

COVID Intensive Learning Support Program – support for EAL/D students

In 2022 almost 25%, almost 200,000, students in NSW government schools are learning English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D).

Learning English takes a long time. Research tells us that it usually takes 5-7 years for an EAL/D student to master the academic English language required for success at school. This can be longer (up to 11 years) for students from refugee backgrounds who have experienced trauma and interrupted or no prior schooling.

Many EAL/D students were disadvantaged during the learning from home period as they were still developing the English language skills needed to engage in independent learning, much of which was delivered through online platforms or through workbooks and other printed resources. Some students also had difficulties accessing technology or had limited digital literacy, with some families also finding it difficult to support their children due to limited digital literacy and limited English language proficiency. In addition, many students, already carrying trauma, were re-traumatised by locked down conditions and through the changes to routine and structure which would normally allow them to feel safe at school.

COVID Intensive Learning Support funding provides an opportunity for schools to provide additional EAL/D teacher support for students learning English as an additional language.

Recruitment

Teachers with TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) qualifications which are recognised by the Department should be encouraged to apply for these positions. This should include teachers currently employed in fractional EAL/D positions.

Teachers who have been previously appointed to an EAL/D position should also be encouraged to apply.

Identification of students

EAL/D students have their English language proficiency assessed using the [EAL/D Learning Progression](#) which describes English language proficiency as one of four phases: Beginning, Emerging, Developing or Consolidating English. This allows teachers to assess students EAL/D learning needs and determine priorities for allocating available EAL/D teacher support within the school. Targeted syllabus-based English language support aims to scaffold students' understanding of subject content while strengthening English language proficiency.

EAL/D phase data is available in Maintain EAL/D in ERN. Students from refugee backgrounds can also be identified through ERN. To further assist targeted support, information about student phase

progress is available in each school's EAL/D Tracking tool accessible through the Department's data collection website.

EAL/D students who do not meet curriculum outcomes are not necessarily 'underperforming', but may be achieving at levels commensurate with their phase of English language learning and may not need to be included in COVID intensive learning support programs.

Support for students

The Multicultural Education Policy requires schools to provide programs that support EAL/D students to achieve equitable educational outcomes. Where possible, EAL/D students should be supported to access syllabus outcomes within their regular class with targeted English language support. To effectively support the needs of EAL/D students in learning across the curriculum, teachers should identify the language and literacy demands of the curriculum, including texts used in class programs, as well as underlying cultural and conceptual knowledge.

When planning for teaching, teachers should identify curriculum outcomes and learning goals. Unpacking the language learning demands for EAL/D learners means identifying the requirements of tasks, the language processes and the types of texts students are required to respond to and produce in a range of subjects.

Schools should consider the best approach to maximise the language and learning outcomes for their EAL/D students, particularly those who are the most vulnerable. This involves teachers and tutors working collaboratively to assess and address students' English language learning needs and includes identifying English language learning outcomes, and planning content and sequenced learning activities which recognise the cultural demands of the learning and provides a pathway to new learning.

It is essential that planned teaching and learning is focussed on meeting curriculum outcomes and targets the specific language learning needs of EAL/D students. Effective use of COVID Intensive Learning Support funding includes the employment of additional EAL/D teachers to:

- provide in class support for EAL/D students
- provide intensive English language support for students at the early phases of English language proficiency or where learning has been interrupted
- provide after school tutorial support for stage 3 primary and secondary EAL/D students

Resources

[COVID intensive learning support program guidelines](#)

[School Excellence for Students Learning English as an additional language](#)

[EAL/D Advice for Schools](#)

[Multicultural Education website](#)

[EAL/D Professional Learning](#)

For more information:

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