

Name of Policy	Language and Literacy Policy	
Description of Policy	This policy provides a framework and direction for language and literacy practices in the University. Its approaches to language and literacy practices are aligned with the learning philosophy and Mission of the University.	
<input type="checkbox"/> New Policy		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revision

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Review Date	May 2011
Approved By	Academic Board
Officer Responsible	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs)
Contact Officer:	Administrative Officer, Secretariat

Language and Literacy Policy

1. Preamble

This Policy provides a framework and direction for language and literacy practices in the University. Its approaches to language and literacy practices are consistent with learning philosophy and principles aligned with the Mission of the University, embedded in Australian Catholic University policies (see Related Documents). The Language and Literacy Policy reflects:

- current understandings of language and literacy practices; and
- a continuation and growth in new understandings.

2. Contemporary Understandings of Language and Literacy Practices

Literacy is the ability both to use written language and to understand the ways of using written language, which are socially and culturally shaped. Current literacy theorists talk in terms of 'literacies' – ways of using written language which differ according to social context: eg academic literacy, bureaucratic literacy, and literacies associated with different workplaces and aspects of home and community life. Current understandings are that:

- ability to use written language is not a single skill;
- entering a new cultural context, eg higher education, will involve a new phase of literacy development;
- individuals are always increasing their repertoire of literacy practices to suit the increasing number of different types of literacy contexts and uses; and
- students bring resources to their education from their diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

3. Contemporary Understandings of Language and Literacy Practices

Australian Catholic University recognises the central role of English as the national language of Australia, and is committed to its students having a well developed understanding of literacy practices that will enable them to engage successfully in academic, social, cultural, spiritual and economic life.

In adopting a Language and Literacy Policy, the University recognises the

- centrality of language and literacy in academic, professional and social life;
- rich linguistic resources available within the institution;
- significant role that current language and literacy theory plays in informing curriculum development;
- developments in electronic instrumentation and information technology that have altered the way in which language is perceived and the methods of communication; and
- language needs generated by globalisation.

4. Objectives

The objectives of this Policy are to:

- encourage effective and efficient language, literacy and communication practices in all University activities and operations, for both staff and students;
- provide a framework that will inform language, literacy and communication practices in curriculum design and development;
- strengthen the recognition of differences in conventions and expectations in language, literacy and communication practices in different disciplines and cultures and ensure that the approaches to teaching language and literacy will be sensitive to the diverse backgrounds of students and the requirements of the discipline being studied;
- ensure that all students will be given the opportunity to avail themselves of learning contexts which will enable them, on graduation, to exercise a level of

language and literacy corresponding to their professional needs and to their needs in lifelong learning;

- promote the use of inclusive and non-discriminatory language at all times in order to respect and support cultural diversity and to improve equity in areas of race, ethnicity, disability, age and gender.

5. Language and Literacy Policy

Australian Catholic University:

- recognises that the development of language, literacy and communication skills is an integral component of all courses;
- appreciates the differences in conventions and expectations in language, literacy and communication practices in different disciplines and cultures;
- accepts its responsibility to assist all students, regardless of background, to develop and improve their language, literacy and communication skills to an appropriate standard on graduation;
- accepts its responsibility of encouraging effective and efficient development of language, literacy and communication skills, for both staff and students, in all its activities and operations;
- acknowledges the need for current theories of language and literacy practices to inform and underpin curriculum development.

Accordingly, the University will:

- structure its programs in year 1 to support students to become familiar with the literacy needs of tertiary learning, including through the First Year Experience Program;
- ensure that its programs develop students' competency in the language and literacy practices necessary for success in the discipline being studied and the relevant profession;
- offer its students opportunities to develop their language and literacy in order to foster critical understandings for effective communication;
- require that language, literacy and communication practices in the University are inclusive with respect to race, ethnicity, gender, age and disability;
- ensure, as far as reasonably possible, that approaches to teaching language and literacy practices respect the diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds of students;
- encourage, for both staff and students, effective and efficient language, literacy and communication skills;
- regularly review guidelines for language and literacy practices for curriculum designers and reviewers.

6. Policy Review

The University may make changes to this policy from time to time to improve the effectiveness of its operation. In this regard, any staff member who wishes to make any comments about this policy may forward their suggestions to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs).

7. Further Assistance

Any staff member who requires assistance in understanding this policy should first consult his/her nominated supervisor who is responsible for the implementation and operation of these arrangements in the work area. Should further advice be needed, the staff member should contact the Director, Institute for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning.

Related Documents

The following documents underpin the Language and Literacy Policy.

The ACU Mission Statement
ACU Revised Strategic Plan 1999-2008
ACU Cultural Diversity Policy 2008
ACU Teaching and Learning Plan 2006-2008