



Language Policy

Related Merici Policies

International Baccalaureate Academic Honesty Diploma Programme
International Baccalaureate Assessment Diploma Programme
Inclusion
Admissions Policy

Merici College Mission and Vision

"Merici challenges you to love life, have hope, be faithful and build futures more wondrous than you dare to dream."

As a Catholic community aspiring for excellence, Merici College is inspired by our Catholic teachings:

"Whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." (Philippians 4:8)

We are an innovative, progressive and caring learning community, committed to the well-being of our students and driven by our Catholic values. We work in partnership with parents to provide a nurturing and inclusive environment, which develops young women who can lead and have impact within their communities by showing respect for others, empathy, intercultural understanding and positive stewardship. In order to facilitate the ongoing spiritual, emotional, academic and social development of our young women, Merici College has a comprehensive Pastoral Care system based on Christian beliefs. We create a positive and inclusive learning environment that develops and challenges students who are compassionate, confident and active members of our global community. Our vision for each young woman is that she feels fully prepared to meet the challenges of an increasingly globalised world where differences are valued and respected.

We take St Angela Merici as our guide and as such view each student as a unique individual with inherent dignity.

"The more you esteem them, the more you will love them; the more you love them, the more you will care for and watch over them. And it will be impossible for you not to cherish them day and night, and to have them all engraved in your heart, one by one, for this is how real love acts and works." (St Angela Merici)

Teaching and Learning at Merici College is designed, implemented and evaluated to achieve excellence in education. We promote enthusiasm and energy for learning within our classrooms by utilising a variety of strategies to meet individual student needs. We encourage ownership of learning, higher-order and critical thinking and reflection to empower students and allow them to develop the self-discipline and drive required to become life-long learners.

Our focus is on developing students holistically, so that they become compassionate and active members of our global community: young women who value ethical behaviour, who have a strong yet realistic sense of their own worth, and who are ready to take their place the world.

"Love your daughters equally, do not have any preference for one rather than the other, because they are all children of God, and you do not know what He wishes to make of them." (St Angela Merici)

Rationale/Purpose

College Language Philosophy

The Merici College Mission and Vision Statement¹ aligns with the philosophy and principles of the International Baccalaureate to develop young women who are ready to take their place in the world. One of Merici College's educational goals, to be lifelong learners, supports the IB Diploma Programme compulsory study of language and is an outcome of the Merici College Principles of Powerful Learning.²

Language is integral to enhancing students' skills in cross-cultural communication. Merici College is an internationally-minded school, where students acquire a wider-world view through the understanding and appreciation of other cultures as well as their own culture. The Merici College Language philosophy is also underpinned by The Catholic Education Languages Other Than English (LOTE) policy³ which is reflected in its aims and purpose.

Language in all its forms: oral, visual, written, is the basic tool of communication in our society, and the need to master the use of a mother tongue, the language of instruction and an additional language is a requirement if students are to be informed global citizens. All members of the Merici community need to be actively engaged in promoting a culture in which language learning contributes to students' personal development by cultivating tolerance and respect for other cultures and stimulating curiosity about the lives of people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

The key pedagogies of Merici College listed below, impact on the teaching and learning of language.

- Brain-based learning
- Differentiation and Inclusivity
- Collaborative Teaching
- Integrated ICT⁴

Curriculum Requirements

This document is underpinned by the curriculum requirements of the Australian Curriculum⁵, ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies (ACTBSSS) Senior Secondary Certificate⁶ and the International Baccalaureate Organization (Middle Years Programme and Diploma Programme)⁷.

College Language Profile

Merici College accepts enrolments from all over Canberra and has a diverse mix of cultural and religious backgrounds. The Merici community is currently predominantly made up of English-speaking students (91%), with 9% of students with a different mother tongue. Students from non-English speaking backgrounds originate from Europe, Africa, India, and Asian and Pacific Islands. Less than 1% of students are more proficient in a language other than English. The Merici College language of instruction for the curriculum is English.

¹ Merici College, (2017). *Mission and Vision Statement*. [online] Available at: <https://www.merici.act.edu.au/building-futures/aboutmerici/strategic-directions>

² Merici College, (2017). *Core Teaching and Learning Document*. Canberra. ACT

³ Catholic Education Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn, (2005). *Languages Other Than English (LOTE)* [online] Available at: [https://intranet.cg.catholic.edu.au/formandpolicies/Lists/Policies%202015/Attachments/97/Languages%20Other%20Than%20English%20\(LOTE\)%20Policy.pdf](https://intranet.cg.catholic.edu.au/formandpolicies/Lists/Policies%202015/Attachments/97/Languages%20Other%20Than%20English%20(LOTE)%20Policy.pdf) [Accessed 19 Sep. 2018].

⁴ Merici College, (2017). *Core Teaching and Learning Document*. Canberra. ACT, p. 8.

⁵ Australian Curriculum, Assessment & Reporting Authority (ACARA), (2018). *Australian Curriculum*. [online] Available at: <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/> [Accessed 17 Sep. 2018].

Definitions

Ab initio

Language ab initio - designed for students with no prior experience of the target language, or for those students with very limited previous exposure. Offered at SL only.

iC

Information Centre at Merici College; a vibrant, flexible space that reflects the shift from learning as an individual to learning as a social collaborative activity. The Centre reflects the dynamic information environment and is responsive to the demands of 21st Century learning for independent, self-directed learners who are well versed in the inquiry process. The modern facility is popular with students, both for academic and recreational activities, and is well resourced in both physical and digital resources.

iC Merici online

iC Merici online is available 24/7 and is accessed through Merici College Moodle, providing direct access to: LibGuides (subject specific resources); Oliver (the iC catalogue); and a variety of online resources including databases, eBooks, websites, magazine subscriptions, and ClickView video content.

Language acquisition

Designed for students with some previous experience of the target language.

Mother Tongue

May denote the language learned first; the language identified with as a “native” speaker; the language known best; the language used most⁸

Multilingualism

The use of more than one language beyond the mother tongue in both aural and oral forms.

The Hub

The Hub is an area serviced by Inclusive Education staff where students can have access to a quiet area and individual help where they can work collaboratively with a Learning Support Assistant.

⁶ ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS), (2017). *ACT Senior Secondary Curriculum*. [online] <http://www.bsss.act.edu.au/home> [Accessed 17 Sep. 2018].

⁷ International Baccalaureate Organization, (2015). *Diploma Programme: From principles into practice*. The Hague: IB Publishing Ltd

⁸ International Baccalaureate Organization, (2008). *Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes*. Cardiff: IB Publishing Ltd

Policy

The following policy guidelines are designed to inform the implementation of language learning in the College:

Literacy support for students:

Literacy support is available to students with additional needs through additional support which may include specific Inclusive Education resources. Other support may include:

- Scaffolded tasks for individual students
- Literacy support lessons (Hub)
- Special Provisions for assessments
- Individualised literacy testing and development of strategies for improvement
- Cross-age Tutoring
- Classroom & learning adjustments as outlined in Personalised Plans
- iC and iC Merici online

Indigenous and EAL/D Tutoring

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and students with English as an additional Language, are offered tutoring in English/Literacy by qualified English teachers. Seniors currently access tutoring on their study line and junior students have the time rotated on their timetables.⁹

Extension for student language

Students can participate in a wide variety of activities to develop their language use and utilise their skills creatively and imaginatively. Examples of such activities include mock trial, debating, public speaking, writing competitions, social justice activities, leadership opportunities, representative roles, Cross-age Tutoring, overseas study tours, Christian Service Learning Program (CSLP) involvement, exchange programmes, wide-reading lessons, Shakespeare festival, etc. These activities allow students to have opportunities to use language authentically.

Provision of Language A

All students undertaking the IB Diploma Programme are expected to study at least one Group 1 Language A course as an IB requirement. English, as the predominant mother tongue language is the language offered. To support mother-tongue entitlement as outlined by the IB, Merici College may offer a school-supported self-taught course to students whose mother tongue is not English.¹⁰

Current provisions

Students at Merici College study a programme that meets the requirements of both the Australian Curriculum (ACT Implementation Schedule) and the IB Middle Years Programme in Language A: English. In Years 11 and 12 students choose to complete either the ACTBSSS Senior Secondary Certificate or IB Diploma Programme in English. Students undertaking the ACTBSSS course must study English as a subject and this is the only compulsory subject.¹¹

⁹ Merici College, (2017). *Core Teaching and Learning Document*. Canberra. ACT, p. 16.

¹⁰ International Baccalaureate Organization, (2011). *Language and Learning in IB Programmes*. International Baccalaureate Organization (UK): Cardiff, p. 19.

¹¹ ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies, (2018). *Policy and Procedures Manual*. [online] Available at: http://www.bsss.act.edu.au/The_Board/policy_and_procedures_manual. Accessed [16 Sept 2018].

Year	Curriculum followed	Subjects
Year 7	MYP Year 2	Integrated Humanities
Year 8	MYP Year 3	English
Year 9	MYP Year 4	9 Core / 9 Fast Pace
Year 10	MYP Year 5	10 Core / 10 Fast Pace
Years 11 and 12	IB Diploma Programme	Language A: English Literature (HL) English Language and Literature (SL)
	ACTBSSS Senior Secondary Certificate	English (T) English Literature (T) Essential English (A/M)

Differentiation of Curriculum

The English programmes are designed to enable inclusion and equity of access to all students. In Years 9 and 10, students may elect to complete a Fast Pace version of the English course. In this course, students complete the same curriculum but move through the course more quickly. Teachers of this course also provide literature and activities that extend students beyond their chronological age. Assessment in the Fast Pace program is sometimes varied to suit the needs of the class. The content of the course aligns with the Australian Curriculum and MYP requirements¹². Regular assessment ensures that students and parents are kept informed about progress. Teachers are conscious of the need to develop and maintain students' confidence in their abilities as well as challenging students to extend their skills and experiences.

Language Acquisition*

All students in Years 7-10 will study an additional language (Language Acquisition). In years 11 and 12, students taking the ACTBSSS pathway may opt to study a language acquisition course. At IB DP level it is a requirement of the DP for students to study a language acquisition course. There are two language pathways in IB DP Language Acquisition: ab initio (SL) and Language B (SL / HL). In the language B course, students further develop their ability to communicate in the target language through the study of language, themes and texts. In doing so, they also develop conceptual understandings of how language works, as appropriate to the level of the course. All students undertaking the IB Diploma Programme are expected to study one Group 2 Language Acquisition course as a requirement of the IB Diploma Programme. Students are offered the following modern languages courses:

- Language B – for students with some experience of the language
- Language ab initio – for students with little or no experience of the target language

Year	Curriculum followed	Subjects
Year 7	MYP (Phases 1-6)	Chinese, Italian, French
Year 8	MYP (Phases 1-6)	Chinese, Italian, French
Year 9	MYP (Phases 1-6)	Chinese, Italian, French
Year 10	MYP (Phases 1-6)	Chinese, Italian, French
Years 11 and 12	IB Diploma Programme	Language ab initio: Chinese ab initio (possibly through Pamoja) French ab initio (possibly through Pamoja) *online Spanish ab initio (Pamoja) Language B: Chinese Language B (HL and SL) French Language B (HL and SL)
	ACTBSSS Senior Secondary Certificate* <i>* Proficient language options are offered at the ANU and are available to students wishing to enrol in ANU (Australian National University) Extension Courses</i>	Beginning Chinese (T) Beginning French (T) Beginning Italian (T) ¹³ Beginning Spanish (T) Continuing Chinese (T) Continuing French (T) Continuing Italian (T/A)

¹² Australian Curriculum, Assessment & Reporting Authority (ACARA), (2018). Australian Curriculum. [online] Available at:

<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/> [Accessed 17 Sep. 2018].

¹³ Merici College, (2018). *2019 Senior Handbook and Course Outlines*. Merici College

*Courses are offered subject to student demand and proficiency, online course availability and teacher availability.

MYP Language B Exceptions:

(a) Late Arrivals

Students who enrol at the College after Year 7 with limited prior language experience can access support through Cross-age Tutoring, private tuition and support from the classroom teacher outside the class. In some individually assessed cases, (such as arrivals during Year 10) students in this situation would not be required to complete a language study.

(b) Literacy Development

Students identified by teachers who are not able to complete the MYP language acquisition requirement will be provided with the opportunity to undertake a modified course. These students will be invited to complete an adjusted curriculum with a focus on literacy in language to support their overall literacy and language development. This course aims to support students in acquiring cultural literacy to become tolerant global citizens and is overseen by the English & Languages Faculty. This course is accessible by invitation only to a small number of students and in consultation with the Inclusive Education Coordinator, IB Coordinator, Deputy Principal Learning and parents of the students.

DP Language Acquisition Exceptions:

Students who have arrived at Merici College at the beginning of Year 11 will be provided with the opportunity to study Language Acquisition ab initio level for the Diploma. Students who do not have the basic literacy skills in the mother tongue to meet the requirements of an entry level Language Acquisition may seek to undertake the ACTBSSS Senior Secondary Certificate, for example, through the Modified course pathway, with the aim for students to be successful in their academic studies. Relevant parents, students and staff will be involved in the decision-making process.

Encouraging multilingualism

To foster a culture of language learning, Merici College will provide opportunities for the study of more than one language in high school and senior college.

Students undertaking the IB Diploma Programme are required to study:

- One Group 1 and one Group 2 subject, or
- Two Group 1 subjects
- In some diploma combinations a further language – from either Group 1 or 2 could be studied instead of a Group 6 subject¹⁴

Merici College may provide more than one Group 1 or 2 subject, depending on the size of the cohort, student ability, teacher availability and resources. Below are strategies already in place, and suggested areas for future models of language learning offerings for students wishing to study 2 languages at Language B level for the IB DP (either at HL, SL or ab initio):

International Baccalaureate Organization, (2011). *Language and Learning in IB Programmes*. International Baccalaureate Organization (UK): Cardiff, p. 19.

- The College, where possible, will support through timetabling.
- Students may choose to complete a course through private tuition, in consultation and approval from the College.

Special request and school-supported self-taught options

The College may support special requests and self-taught options in the Diploma Years programme, as outlined by the IB. This decision would need to be made in conjunction with the Deputy Principal Learning, IB Coordinator, relevant teachers, students and parents.

Mother tongue maintenance

The College will encourage students with a mother tongue other than English to maintain their language through the following strategies:

- Community Language Schools
- Private tuition
- Encourage use of mother tongue at home

More information on the maintenance of students' mother tongue could be accessed through:

- Canberra Multicultural Community Forum (CMCF)
- ACT Bilingual Education Alliance
- The Mandarin Community Tutoring Project

Mother tongue maintenance is not accessed through Language B classes.

Procedures

Language Acquisition

At Diploma Level, students will be assessed by Merici qualified IB staff to determine which level a student should be placed for Language Acquisition: Ab initio or Language B. Any student who is already able to understand and respond to spoken and written language on a range of common topics is not to be placed in language ab initio as this would not provide an appropriate academic challenge, nor is it fair for those students who are genuine beginners of the language.

Phase Progression in MYP

All Year 7 students entering the college will be placed at phase 1 unless parents have indicated that their daughter has some prior language acquisition experience in the selected language. Students in the MYP at Merici College will only progress to the next phase of language acquisition once they have reached a grade 7 in a specific MYP phase. Each semester, reporting data will be used to notify those students and their parents in writing if they are moving up phases. Moving phases may not mean changing classes. Classes may contain more than one phase of language acquisition learners but will be organised vertically in phases rather than chronologically.

Referencing

The Merici College Referencing Guide¹⁵ is the referencing protocol which adheres to the Harvard system utilised College-wide and is common practice for students across Years 7-12.

Roles and Responsibilities

All teachers at Merici College are teachers of language. The English & Languages Department are responsible for the assessment of proficiency in language at Merici College. Parents are encouraged to share with the College any previous exposure to additional languages other than English.

Assessment

Upon entry to the College at Year 7 level, students will be required to submit preferences for Language Acquisition courses. Students will continue with this language for the duration of the MYP unless Phase 4 is achieved. Language classes will be organised in a vertical system, rather than based on chronological age. Upon completion of Phase 4, students may choose to study an additional language, which is also at the discretion of the College.

Students entering the Diploma Programme with no prior language with no prior experience of the target language, or for those students with very limited previous exposure will undertake an ab initio course.

Acceptance to HL Language Acquisition courses.

In order to be accepted onto HL Language Acquisition, a teacher recommendation must be obtained, and the student must accept the level of study recommended by the teacher. This is to ensure the best chance of success in the Diploma Programme.

For students entering the College during Years 11 and 12 wishing to take the Diploma Programme, the level of knowledge may be clarified by any or all the following ways:

- An oral discussion with the Head of Faculty or their delegate in that subject area
- Previous school reports
- Contact directly with previous school to discuss level of performance
- Written test (not standardised, developed based on any areas that Head of Faculty or delegate deems appropriate).

For current students studying in Year 10 at Merici College wishing to embark on the IB DP in Years 11 and 12, their level of suitability for Language Acquisition will be assessed using their College semester reports, discussion with the student's teachers and Head of Faculty as required. The recommendations will be shared during course counselling sessions with students and their families if not before.

Forms

Online teacher recommendation form

References

ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS), (2017). *ACT Senior Secondary Curriculum*. [online] <http://www.bsss.act.edu.au/home> [Accessed 17 Sep. 2018].

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