range of purposes e.g. stating a case clearly, comparing, explaining, describing processes • planning, drafting, rehearsing spoken presentations • preparing useful prompts for presentations • preparing effective audio-visual aids to communication e.g. PowerPoint, Prezzie • participating in group discussion • interacting with a presenter e.g. asking for clarification, repetition, further information	**Contexts**: more complex/challenging presentations, seminars, debates, discussions, transactional exchanges with academic staff & peers, casual conversation • negotiating and interacting productively in spoken academic contexts • developing/using strategies to make meaning e.g. using discourse elements, aspects of pronunciation & non-verbal communication (gesture, emotion, intention), speaking confidently • negotiating with others (lecturer, peers) to achieve agreed outcomes, using a range of oral strategies, e.g. presenting an opinion, persuasion or presenting options for compromise • leading a discussion with a group, and managing issues such as timing, staging and access of participants during a discussion • developing and refining personal views when expressing opinion, reflecting on perspectives offered in discussion

4. Reading skills & strategies

GOAL: High school, TAFE/VET Diploma courses, Foundation Diploma courses	GOAL: Undergraduate and postgraduate study	GOAL: Postgraduate study (Additional syllabus considerat for dedicated post-grad. courses)
Contexts (print & online): argumentative & discursive texts e.g. scholarly articles, newspaper and magazine articles; information texts e.g. scientific texts, reference material; databases and catalogues, assessment tasks • recognising and responding to some conventions of complex texts to locate information, e.g. indexes, table of contents in books/journals, section numbering, use of footnotes or accepted styles of referencing • identifying main ideas • identifying details • understanding gist quickly by skimming • locating specific information quickly by scanning • identifying relevant information in diagrams and graphs • developing/using a range of strategies e.g. guessing meaning from context • making a record of relevant information e.g. note taking, highlighting etc. • monitoring comprehension by using a variety of strategies when meaning is lost, e.g. re-reading, identifying a specific area of confusion, or seeking clarification from another source	**Contexts** (print & online): lengthy/complex argumentative & discursive texts e.g. scholarly articles, newspaper and magazine articles; information texts e.g. scientific texts, reference material; databases and catalogues, case studies, assessment tasks • recognising and responding to some conventions of complex texts, and understanding how to use these as an aid to locating information and developing understanding e.g. indexes, table of contents in books/journals, section numbering, use of footnotes or accepted styles of referencing • identifying main ideas & details • understanding gist quickly by skimming • locating specific information quickly by scanning • identifying relevant information in diagrams and graphs • recognising meaning not explicitly stated • developing/using a range of strategies e.g. guessing meaning from context, recognising unimportant words & content • making a record of relevant information e.g. note taking, annotating etc. • summarising, paraphrasing, synthesizing information and ideas from a range of texts in order to form an opinion • critically evaluating information presented	**Contexts** (print & online): lengthy/complex argumentative & discursive texts e.g. scholarly articles, newspaper and magazine articles; information texts e.g. scientific texts, reference material; databases and catalogues, case studies, primary sources, assessment tasks • demonstrating the ability to read critically and effectively • identifying types of academic text • analysing, evaluating, interpreting and responding to a range of written texts • effectively summarising and synthesising key points of written academic texts

GOAL: High school, TAFE/VET Diploma courses, Foundation Diploma courses	GOAL: Undergraduate and postgraduate study	GOAL: Postgraduate study (Additional syllabus considerat for dedicated post-grad. courses)
	• monitoring comprehension by using a variety of strategies when meaning is lost, e.g. re-reading, identifying a specific area of confusion, or seeking clarification from another source	

5. Writing skills & strategies

GOAL: High school, TAFE/VET Diploma courses, Foundation Diploma courses	GOAL: Undergraduate and postgraduate study	GOAL: Postgraduate study (Additional syllabus considerations for dedicated PG courses)
Contexts: personal profiles, descriptions, argumentative & discursive essays, formal and informal letters/email, processes • planning, drafting and editing texts • forming paragraphs • writing different stages of texts egg introduction, conclusion (academic texts) • presenting and supporting an argument/point of view • recognising sources of information within a text • addressing the context, purpose and audience	**Contexts**: longer/more complex texts egg argumentative & discursive essays, processes, case studies, reports • planning, drafting and editing texts • writing different stages of texts egg introduction, conclusion (academic texts) • presenting and supporting an argument/point of view with a range of points • presenting information in graphic/diagrammatic form • using grammar & vocabulary appropriate to genre ('academic' language) • recognising sources of information within a text • writing a reference list • addressing the context, purpose and audience • choosing the appropriate register and organisational pattern e.g. cause & effect, compare & contrast	**Contexts**: journal articles in discipline specific areas, case studies, research reports, literature reviews, annotated bibliographies • planning , drafting and structuring a research document • appropriate Citation and avoiding Plagiarism • understanding written discourse in research genres • reviewing literature and evaluative language • editing and self-editing practical strategies • evaluating, hypothesising, synthesising and applying critical analysis to written texts in order to produce extended academic written discourse.

6. Study and research skills & strategies

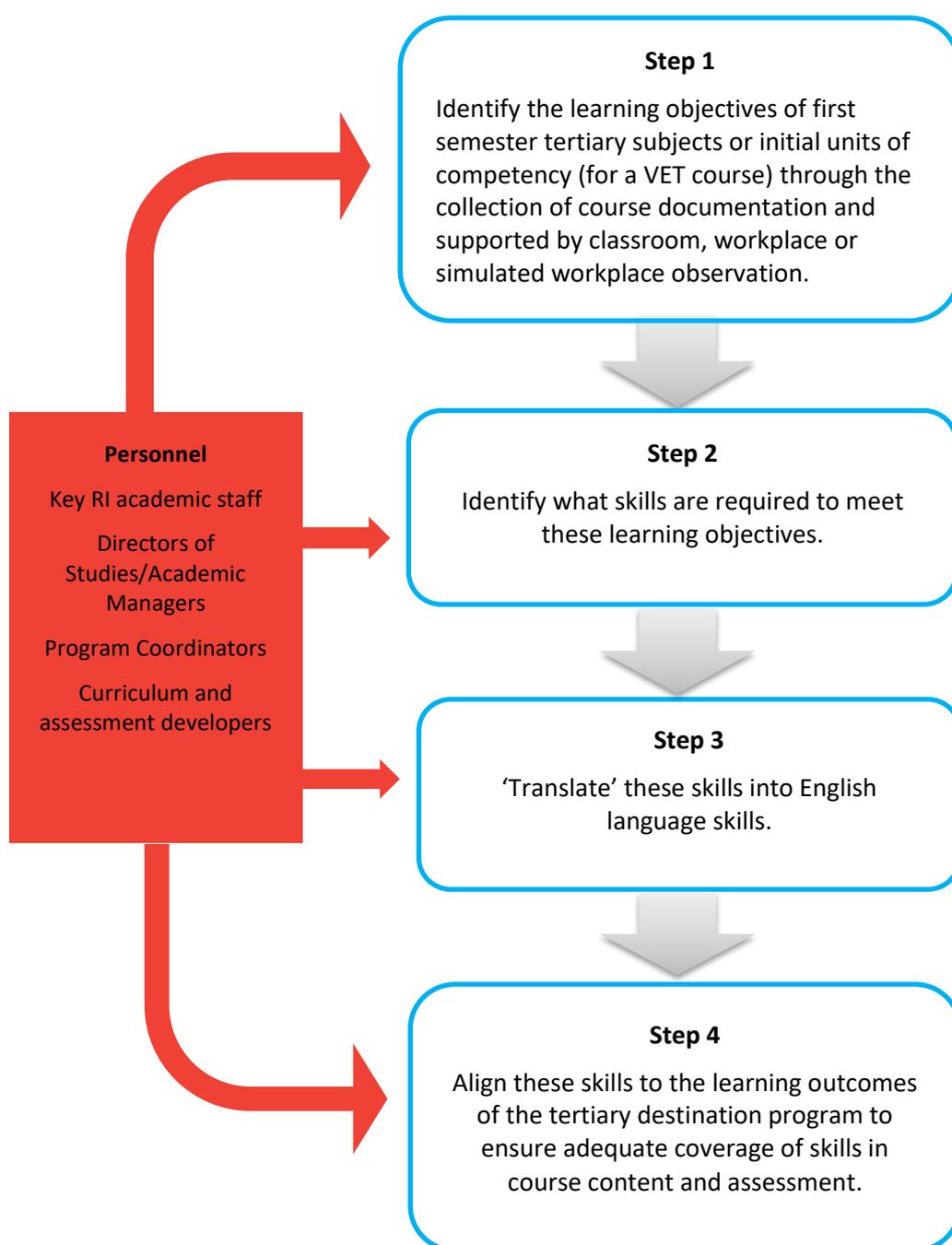| GOAL: High school, TAFE/VET Diploma courses, Foundation Diploma courses	GOAL: Undergraduate and postgraduate study	GOAL: Postgraduate study (Additional syllabus considerations for dedicated PG courses)
- locating and identifying appropriate texts i.e. using a catalogue/ database - time management skills - using a dictionary effectively - critical thinking and analysis - locating information using advanced web search queries to filter out irrelevant information - considering the reliability of an information source against a range of criteria, e.g. the author's background, the intended audience and purpose, or the date of publication - using library systems efficiently and effectively to access relevant resources - using a range of collaborative tools as an aid to learning e.g. email, blogs, wikis, discussion boards or online training programs - using personal organisation systems to collect, analyse, store, organise and access to information obtained through study and research - applying inductive and deductive reasoning	- locating and identifying appropriate texts i.e. using a catalogue/ database - finding and analysing information - cross-referencing information - using reference material (dictionary, grammar references etc.) effectively - critical thinking and analysis - using data appropriately - using library systems efficiently and effectively to access relevant resources - using a range of collaborative tools as an aid to learning e.g. email, blogs, wikis, discussion boards or online training programs - using personal organisation systems to collect, analyse, store, organise and access to information obtained through study and research	- Identifying, evaluating and referencing appropriate resources - locating information using sophisticated web search queries to identify relevant information sources effectively - evaluating the reliability of information from a wide variety of sources, taking a range of criteria into account e.g. the author's credibility, potential bias, the nature of evidence

7. Grammar & vocabulary use (integrated into macro-skill areas throughout course)

Focus: High school, TAFE/VET Diploma courses, Foundation Diploma courses	Focus: Undergraduate and postgraduate study	Focus: Postgraduate study (Additional syllabus considerations for dedicated PG courses)
• structural & discourse features of a range of spoken and written texts e.g. presentations, different types of 'essay' (cause & effect, compare & contrast etc.) • cohesion • range of past, present and future verb forms • noun phrases, gerunds, countable & plural nouns • nominalisation • modals, quantifiers • prefixes and suffices • active & passive forms • relative clauses, verb/noun combinations • signal language, sequence markers • build content vocabulary relevant to contexts • understanding of word usage, word derivations and meaning, and prefixes and suffixes • understanding of how words and word families may be generated (e.g. from a root) and using known parts of words to predict word meanings • using punctuation accurately and effectively to convey a range of meanings • spelling	• structural and discourse features of a range of spoken and written texts e.g. lectures, different types of written text (research report, literature review etc.) • cohesion • transition • describing trends • build content vocabulary relevant to contexts • familiarity with the Academic Word List (AWL) • a broad range of vocabulary, including idioms, colloquialisms and cultural references as appropriate • understanding of word usage, word derivations and meaning, and prefixes and suffixes • understanding of how words and word families may be generated (e.g. from a root) and using known parts of words to predict word meanings and extend vocabulary • nominalisation • modality • using features of punctuation, font and layout effectively • spelling	• using a variety of sentence structures according to genre and style with appropriate punctuation and accurate spelling. • consolidating all tense use and passives for academic discourse. Demonstrate the use of: conditionals for speculation and hypothesis; modals and other expressions for hedging and appropriateness of academic voice; adverbial phrases in academic register • extending the range and use of sequence markers and signposts, appropriate referents for discourse cohesion, and parallel structures • extending and consolidating lexical resource for academic register and to indicate stance

Aligning direct entry programs to destination programs

English language providers that offer direct entry programs need to align course content and outcomes with the requirements of students' tertiary destination programs and with the necessary graduate attributes of the programs. The process of alignment and recalibration of the English language curriculum and assessment framework should be considered good practice and undertaken periodically to ensure the relevance of course content, learning outcomes and assessment tasks.

The following sample framework could be used to align direct entry programs to the entry requirements of tertiary programs:

Personnel

Key RI academic staff

Directors of Studies/Academic Managers

Program Coordinators

Curriculum and assessment developers

Step 1

Identify the learning objectives of first semester tertiary subjects or initial units of competency (for a VET course) through the collection of course documentation and supported by classroom, workplace or simulated workplace observation.

Step 2

Identify what skills are required to meet these learning objectives.

Step 3

'Translate' these skills into English language skills.

Step 4

Align these skills to the learning outcomes of the tertiary destination program to ensure adequate coverage of skills in course content and assessment.

ELICOS and the Higher Education sector

The following section 'ELICOS and the Higher Education sector' has been written by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA). Direct entry pathways into Higher Education providers are a significant feature of the Australia ELICOS sector. English Australia and TEQSA signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2016, and this guide is just one initiative that English Australia and TEQSA have collaborated together on to support quality outcomes through these pathways.

ELICOS and the Higher Education sector

The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) is an independent statutory authority established in 2011. TEQSA regulates and assures the quality of Australia's large, diverse and complex higher education sector. The Australian higher education system comprises both public and private universities, Australian branches of overseas universities, and other higher education providers with and without self-accrediting authority.

The standards required to be met by all higher education providers so that the interests of students and the reputation of Australia's higher education sector are promoted and protected are set out in the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015, which came into effect on 1 January 2017.

While the Threshold Standards do not define minimum English levels for entry into a higher education course of study, they require that admission requirements are designed (and applied fairly and consistently) to ensure that admitted students have the necessary proficiency in English needed to participate in their intended study.

Further, the Threshold Standards establish minimum requirements with respect to staffing, assessment, educational resources and facilities

On 1 July 2012, TEQSA assumed regulatory responsibility for English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) delivered by

• all registered higher education providers, and

• all providers providing or seeking to provide ELICOS programs under an entry arrangement with at least one higher education provider registered under the TEQSA Act.

TEQSA recognises that Direct Entry Programs in ELICOS are an important educational foundation for ongoing progress in study at higher education level and an important entry point for international students coming to Australia for further study.

The National standards for ELICOS providers and courses (ELICOS Standards) are guidelines for regulatory authorities to make recommendations for acceptance of providers to be registered on the CRICOS under the ESOS legislative framework.

Throughout 2014 and 2015, TEQSA completed the 'ELICOS Reaccreditation Project' which involved assessing all ELICOS courses of study delivered by TEQSA-registered providers as well as those standalone ELICOS providers for which TEQSA is the ESOS Agency.

TEQSA recognises its role in ensuring vigilance and oversight in the ongoing quality assurance of Direct Entry Programs in ELICOS and is committed to:

• continuing to assess new ELICOS Courses upon application to have them added to CRICOS

• reviewing existing ELICOS courses at the time a provider submits its application for renewal of CRICOS registration.

As part of these assessment processes, TEQSA will consider the extent to which assessment outcomes are benchmarked against external reference points commonly used in admission criteria for tertiary courses.

Consistent with the basic principles of regulation, TEQSA will have regard to a provider's history and risk profile in determining the scope, evidence requirements and approach to cyclical ELICOS reviews.

TEQSA's principal role is to ensure that quality standards are being met and where possible, it will incorporate consideration and assessment of all requirements, including ELICOS, into broader quality assurance and monitoring of compliance with the Threshold Standards.

ELICOS and the Vocational Education and Training sector

The following section, 'ELICOS and the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector' has been written by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA). English Australia and ASQA signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2016, and ASQA's contribution to this Best Practice Guide is just one initiative that English Australia and AQSA have collaborated on to support quality outcomes through these pathways. The collaboration is particularly valuable given the growth in international students undertaking ELICOS courses as a pathway to a VET courses.

ELICOS and the Vocational Education and Training Sector

The Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector provides formal training for people across most occupations in the economy, except those requiring higher education qualifications. The breadth of training within the sector, which includes training for skilled para−professional occupations, trades and a large range of skilled human service occupations, necessarily impacts the English language programs that have an association with a Registered Training Organisation (RIO).

Since 1 January 2015, ASQA has regulated RTOs in accordance with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RT05) 2015 (the Standards). Due to the wide range of occupations towards which RTOs provide training, the Standards describe outcomes RTOs must achieve, but do not prescribe methods to achieve these outcomes. Crucial to quality training is that VET graduates are job−ready and meet the expectations of industry.

English language entry requirements are determined by RTOs and vary between VET providers. This is reflective of the different courses provided, the specific training offered and the requirements of working in the relevant industry. In order for RTOs registered to provide courses to overseas students to comply with the National Code 2007, the provider must document and implement procedures that, amongst other things, assess whether a student's English language proficiency is appropriate for the course[3].

While the Standards do not explicitly refer to minimum English levels for entry into a VET course, a VET provider must supply, to the learner, current and accurate information about any requirements the learner must meet to enter and successfully complete their chosen training product[4]. This requires providers to consider: their student market, the presence of international students; and the appropriate English level to commence and participate in learning tasks, activities and assessments for the particular vocational field.

In developing and implementing strategies for training and assessment in a VET course, RTOs must consider specific industry needs for performing in the workplace, including English proficiency. It should be noted that some occupations, such as allied health professionals or childcare educators, will require advanced greater level of English language proficiency from its practitioners. It is this requirement that should guide a provider's determination of the appropriate English level as an entry requirement[5].

Where an RTO has a direct entry arrangement with an ELICOS provider, this relationship can potentially enhance the programs delivered by both parties. The RTO can use the expertise of the ELICOS provider in determining the appropriate English language level for entry into a particular VET

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[3] National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training 2007, Part D, Standard 2.

[4] Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015, Clause 5.2 (e)(iii).

[5] Australian Government, Australian Skills Quality Authority "Users' Guide; Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RT0s) 2015" retrieved from:

https://www.asqa.gov.au/standards

course and can look to the ELICOS provider to assist with any ongoing English language development necessary to support the student's progression through to graduation from their VET course. Similarly the ELICOS provider can use the relationship to inform the development of English language programs that align with the needs of specific VET programs.

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