

Memorandum

From	Prof Michelle Picard, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching Innovation)
Subject	New English Language and Academic Literacies Policy
Date	2 October 2026

Purpose

To provide a draft new English Language and Academic Literacies Policy for open consultation.

Background

A review of Student Learning Support Services identified the need for a clearer institutional framework for English language development and academic literacies across the student lifecycle. The review recommended the development of a policy to articulate that responsibility for supporting students' English language development and academic literacies is shared across the University and extends throughout the period of enrolment.

Discussion

The English Language and Academic Literacies Policy establishes the principles and requirements for developing and assessing students' English language proficiency and academic literacies across the full student lifecycle from admission to course completion. Its purpose is to support participation in learning, achievement of learning outcomes, and compliance with professional, legislative, and accreditation standards.

The policy defines English language proficiency as students' ability to use English appropriately in spoken and written contexts, and academic literacies as the ability to understand and produce the formal language required in higher education and professional settings, including discipline-relevant numeracy.

The policy states that the University is responsible for ensuring students have the language and literacy capabilities needed for academic success and future professional practice, while recognising student diversity and providing developmental support throughout enrolment. Conversely, students share responsibility for developing and demonstrating these skills.

Supporting procedures to accompany the policy and guide implementation of its principles are planned for development in 2027.

Feedback

We invite feedback on the new English Language and Academic Literacies Policy to be sent to policy@flinders.edu.au by **Friday, 16 October 2026**.

English Language and Academic Literacies Policy

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1. Purpose

- a. This policy sets out the principles and requirements for supporting, developing, and assessing students' English language proficiency and academic literacies across the student lifecycle.
- b. The development of students' English language proficiency and academic literacies is a shared responsibility between the University, academic staff, and students. This shared responsibility supports students to participate effectively in learning, achieve course learning outcomes, meet professional and accreditation standards, and develop the capabilities required for future study, work and professional practice.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- a. all students enrolled in a Flinders University topic or course
- b. all staff involved in teaching, learning support, curriculum design, and academic quality assurance.

3. Definitions

English language proficiency	The ability of students to use the English language to make and communicate meaning appropriately in spoken, written and other relevant contexts, consistent with the expectations of higher education study, discipline-specific learning, professional practice and the Higher Education Standards Framework.
Academic Literacies	The ability to understand, interpret, evaluate and produce the complex formal language and communication practices required in higher education, discipline contexts and professional workplaces. It includes participation practices, oral and written communication, the ethical and appropriate use of technologies and digital resources including generative artificial intelligence, and the academic numeracy required to meet the general demands of life, study, and work appropriate to the discipline and qualification level.

4. Policy statement

- a. Flinders University is committed to supporting all students to develop the English language proficiency and academic literacies required for success in their studies and future professional practice.
- b. The University recognises the diversity of students' linguistic, cultural and educational backgrounds, and values the contribution this diversity makes to learning, teaching and the broader University community.
- c. The University also recognises that English language proficiency and academic literacies are developed over time, through discipline curriculum, assessment, feedback, student engagement, and access to appropriate academic learning support.

4.1. Principles

The University's approach to English language proficiency and academic literacies is based on the following principles:

- a. English is the language of instruction and assessment at Flinders University, except where another language is specified or approved as part of the course, topic, foreign language learning activity, or other approved academic program
- b. the University values cultural diversity, linguistic diversity, and the language repertoires students bring, including the use and recognition of Indigenous languages, while ensuring students are supported to develop the English language proficiency required for academic success
- c. English language proficiency and academic literacies are essential to student learning, academic success, professional preparation and graduate outcomes
- d. the development of students' English language proficiency and academic literacies is a shared responsibility between the University, academic staff, and students
- e. admission processes ensure students meet the minimum English language proficiency and academic literacy requirements for entry into their chosen course, in accordance with the [English Language Proficiency Requirements for Coursework Award Courses and Topics](#) and [English Language Proficiency Requirements for HDR Candidature](#).
- f. English language proficiency and academic literacies are developed through purposeful curriculum design, discipline-specific learning activities, assessment, feedback, and engagement with academic support
- g. courses and topics must provide structured, authentic, and visible opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate discipline-specific English language proficiency and academic literacies
- h. assessment and HDR milestones must enable students to demonstrate achievement of topic and course learning outcomes, including relevant discipline-specific communication, literacy, and numeracy capabilities in accordance with the [Assessment Policy](#)
- i. students must receive timely, explicit, and constructive feedback that supports their continuing development of English language proficiency and academic literacies
- j. consistent with the [Support for Students Policy](#), academic language, learning, and numeracy support must be visible, accessible and appropriately connected to students' discipline and course learning needs
- k. reasonable adjustments and inclusive participation options must be provided for students with disabilities in accordance with the [Disability Policy](#), while maintaining academic, professional and accreditation standards

- i. moderation, benchmarking, review and quality assurance processes must support consistent expectations and standards for English language proficiency and academic literacies across the University.

4.2. University responsibilities

The University will support the development of students' English language proficiency and academic literacies by:

- a. ensuring that applicants meet the English language proficiency and academic literacy requirements for admission to their course of study, in accordance with the [Admissions Policy](#) and [Higher Degrees by Research Policy](#)
- b. providing accessible, high-quality, and integrated academic language, learning, and numeracy support services, including central and discipline-embedded support, through Student Learning Support Services and other relevant services within and alongside curriculum
- c. supporting and resourcing collaboration between central support services, Colleges, course coordinators, and teaching staff to identify and respond to students' academic language, literacy, and numeracy development needs
- d. providing information to students about available academic learning support and how to access it
- e. supporting early identification of students who may benefit from additional academic language, literacy, or numeracy support, consistent with the [Student Progress Policy](#) and [HDR Progression Procedures](#)
- f. connecting students to relevant academic or other support services where their progress, engagement, or assessment performance indicates that support may be needed
- g. maintaining quality assurance processes that support consistent standards and continuous improvement in curriculum, assessment, and student support, with reporting to academic governance
- h. developing staff capability to ensure that students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds are not disadvantaged in their learning.

4.3. Academic staff responsibilities

- a. Academic staff are responsible for supporting students' English language proficiency and academic literacies within the scope of their roles.
- b. Course coordinators, topic coordinators, teaching staff, and HDR supervisors will:
 - i. develop their individual capability to support students' discipline language and literacies
 - ii. work with Student Learning Support Services and other relevant staff, where appropriate, to embed, co-design, or coordinate support for students and cohorts with identified learning needs
 - iii. design courses, topics, assessments, and HDR supervision so that students have structured opportunities to develop and demonstrate discipline-specific English language proficiency and academic literacies appropriate to the discipline, course level, and learning outcomes
 - iv. design learning, assessment activities, and HDR milestones that enable students to authentically demonstrate their own learning and communication capabilities, including in accordance with University and discipline requirements relating to the use of generative artificial intelligence
 - v. consistent with the [Assessment Practice Procedures](#) and [HDR Progression Procedures](#), provide timely, constructive, and discipline-specific feedback that supports students' continuing development

- vi. identify students who may benefit from additional academic language, literacy, or numeracy support through assessment, learning activities, diagnostic activities, early engagement information, or other relevant indicators
- vii. refer students to Student Learning Support Services, discipline-specific or discipline-embedded supports, or other relevant supports, where additional academic language, literacy, or numeracy support may assist their learning
- viii. apply relevant assessment, student progress, disability, academic integrity, and support policies consistently when responding to students' learning needs.

4.4. Student responsibilities

- a. Students are responsible for actively developing and seeking help to demonstrate the English language proficiency and academic literacies required for their course.
- b. Students are expected to:
 - i. utilise English as the language of communication in course and topic events, activities, and assessments, except where otherwise specified
 - ii. understand the English language and academic literacy expectations of their course and topics
 - iii. participate actively in learning and assessment activities designed to develop discipline-specific language, literacy, and numeracy capabilities
 - iv. use feedback to improve their English language proficiency and academic literacies, and seek clarification if feedback is not understood
 - v. seek and engage with support when they experience difficulty with academic language, literacy, numeracy, assessment, or study expectations
 - vi. practice ethical and appropriate use of technologies and digital resources, including generative artificial intelligence, as applicable to their courses and topics, and seek advice if uncertain.

5. Related documents

[Admissions Policy](#)

[Higher Degrees by Research Policy](#)

[HDR Progression Procedures](#)

[English Language Proficiency Requirements for Coursework Award Courses and Topics Policy](#)

[English Language Proficiency Requirements for HDR Candidature Policy](#)

[Award Courses Policy](#)

[Assessment Policy](#)

[Assessment Practice Procedures](#)

[Disability Policy](#)

[Support for Students Policy](#)

[Student Progress Policy](#)

[Student Academic Integrity Policy](#)

Approval Authority	Academic Senate
Responsible Officer	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching)
Approval Date	
Effective Date	
Review Date*	
Last amended	
CM file number	

* Unless otherwise indicated, this policy or procedures still apply beyond the review date.

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