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# Good Practice Report – English Language Proficiency

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## List of acronyms and abbreviations used

AEI	Australian Education International
AHELO	Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes
ALL	Academic Language and Learning
ALTC	Australian Learning and Teaching Council Limited
AUQA	Australian Universities Quality Agency
CAE	Certificate of Advanced English
CLA	Collegiate Learning Assessment
DVC (A)	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
ELP	English Language Proficiency
ESL	English as a Second Language
GPP	Good Practice Principles for English language proficiency for international students in Australian universities
IEAA	International Education Association of Australia
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
IoC	Internationalisation of the Curriculum
LTAS	Learning and Teaching Academic Standards
OLT	Office for Learning and Teaching
PELA	Post-entry English language assessment
PTE	Pearson Test of English
TAFE	Technology and Further Education
TEQSA	Tertiary Education Quality Standards Authority
TLO	Threshold Learning Outcome
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
WIL	Work Integrated Learning

## Overview

This guide provides a summary of research into good practices in developing students' English Language Proficiency (ELP), and OLT/ALTC projects and fellowships associated with the issue. It also pinpoints gaps in the literature and makes recommendations for future work.

The term 'ELP' will be used throughout this report because it appears within higher education policy documents, such as the *Higher Education Standards Framework* (2011). Many have argued that this is not the best term to use, particularly when most Australian universities use 'written and oral communication' in their graduate attributes rather than 'ELP'. It is not the aim of this literature review to enter into debates concerning terminology, although we acknowledge that they exist. Rather the aim of this report is to offer insights into what works best in assuring that students graduate with the necessary communication skills for further study or employment. Therefore, 'ELP' will be used in the broadest sense in discussing English language and literacy learning outcomes in higher education. Terms such as 'communication skills' and 'academic literacy' will also be used when referring to research that uses this terminology.

### All students in higher education

Much of the research and the OLT/ALTC projects that have informed this guide have centered on ELP issues for international students. Since the development of the *Good Practice Principles for English Language Proficiency for International Students in Australian Universities* (AUQA, 2009), there has been increased activity within the higher education sector to better address the language and learning needs of international students. With the uncapping of university places and the establishment of *The Higher Education Standards Framework* (DIISRTE, 2011), interest has focused on assuring threshold ELP learning outcomes of all students. Yet, there is very little available research in Australia regarding the ELP of domestic students. The majority of the research focuses on a deficit view that treats international students as a 'problem' to be dealt with and domestic students as 'unproblematic' when it comes to ELP. Put simply, ELP is viewed as an international student issue, and the majority of the research and projects reviewed for this guide reflect this.

**Recommendation 1: Future work into ELP should include all students, rather than only international students, and consider replacing the term 'ELP' with 'communication skills' to move the focus away from international students.**

### Leadership in teaching and learning

There has been much work in the area of developing students' ELP in higher education over the years and we know that what works best is integrating ELP into disciplinary teaching. However, this is also the main stumbling block, as there is very little evidence of sustained practices in the research. Part of the reason for this is that ELP learning

outcomes have not traditionally been core business within universities. It is clear that strong organisational leadership is required to integrate ELP learning outcomes within institutional quality assurance measures, and learning and teaching practices. If English language learning outcomes are everyone's business, then how can organisational leaders facilitate systematic and integrated approaches? We have had much project work at the teaching level, but what is required is more at the leadership level, particularly by course and unit coordinators.

**Recommendation 2: Fund work on good practices for organisational leadership to develop institutional-wide approaches to ELP.**

### **Learning analytics online technologies**

Many of the projects and research considered in this guide have pointed to the difficulty encountered by universities in monitoring and evaluating the progress of their students and identifying students at risk due to their ELP. A key challenge for universities lies in collecting relevant data for reporting, monitoring and evaluating students' ELP development. Currently there is much activity within Australian universities involving the development of learning analytics and online technologies to support and improve students' learning experiences and outcomes, and ELP should be included in these activities. In particular, work could focus on supporting teaching academics to more easily interpret learning analytics to help them improve their teaching and learning practices.

**Recommendation 3: Future funding on learning analytics and online technologies projects should include ELP.**

### **Assessment of ELP**

The literature review emphasises the importance of assessing students' ELP throughout their study at university. Most of the activity is focused on the first year, particularly with the increased use of Post-entry language assessment (PELA) to identify students at risk and offer targeted support. There is less evidence that ELP is assessed within units and across degrees in ways that protect minimum ELP learning outcomes on graduation. Assessment of ELP should occur within the disciplines as ELP is integral to learning and assessment in the disciplines. Part of the difficulty with assessing ELP is that many institutions have not necessarily identified minimum standards in ELP learning outcomes. More work should be done in this area involving teaching academics within the disciplines.

**Recommendation 4: Future funding on ELP assessment across the disciplines should focus on ways of providing evidence of the achievement of minimum standards in ELP outcomes.**

### **Oral language assessment**

There is very little research on oral language assessment in higher education, as written assessment has been the main area of focus.

**Recommendation 5: Fund future projects that focus on oral language assessment.**

It is evident from the literature review that there has been much work over the last seven years in identifying good practices in teaching, learning and assessing ELP. We know from the research and projects that the key to developing and assessing ELP is to integrate it with disciplinary learning and teaching. We also know that this is very difficult to do. The literature is dominated by examples of micro-level initiatives to improve practice, which do not appear to be sustainable. There are also a number of examples of the difficulties academic language and learning (ALL) advisors encounter in gaining access to disciplinary teaching and learning contexts. It is difficult to sustain micro-level practices without macro-level support. The recommendations for future activities are focused on those responsible for the leadership of learning and teaching.

**Recommendation 6: Present key findings from the good practice guide to Universities Australia, DVCs (A), and Chairs of Academic Boards and Senates meetings.**

**Recommendation 7: Present seminars on whole-institutional approaches to assuring ELP of graduates for leaders in learning and teaching.**

**Recommendation 8: Develop a series of five three-minute videos about options and strategies for integrating ELP into disciplinary learning and assessment for unit coordinators.**

## Literature review of Australian and international scholarly research and publications

### Introduction

One of the outcomes of globalisation has been the rise of English as the international language of higher education. Worldwide, over half of the three million students that seek to study in a foreign country travel from Asia to study in English speaking universities in Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America (OECD, 2013). One of the main factors influencing the selection of a study destination by international students is English language. There has also been an increase in research investigating issues associated with developing students' English language proficiency (ELP) in higher education in Australia and internationally.

A central concern of much of the research is on improving English language and literacy learning outcomes for graduates. In Australia, the ELP of students has been a focus of research in recent years with some researchers raising concerns about whether Australian universities are graduating students with adequate levels of ELP for further study or for employment. For example, there have been studies which claim that international students' work is soft-marked (Bretag, 2007; Foster, 2012), as well as some particularly influential research that has questioned whether international students graduate with an appropriate level of ELP (Birrell, 2006). There are perceptions within the community that Australian graduates (international and domestic) lack the required levels of ELP for employment. Some professional associations require graduates to undertake English language tests as evidence that they have the minimum ELP for employment. Similarly, there are views that the uncapping of student numbers in undergraduate degrees will result in falling standards.

So far, universities have not managed to dispel these perceptions. There is very little data available to either support or refute any of the above views. Most of the available research into ELP is qualitative in nature and small in scale (Dunworth, 2013; Arkoudis, Baik & Richardson, 2012). It is dominated by micro-level practices that do not appear to be sustainable. There has been less attention on understanding ELP exit standards, and the teaching, learning and assessment practices that ensure graduates' ELP learning outcomes. As James (2014: 2) has argued, within the demand driven Australian higher education system universities have not been "swift to demonstrate how their pedagogies and assessment systems can protect minimum standards on graduation". In terms of ELP, more integrated and sophisticated methods are required if universities are serious about assuring graduates' ELP. The challenge for universities is to incorporate ELP into their existing quality assurance processes for graduate standards. This requires a pedagogic shift within institutions to view ELP as:

- Relevant to all students
- Integrated within disciplinary learning and teaching
- Incorporated into institutional quality assurance processes (Arkoudis, 2014).

This guide provides a summary of research into good practices in developing students' English Language Proficiency (ELP), and OLT/ALTC projects and fellowships associated with the issue. It identifies good practices and areas where further work needs to occur.

### Reframing ELP as integral to learning in higher education

English language entry requirements have been used by universities to assure ELP standards upon entry, both within Australia and internationally in English-medium universities. There are a number of English language entry pathways into university study. Currently, international students can use the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the Certificate of Advanced English (CAE), and the Pearson Test of English Academic (PTE Academic) as a means to gain entry into an Australian higher education institution. There has been a misconception that English language tests are the most common entry pathway used by international students. However, some universities have indicated that less than 20 per cent of international students use this pathway to study at their institution (Arkoudis, 2014). Apart from entry tests, there are a variety of other pathways into tertiary study for international students. These range from the completion of a TAFE certificate or diploma that provides direct entry into the first or second year of a university course, to the completion of the equivalent of the final year at an Australian high school (Arkoudis, 2013). Alternative pathways into higher education make up the majority of the ways that international students gain access to tertiary education. Domestic students also enter university through a variety of pathways, and within the demand driven system, universities are now enrolling students who would not have attended university in the past (Kemp & Norton, 2014). What is evident is that students enter university with diverse education and English language backgrounds which means that there is no 'standard' level of ELP but rather that students enter their university studies with different levels of ELP preparedness.

What is clear from the research is that English language entry requirements can at best indicate a readiness to commence study, and are not in themselves a measure of success at university (Murray & Arkoudis, 2013). Whatever the field of study, in most learning and assessment, students express their understanding of concepts and ideas through oral and written communication. This means that the role of ELP is integral to disciplinary learning, teaching and assessment. This would be so for international and domestic students and universities should be able to demonstrate that all graduates have developed at least threshold level ELP standards. There is very little in the literature on good practices for all students, however, we can refer to the research about international students to develop good practices.

In 2008, the Australian Federal Government commissioned the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) to develop the *Good Practice Principles for English Language Proficiency for International Students* (GPP) (AUQA, 2009). The GPP provided guidance to universities on addressing the English language needs of international students. They formed a part of the AUQA quality audits and influenced, to a certain extent, universities' policies and practices. The ten principles in the GPP emphasised ELP development from entry, in-course and exit. The ten principles are:

1. Universities are responsible for ensuring that their students are sufficiently competent in the English language to participate effectively in their university studies.
2. Resourcing for English language development is adequate to meet students' needs throughout their studies.
3. Students have responsibilities for further developing their English language proficiency during their study at university and are advised of these responsibilities prior to enrolment.
4. Universities ensure that the English language entry pathways they approve for the admission of students enable these students to participate effectively in their studies.
5. English language proficiency and communication skills are important graduate attributes for all students.
6. Development of English language proficiency is integrated with curriculum design, assessment practices and course delivery through a variety of methods.
7. Students' English Language Development needs are diagnosed early in their studies and addressed, with ongoing opportunities for self-assessment.
8. International students are supported from the outset to adapt to their academic, socio-cultural and linguistic environments.
9. International students are encouraged and supported to enhance their English language development through effective social interaction on and off campus.
10. Universities use evidence from a variety of sources to monitor and improve their English language development activities. (AUQA, 2009: 3).

Of the ten principles, the one that appears to have been taken up by many universities is the seventh principle, which is that 'Students' English language development needs are diagnosed early in their studies and addressed, with on-going opportunities for self-assessment'. Of the 39 Australian universities, 27 currently use some form of Post-entry Language Assessment (PELA). These range in format, design, content, students targeted, feedback processes and follow-up (Dunworth, 2013). There is much debate and mixed reports about the usefulness of PELAs. While the intent is to raise students' awareness about developing their ELP and for academics to be aware of how they can assist students in this area, there is some evidence to suggest that this does not necessarily occur (Arkoudis, 2014; Ransom, 2009). On the other hand, it appears that if PELAs are integrated within subjects then students undertake the test and academics use the results to inform their curriculum design (Arkoudis, 2014; Harris, 2013).

There has been some criticism of the GPP since their release. These critiques are mainly concerned with definitional issues related to definitional issues concerning the use of 'English Language Proficiency' within the document (Murray, 2010) and the inclusion of international students and the exclusion of other cohorts (Harper, Prentice, & Wilson, 2011). These critiques demonstrate an important point – the higher education landscape has changed in Australia since the GPP was written. Perhaps PELAs are no longer a useful use of resources within a demand-driven system where students enter their studies with different levels of ELP preparedness. Maybe resources might be better

placed in developing ELP within disciplinary learning rather than on resourcing PELAs (Arkoudis, 2014).

The uncapping of student places has resulted in a changing focus from international to all students and from entry to exit standards. In 2011, this move was underlined by the development of The *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards)* (DIISRTE, 2011). Since the development of the framework, the priority in quality of learning and teaching in higher education is mainly focused on assuring graduates' learning outcomes, and this is reflected in the research (i.e. Dowling & Hadgraft, 2013a; 2013b; 2014; Oliver, 2011). There is now a considerable push within the sector towards the development of evidenced-based approaches that can assure graduate outcomes, including ELP. Specifically, the *Threshold Standards* state that:

The higher education provider is able to demonstrate appropriate progression and completion rates and students who complete the course of study have attained key graduate attributes including an appropriate level of English language proficiency. (DIISRTE, 2011, p. 17)

The GPP may now need to be updated, in light of the changes to the Australian higher education environment highlighted above, so that it has an increased focus on ELP standards at exit for all students.

### **ELP and disciplinary learning and teaching: what works best?**

As stated earlier, the ELP of graduates is an ongoing concern for Australian universities and there has been some progress in addressing this issue within students' university study (Dunworth, 2013). While there is general agreement that embedding ELP into disciplinary curricula is the approach that should be adopted within universities, the challenge lies in how this can be achieved (Arkoudis, 2014). As will be demonstrated, the contemporary view is that ELP is an issue that concerns all students. In order to develop good practices for ELP that are inclusive of all students, it is important to draw on research that can inform practices.

#### **What we know**

Academic Language and Learning (ALL) advisors have long been part of the Australian higher education landscape. Since the 1960s, then going under the moniker 'learning skills counselors', ALL advisors have provided a variety of forms of learning support to students (Chanock, 2011, A-60). Traditionally, the primary form of support that they have provided is English language development advice to students, in either one-to-one sessions or workshops under a model that operates largely outside of disciplinary curricula. This model provided by ALL advisors has been characterised as a 'deficit', because they target students who are considered to be in need of remedial support for English language outside of the curriculum.

In recent years the deficit model has started to change, with attempts by ALL advisors to provide English language development activities within disciplinary curricula. There are a number of studies that provide evidence to support their move in this direction. First, it is argued that a non-compulsory model that exists outside of the curriculum does not target the right students, given that students who have less significant English language development needs are more likely to attend ALL workshops and sessions and those

who are 'weaker' students may avoid attending (Arkoudis, Baik, & Richardson, 2012, p. 42; Watkins, 2007; (Wingate, 2006)). Second, there is some evidence that attendance of support programs does not necessarily lead to improved learning outcomes (Baik & Greig, 2009; James, 2010), in which case they are not necessarily the best use of resources. Third, some of the studies indicate that there are low attendance rates in workshops (Harris & Ashton, 2011; Rochecouste, Oliver, Mulligan, & Davies, 2010) and the main reasons for this are that students who are struggling with their studies would rather work on their studies than attend ELP programs (O'Loughlin & Arkoudis, 2009), and it is difficult to force students to attend (Ransom, 2009). The international literature reviewed for this guide supports these findings (for example, Garcia, et al, 2013; Cots, 2013; Wilkinson, 2013).

It therefore appears that ELP support programs that operate outside of disciplinary learning are perhaps not the best model for developing students' ELP. However, many universities still use this model largely due to the difficulties associated with integrating ELP into disciplinary curricula (Arkoudis et al, 2012), even though the projects and research reviewed for this guide support the view that ELP should be integrated into disciplinary teaching (for example, Dunworth, 2013; Wingate, 2011). A common theme in the literature is the frustration ALL advisors experience at being unable to get traction to work with disciplinary academics to improve students' learning outcomes within disciplinary curricula. The reasons for this are varied, but they are usually that some academics are unaware of the kind of work that ALL advisors do, and that they think that English language support should not form part of their teaching and learning practices (Arkoudis, Baik, & Richardson, 2012; Chanock, 2007a; Chanock, 2007b; Harper, 2013).

A second issue that emerges from the literature is that most of the examples of good practices for embedding ELP have been initiated by academics and ALL advisors who decide to work together to develop ELP of students within disciplinary teaching (Baik & Greig, 2009; Kennelly, Maldoni, & Davis, 2010; Mort & Drury, 2012). These studies provide evidence of students' ELP development. Nevertheless these micro-level approaches are difficult to sustain over time and do not necessarily result in systematic and integrated change. For example, the program developed by Baik & Greig and often quoted in the literature as an example of good practice, only operated for two semesters. Therefore, the critical issue is not only about what options work best, but how universities can develop sustainable and integrated whole-of-university approaches to assure graduates' ELP outcomes. There is an emerging body of work that is attempting to tease out the issues that influence the successful implementation of whole-institutional approaches. For example, Harper (2013) discusses the lessons learnt in implementing English language strategy at the University of South Australia.

The OLT fellowship by Arkoudis (2014) has explored this issue. The main findings from the fellowship are that assessment of oral and written communication skills should be core business in university teaching and learning, alongside assessment of disciplinary knowledge. How can this be achieved? The impetus for change will come from universities adopting the stance that students will not be able to graduate from their university courses unless they can demonstrate effective oral and written communication skills.

The fellowship findings suggest that while a number of higher education institutions have developed institutional strategies for assuring the communication skills of their graduates, practices can be disjointed and not connected to disciplinary assessment. It is not possible to protect minimum standards for oral and written English language and literacy skills unless these are assessed, and the most appropriate place for this assessment to occur is within disciplinary teaching and learning. However there is still much debate about who is responsible for developing and assessing students' communication skills. What is required is an integrated approach that includes a variety of strategies that fit together to develop and assess students' communication skills. This does not mean that it is shared evenly but rather that it is distributed according to the professional responsibilities of key people involved in teaching and learning. The idea of distributed responsibilities is useful in considering how various approaches contribute to ensuring students have attained threshold levels of English language communication upon graduation. Distributed responsibilities include the following:

- **Teaching and Learning leaders** (can include Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Associate Deans Teaching and Learning) – What is the evidence base that graduates have attained threshold oral and written communication skills upon completion?
- **Course coordinators** – What communication skills are students expected to have on completion of the course? Where and how are these assessed during the course of study?
- **Teaching academics** – What are the learning outcomes for the unit in terms of communication skills? How will these be taught and assessed?
- **Academic Language and Literacy Advisors** – How can course coordinators and teaching academics include ALL advisors in developing resources for teaching communication skills?

All of the above should increase students' awareness of their responsibilities towards developing their communication skills and of the importance of their communication skills for success in university study and employability.

### What are good practices?

In literature on ELP of students in higher education several points of understanding have been highlighted. Firstly, preliminary research demonstrates that students who attend content-based English language tutorials receive higher grades (Baik & Greig 2009). However, this research was a preliminary study, and cannot form the basis of any definitive judgments about the widespread effectiveness of such tutorials. More research is required.

Secondly, students have been shown to listen to academics regarding their learning needs, including those regarding their ELP development. In contrast, they are shown not to seek help outside of the curriculum for ELP development for a set of reasons (Arkoudis, Baik, & Richardson, 2012; Wingate, 2006; Watkins, 2007). This suggests that any approach taken to ELP development is best served by measures taken within the curriculum, as these are most likely to be effective. However, this is not to suggest that existing measures outside of the curriculum should be abandoned. These still have value,

and can achieve positive outcomes. It is to stress that approaches within the curriculum are the key to ELP development of students, and should be the focus of future efforts.

Third, there is clear evidence that students' learning is driven by assessment, in particular by what they think will help them succeed in their assessment (see Arkoudis, Baik, & Richardson 2012; Boud, 1999). As such, an effective way to address the ELP development needs of students is through assessment with explicit English language components. This includes direct and explicit comments about students' English use in feedback, English language (or 'communication') marking criteria, and the explanation to students of the importance of academic language and literacy in their assessment in class time. However, we also know that ELP is not currently assessed to any great degree in Australia and instead is assessed implicitly, if at all (Arkoudis, Baik, & Richardson, 2012). This causes students not to value their ELP development, as they do not realise that it is crucial to their continued academic success, and indeed vocational success at the end of their degree programs. As such, it is essential that ELP development strategies focus on how to best incorporate English language components within assessment, as it is in this area that good student outcomes regarding ELP development can be achieved.

The following table from Arkoudis, Baik & Richardson (2012, p. 91) offers nine suggestions for enhancing assessment practice to embed ELP development within the disciplines.

**Table 1: Nine assessment practices to support ELP development in higher education**

**For academic teaching staff**

1. Emphasise the importance of ELP through explicit and published assessment criteria that align with the learning objectives of subjects and the course overall.
2. Clarify expectations in relation to ELP and the standards required to complete the assessment task.
3. Work with language specialists to develop teaching and learning activities that feed into the assessment task and help students develop their ELP.
4. Use formative assessment tasks that focus on ELP development where students have opportunities to learn from feedback from peers (and teachers).
5. Explore possibilities for using peer- and self- assessment to encourage self-regulated language learning.

**For department leaders**

6. Include explicit reference to ELP in published course graduate attributes and encourage/support collaboration between content experts and language specialists to explore practical ways of assessing ELP as part of disciplinary learning.
7. Engage in whole-of-course curriculum mapping and review to ensure that ELP is developed and assessed throughout the course.
8. Facilitate discussion among teaching staff to share ideas for assessment design, examine issues related to the assessment of EAL student work, and develop a shared understanding of minimum standards of ELP attainment for the degree.
9. Provide opportunities and incentives for staff to engage in professional development activities on curriculum design and assessment for developing students' ELP.

### **Are exit English language tests the answer to assuring graduates' ELP?**

The issue of exit English language tests is mentioned in the literature as a possible strategy to assure the ELP outcomes of graduates. These are currently used in some health professions to assess international graduates' ELP for employment. But is a standardised English language exit test the best way to know about ELP attainment on completion? There are currently three Australian universities that offer IELTS tests for their international students who are about to graduate from their course (Humphreys & Gribble, 2013). It should be noted that the tests are voluntary for international students and do not include domestic students.

While exit testing has some virtues, using exit testing as a pass or fail hurdle at the end of degree programs is not the magic bullet to assure graduates' ELP learning outcomes (Humphreys & Gribble, 2013). The research from Hong Kong and Taiwan further supports this finding (Qian, 2007; Zhendong, 2009; Pan & Newfields, 2011). There is very little research about the validity and reliability of these tests in terms of assessing whether graduates have the English language necessary for their careers and professions. Standardised language tests were developed to measure English language for entry to university. They were not designed as a measurement for entry to the workplace. A one-size-fits-all model of English language testing may not provide

universities, employers and professional associations with the occupation-specific information they need for accessing workplace readiness (Arkoudis, et al, 2009).

Despite the issues listed above, with careful development, standardised English language testing may have a role in assessing the ELP levels of graduates from universities. However, this would require a strategy with two important aspects. First, new test development that is inclusive of all students and linked to the particular ELP standards required within professions would be needed. In addition, other sources of information would need to be used for employers to make an adequate assessment of graduates' English language skills for the workplace. Second, exit testing would have to be used as part of a multi-pronged strategy, where evidence-based measures are first developed and implemented within the curriculum to ensure that English language is developed incrementally throughout degree programs, so that students can comfortably approach exit tests.

In Australia, many universities have introduced capstone experiences within degrees. Capstone subjects are defined as subjects offered in the final year of an undergraduate course and are designed to assess students' learning from the various strands of their undergraduate program. Examples of capstone subjects can include a research project, work experience or a coursework subject where students demonstrate their knowledge and skills. Given that capstone subjects assess the disciplinary knowledge of final year undergraduate students, they could also be used to assess students' ELP. While there has been some activity in this area, the challenge is to incorporate inter-institutional moderation in final year subjects across disciplines (Krause, et al, 2014) to assure learning outcomes, including ELP.

## Conclusion

The above discussion has drawn on research into ELP in higher education in order to identify evidence of good practice and areas that require further research. The challenge lies in developing good practices that assure the ELP of graduates. The review has identified eight recommendations for future work to assist universities. These are:

Recommendation 1: Future work into ELP should include all students, rather than only international students, and consider a the term 'ELP' with 'communication skills' to move the focus away from international students.

Recommendation 2: Fund work on good practices for organisational leadership to develop institutional-wide approaches to ELP.

Recommendation 3: Future funding on learning analytics and online technologies projects should include ELP.

Recommendation 4: Future funding on ELP assessment across the disciplines should focus on ways of providing evidence of the achievement of minimum standards in ELP outcomes.

Recommendation 5: Fund future projects that focus on oral language assessment.

It is evident from the literature review that there has been much work over the last seven years in identifying good practices in teaching, learning and assessing ELP. We know from the research and projects that the key to developing and assessing ELP is to integrate it with disciplinary learning and teaching. We also know that this is very difficult to do. The literature is dominated by examples of micro-level initiatives to improve practice, which do not appear to be sustainable. There are also a number of examples of the difficulties ALL advisors encounter in gaining access to disciplinary teaching and learning contexts. It is difficult to sustain micro-level practices without macro-level support. The recommendations for future activities are focused on those responsible for the leadership of learning and teaching.

Recommendation 6: Present key findings from the good practice guide to Universities Australia, DVCs (A), and Chairs of Academic Boards and Senates meetings.

Recommendation 7: Present seminars on whole-institutional approaches to assuring ELP of graduates for leaders in learning and teaching.

Recommendation 8: Develop a series of five three-minute videos about options and strategies for integrating ELP into disciplinary learning and assessment for unit coordinators.

## OLT/ALTC projects and fellowships

An account of each ALTC/OLT project, or fellowship that is either relevant to, or directly addresses the issue of ELP development is provided below. Overall, there are three prominent outcomes relating to ELP development that emerge from these fellowships and projects:

- First, universities need to develop mechanisms that can help assure graduates' ELP (See ALTC, 2010; ALTC, 2011; Colthorpe, et al, 2013; Hancock, et al, 2013, 9; Wesley, 2011).
- Second, ELP development strategies need to target all students instead of just international students (See Briguglio, 2013; Dunworth, 2012; Rouchecouste, et al, 2010).
- Finally, and most forcefully, ELP needs to be explicitly assessed (See Bentley and Squelch, 2012b, p. 55-56; Colthorpe, et al, 2013; Dunworth, 2013; IEAA, 2013, p. 5; Krause, et al, 2014, p. 64; Rouchecouste, et al, 2010, p. 1-5).

These issues are highlighted within the text throughout, as is other information pertaining to the ELP development of students. The three outcomes are indicative of the broader environment in higher education, where the shift is towards assuring the graduate attributes of all students, in part by strategically assessing students on these attributes within disciplinary curricula (Hancock, et al, 2013; Krause, et al, 2014).

The following projects and fellowships will be structured into three broad categories based on the chief focus of their subject matter. They are: (i) direct focus on ELP, (ii) graduate attributes and learning outcomes, and (iii) intercultural competence and internationalising the curriculum.

## Completed OLT/ALTC projects and fellowships: Direct focus on ELP

### Working in the third space: promoting interdisciplinary collaboration to embed English language development into the disciplines (2013)

This fellowship **promoted collaboration between disciplinary academics and Academic Language and Learning (ALL) advisors**, to improve English language development within the curriculum. In particular, the project outlined an evidence-based strategy that disciplinary academics, and ALL advisors can use to collaborate with each other. This is called the Working in the Third Space (WITTS) model for interdisciplinary collaboration' (Briguglio, 2013). The WITTS model provides insights into how to use the combined

expertise of ALL staff and disciplinary academics in **integrating both discipline specific and non-discipline specific ELP content within disciplinary curricula**. Although the model was developed and applied within the context of a specific institution, it still represents a step forward in the development of English language strategies within disciplinary curricula. In the fellowship final report it was argued that **ELP development should be considered an issue that concerns all students and not just international students** (Briguglio, 2013, p. 12-14), which is in line with the direction the sector is moving in.

#### **Key Resources:**

- Briguglio, C. (2013). *Working in the third space: promoting interdisciplinary collaboration to embed English language development into the disciplines, Final Report 2013*. Sydney: Office for Learning and Teaching.

#### **Degrees of Proficiency: Building a strategic approach to university students' English language assessment and development (ID11-2048) (2013)**

The OLT project “Degrees of proficiency: building a strategic approach to university students’ English language development” developed a resource to assist in English language development strategies. The resource, the ‘Degrees of Proficiency website’ (<http://www.degreesofproficiency.aall.org.au>), contains a variety of examples of good practice regarding English language development within the sector. When new strategies are implemented by different institutions, they are shared on the website, so the website has the capacity to maintain its relevance over time. The website also provides step-by-step instructions on how English language development may be effectively assessed after entry with PELAs (<http://www.degreesofproficiency.aall.org.au/post-entry-language-assessment>). As a resource, the website identifies what the best practice in the development and implementation of PELAs is, depending on the contextual needs of particular institutions, and so it is a useful tool that can be drawn upon across the sector.

The key outcome of this project was that it provided some impetus for the **implementation of evidence-based approaches for ELP development**. It did so by disseminating information concerning approaches towards English language development that have been trialed by universities, with the range of strategies that are documented on the degrees of proficiency website.

#### **Key Resources:**

- Degrees of Proficiency Website: <http://www.degreesofproficiency.aall.org.au>
- Dunworth, K (2013). *Degrees of Proficiency: Building a strategic approach to university students’ English language assessment and development (Final Report)*. Sydney: Office for Learning and Teaching.

#### **Ms Parrot the detective solves grammar problems in an online resource for students and lecturers (SD12-2172) (2013)**

The aim of this project was to highlight the correct use of the English article in an easily accessible manner to EAL students, and provide strategies for lecturers and tutors in teaching this skill to EAL students. The vehicle through which the project attempted this was an interactive video, in which the protagonist, ‘Ms Parrot’ (Julia Miller), humorously

teaches the English article, primarily through participating in a fictional game show. The project also attempted to **'raise the profile of the issue of English language development'** across the sector (Miller, 2013, 7-8).

**Key Resources:**

- Ms Parrot video and accompanying information can be found at: <https://www.adelaide.edu.au/english-for-uni/>
- Miller, J. (2013). *Ms Parrot the detective solves grammar problems in an online resource for students and lecturers: Final Report 2013*. Sydney: Office for Learning and Teaching.

### **A cross-disciplinary approach to language support for first year students in the science disciplines (CG7-441) (2011)**

This project concerned **strategies that target the development of discipline specific, and non-discipline specific language skills** in science students. The focus of the project was a set of studies across a range of institutions. These involved the development and implementation of strategies in four first year science classes, and in one second year subject (See Zhang, et al, 2011a, p. 11). There were a total of eight strategies used across the five institutions, such as the use of flashcards for vocabulary revision, and these drew heavily on the disciplinary expertise of the project leader, who has a history of educating in foreign language teaching. The strategies were outlined in the final project report (Zhang, et al, 2011a, p.15-16). According to the project team, the strategies proved to be quite successful, in particular reducing failure rates for students and increasing average grades across the board (Zhang, et al, 2011a, p.10). A key outcome of this project was the success it had in **changing the teaching and learning strategies of disciplinary academics**. It was argued that it succeeded in this end by including disciplinary academics in the development of teaching strategies, and being flexible enough in the development of strategies to accommodate their disciplinary contexts (Zhang, et al, 2011a, p. 11). One of the aims of the project was to develop strategies to cope with the **increasing diversity of students, including students with particular language learning needs** found in the physical sciences (Zhang, et al, 2011a, p. 11). The resources developed in the project included both survey instruments, and learning resources that can be drawn upon to target students' language needs in science classes.

**Key resources:**

- Zhang, F., Lidbury, B., Schulte, J., Bridgeman, A., Yates, B., and Rodger, J. (2011a). *A cross disciplinary approach to language support for first year students in the science disciplines (Final Report 2011)*. Sydney: Office for Learning and Teaching.
- Zhang, F., Lidbury, B., Schulte, J., Bridgeman, A., Yates, B., and Rodger, J. (2011b). *A cross disciplinary approach to language support for first year students in the science disciplines (Learning Resources)*. Sydney: Office for Learning and Teaching.
- Zhang, F., Lidbury, B., Schulte, J., Bridgeman, A., Yates, B., and Rodger, J. (2011c). *A cross disciplinary approach to language support for first year students in the science disciplines (Survey Instruments)*. Sydney: Office for Learning and Teaching.

## Addressing the ongoing English language growth of international students (CG7-453) (2010)

This project looked at strategies to develop the English language capacities of EAL international students within Australian higher education institutions. The major outcome of the project was a set of recommendations that can help facilitate the English language growth of international students. Among the recommendations was that **English language should be explicitly marked within assessment, with some marks directly provided for English use** (RocheCouste, et al, 2010, p. 1-5). Although this ALTC work was targeted at international students, the assessment recommendation does not target them specifically, and instead targets all students. As such this can be considered to promote **assuring good ELP outcomes for all students**, through incorporating English language requirements in assessment. Other key recommendations that came out of the project were that **academic support should be embedded into the curriculum**, and that international students' **reading skills, and not just their oral and writing skills** should be emphasised as an important area for development.

### Key Resources:

- RocheCouste, J., Oliver, R., Mulligan, D., and Davies, M. (2010). *Addressing the ongoing English language growth of international students*. Sydney: Australian Learning and Teaching Council.

## Completed OLT/ALTC projects and fellowships: Graduate attributes and learning outcomes

### Learning and Teaching Academic Standards Project (2010)

In the 'Learning and Teaching Academic Standards Project (LTAS)' a set of threshold standards that students are expected to have met as a result of studying in different disciplines were developed. In total, a set of standards for ten different disciplines was provided (see ALTC, 2010; ALTC, 2011). **Each of the LTAS project disciplines identified 'communication' threshold learning outcomes (TLOs) as part of their work.**

The LTAS project also provided the impetus for the development of a series of ALTC/OLT Good Practice Guides in the disciplines of both science and law. The guides described how to meet each of the TLOs that were developed for the disciplines in the LTAS project. Importantly, for the purposes of this report, Good Practice Guides that described how to satisfy the 'communication' TLOs for both disciplines were developed. **These 'communication' TLOs concern both discipline specific, and non-discipline specific English language skills** (Colthorpe, et al, 2013; Wesley, 2011).

The Good Practice Guide for science is of particular use as it contains a variety of insights into how English language should be assessed and taught within the sciences. For example, it suggested that communication skills be **'explicitly articulated in assessment guidelines, criteria and discussions'** (Colthorpe, et al, 2013, p. 5). Moreover, in the guide it was also suggested that **everyday English language requirements be incorporated within assessment**, where it was noted that:

It is inappropriate to assume that all BSc students will become research scientists.

Hence, the other types of communication skills these students will need during their

working life should be considered and included in curricula as learning and assessment activities (Colthorpe, et al, 2013, p. 10).

#### **Key Resources:**

- Australian Learning and Teaching Council (2010). *Learning and Teaching Academic Standards Project (Final Report)*. Sydney: Australian Learning and Teaching Council.
- Australian Learning and Teaching Council (2011). *Learning and Teaching Academic Standards (LTAS) Project, Final Report for the Second-Intake Discipline Groups of: Architecture, Building and Construction, Education, and Science*. Sydney: Australian Learning and Teaching Council.
- Colthorpe, K., Rowland, S., and Leach, J. (2013). *Good Practice Guide (Science), Threshold Learning Outcome 4: Communication*. Sydney: Office for Learning and Teaching.
- Wesley, S (2011). *Good Practice Guide (Bachelor of Laws): Communication (Threshold Learning Outcome 5)*. Sydney: Australian Learning and Teaching Council.

#### **Tribes and Cultures: Frameworks for shared language and intent to cost-effectively improve learning outcomes (CG7-450) (2011)**

This project investigated a way to clarify the **discipline specific language and concepts** used by ‘instructional designers, educationalists and IT specialists’ in digital learning systems in order to make them more accessible to end users (students and staff) and so increase the value end users get out of the learning systems. The motivation for the project was that educational software is often inaccessible to end users due to overuse of jargon and extreme complexity in design, leading to students and teachers not making the most of such software (Dreher, et al, 2011, p. 1). The resources developed in the project included a glossary, a pedagogical design framework, and an annotated bibliography.

#### **Key Resources:**

- Dreher, H., Quinton, S., Dreher, N., LeClus, M., Dreher, C., and Herrmann, A. (2011). *Tribes and Cultures: frameworks for shared language and intent to cost-effectively improve learning outcomes*. Sydney: Australian Learning and Teaching Council.

#### **DYD: Defining Your Discipline to facilitate curriculum renewal in undergraduate programs (PP9-1280) (2013)**

In this project a process that can determine the **definitions for graduate attributes** as they apply in different disciplines was developed and implemented. The process was developed to be as inclusive as possible, and was called the ‘DYD Stakeholder Process’. The process is outlined in the user guide that was developed in the project (Dowling & Hadgraft, 2013b). In particular, as a result of the project, a set of definitions of graduate attributes for Environmental Engineering were developed, and these can be found in a graduate capability framework for environmental engineering that was part of the project (Dowling & Hadgraft, 2013a).

#### **Key resources:**

- Dowling, D. & Hadgraft, R. (2013a). *A Graduate Capability Framework for Environmental Engineering Degree Programs: A Guide for Australian Universities*. Sydney: Office for Learning and Teaching.
- Dowling, D. & Hadgraft, R. (2013b). *The DYD Stakeholder Process: A User Guide*. Sydney: Office for Learning and Teaching.
- Dowling, D. & Hadgraft, R. (2014). *DYD: Defining Your Discipline to facilitate curriculum renewal in undergraduate programs (Final Report 2014)*. Sydney: Office for Learning and Teaching.

### After Standards: Engaging and embedding history standards using International best practice to inform curriculum renewal (PP10-1812) (2013)

This project developed an account of how to best develop a **compliance model to assure the TLOs** for History developed in the Learning and Teaching Academic Standards (LTAS) Project (see ALTC, 2010; ALTC, 2011). This project, unlike the law and science Good Practice Guides for communication (See Colthorpe, et al, 2013 and Wesley, 2011), sought to revise history TLOs where necessary, noting that “Interrogating existing standards from the perspective of compliance can necessitate modification of the standards themselves”. The issue of ELP development relates to this project, as a **student’s ELP is one of the determinants of whether they satisfy the TLO ‘construct an evidence-based argument or narrative in audio, digital, oral, visual or written form’** (see Brawley, 2013, p. 46).

#### Key Resources:

- Brawley, S., Clark, J., Dixon, C., Ford, L., Nielsen, E., Shawn, R., Upton, S. (2013). *After Standards: Engaging and embedding history standards using international best practice to inform curriculum renewal*. Sydney: Office for Learning and Teaching.

### Assuring Learning and Teaching Standards through Inter-Institutional Peer Review and Moderation (SP10-1843) (2014)

This project developed a sector-wide approach to **measuring institutional achievement of assessment standards in final year subjects**. This was intended to provide quality assurance across the higher education sector that assessment standards are being met, and are comparable. The method suggested to achieve this end in the project was inter-institutional peer review and moderation, wherein the assessment tasks provided at different institutions are blind peer reviewed to test for quality. In the project report it was also recommended that the project be endorsed as a way to ‘externally assure the assessment standards of Australian higher education’ (Krause, et al, 2014a, p. 9). Pertinently, in the final report for this project it was explicitly recommended that **institutions report upon ELP, and that they demonstrate that their students are achieving it** (Krause, et al, 2014a, p. 64).

#### Key Resources:

- Krause, K., Scott, G., Aubin, K., Alexander, H., Angelo, T., Campbell, M., Carroll, M., Deane, E., Nulty, D., Pattison, P., Probert, B., Sachs, J., Solomonides, I., and Vaughan, S. (2014a). *Assuring Learning and Teaching Standards through Inter-Institutional Peer Review and Moderation: A User Guide and Handbook*. Sydney: Office for Learning and Teaching.

## Completed OLT/ALTC projects and fellowships: Intercultural competence and internationalising the curriculum

### Embedding the development of intercultural competence in business education (CG6-37) (2009)

This project provided an account of how the development of intercultural competence within business education is best achieved at higher education institutions. As part of this end, a framework was created to embed the development of intercultural competence within business education. The framework has three major areas of focus, with strategies relating to leadership and communities of practice, curriculum policies and procedures, and resources. In the project it was argued that in order to meaningfully embed intercultural competence in business degrees, strategies that target all three of these areas are required, as they are areas of development that relate to each other, and impact on each other in important ways. Two important points regarding intercultural competence were also identified in the project. First, it was stressed that for intercultural competence to be meaningfully developed it is not enough for there to be a set of resources that are available to disciplinary academics, or students (Freeman, 2009, 1). Instead, it was argued that processes to embed intercultural competence within the curriculum are required, as resources that promote intercultural competence, no matter how valuable, will not be used if there is no imperative to do so. Second, it was argued that **change can only be meaningfully achieved if leaders from different levels of institutions buy in** to the development of intercultural competence initially, and use their influence to embed it within the curriculum, and to promote resources and activities that foster it (Freeman, 2009, 1).

#### Key resources:

- Freeman, M. (2009). *Embedding the Development of Intercultural Competence in Business Education (Final Report)*. Sydney: Australian Learning and Teaching Council.

### Finding Common Ground: enhancing interaction between international and domestic students (CG8-725) (2010)

This project provided a set of strategies to facilitate effective interaction between domestic and international students in the teaching and learning environment. A major outcome of the project was the development of a six-dimensional conceptual framework, called the Interaction for Learning Framework. The six dimensions of the framework are:

1. Planning interaction
2. Creating environments for interaction
3. Supporting interaction
4. Engaging with subject knowledge
5. Developing reflexive processes
6. Fostering communities of learners. (Arkoudis, et al, 2010)

Specifically, the project provided two resources. These are a guide for academics, and a DVD. The resources contain a variety of practical ideas and strategies by which meaningful interaction between domestic and international students may be fostered by disciplinary academics. The contents of both are underpinned by the Interaction for Learning Framework.

#### Key Resources:

- Website with guide and DVD:

[http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/research/experience/enhancing\\_interact.html](http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/research/experience/enhancing_interact.html)

### Investigating the efficacy of culturally specific academic literacy and honesty resources for Chinese students (CG8-766) (2010)

This project aimed to determine how best to convey the importance of **academic literacy** and honesty to Chinese students via multi-media resources. The key outcome of the project was a set of multimedia resources that can assist in promoting the importance of academic literacy and honesty to Chinese students. These are:

1. The Road to Academic Literacy (Video) - Key theoretical concepts and interactive examples
2. Richard & Kim Encounter Academic Literacy (Video) – Proactive principles
3. 'Behind Closed Doors' with Grumpy Lecturer - Episode #1: Improving Your Assignment (Video) – Technical / Practical Instruction / Interactive Feedback
4. April's Journey (Video) – Transition and acculturation
5. 'Battle Royale' with Grumpy Lecturer, PhD. (Comic Strip Serial) – Engagement and advertisement. (Whitelaw, et al, 2010, p. 7)

The project also identified several key factors that impede Chinese students' capacity to develop their academic literacy and honesty.

#### Key resources:

- Whitelaw, P., Henderson, F., Jose, P., Defeng, L., Cuiming, G., Wenjie, S., Qinxi, L. (2010). *Final Project Report: Investigating the Efficacy of Culturally Specific Academic Literacy and Academic Honesty Resources for Chinese Students*. Sydney: Australian Learning and Teaching Council.
- This website contains information relevant to the project, and restricted access to the resources developed in it: <http://tls.vu.edu.au/altc/index.cfm?block=1>

### Internationalisation of the curriculum in action (2012)

This fellowship investigated the nature of the internationalisation of the curriculum (IoC) in a range of different disciplines, and how best to clarify to academic staff what the IoC means to their everyday teaching and learning practices. The fellowship developed a range of findings and recommendations about what should be done to best foster the IoC (Leask, 2012a, p. 5). A key finding of the fellowship was that **university policy is important** to promote the IoC, **but is not sufficient** for the IoC to be effectively implemented. This point may be relevant in different contexts, where university policy is helpful in leveraging change, but is not alone sufficient to do so. Another point made in the fellowship was that **disciplinary academics have a key role to play** in facilitating the IoC, and that there are **discipline specific aspects involved** in the IoC. The sensitivity to disciplinary contexts, and the important roles of academics within these contexts was

one of the major features of this fellowship.

Pertinently, in the fellowship report, it was argued that **language development needs to be strategically embedded within the curriculum in various different courses, and in targeted subjects within courses, in order to deal with the diverse needs found in student groups** (Leask, 2012a, p. 31). It was also argued that **students need feedback on how their language skills are developing in order to improve them effectively.**

Two major resources were developed in the fellowship. They are a fellowship website ([www.ioc.net.au](http://www.ioc.net.au)), and a guide to the IoC. The website was an important outcome of the project, as it provided a conduit through which a wide range of details about the fellowship, and materials on internationalisation, could be disseminated.

#### Key Resources:

- For the fellowship website see: [www.ioc.net.au](http://www.ioc.net.au)
- Leask, B. (2012a). *Internationalisation of the Curriculum in Action (Fellowship Report)*. Sydney: Office for Learning and Teaching.
- Leask, B (2012B). *Internationalisation of the Curriculum in Action, A Guide*. Sydney: Office for Learning and Teaching.

### Internationalising the Australian Law Curriculum for Enhanced Global Legal Practice (PP10-1789) (2012)

The aim of this project was to provide a framework of how best to internationalise the law curriculum for institutions, so that their law graduates are “better equipped to work in a global, international context and across multiple jurisdictions” (Bentley and Squelch, 2012b, p. 46). The key resource provided by the project was a booklet concerning the internationalisation of the law curriculum. It serves as a practical guide that institutions can draw upon as they move towards internationalisation (Bentley and Squelch, 2012a). Overall, four compatible recommendations that institutions can use to internationalise their law curriculum arose from the project. First, it was suggested that internationalised subjects or units should be developed. Second, it was proposed that institutions and centres devoted to the internationalisation of the curriculum should be created. Third, it was recommended that internationalised components be embedded across the whole curriculum, and into research and student services. Finally, they suggested that institutions provide students with the opportunity to study in overseas universities, during the course of their degrees. It was also argued that there are four key areas that need focus within the curriculum to effectively achieve internationalisation. The areas identified were: **objectives or learning outcomes, content, pedagogy, and assessment.**

In describing the attributes graduates entering a globalised international legal context will need, communication skills were identified as extremely important, in particular ‘the ability to write and speak English very well’. To achieve this graduate attribute, it was argued that, unlike what currently occurs, **communication skills should be both taught and assessed** (Bentley and Squelch, 2012b, p. 55-56). Although this material related to Law specifically, it can still be seen as part of a very broad **push to explicitly incorporate, and prepare students for, English language requirements within assessment.**

#### Key Resources:

- Bentley, D., and Squelch, J. (2012a). *Internationalising the Australian law curriculum for enhanced global legal practice (Booklet)*. Sydney: Office for Learning and Teaching.

- Bentley, D., and Squelch, J. (2012b). *Internationalising the Australian law curriculum for enhanced global legal practice (Final Report)*. Sydney: Office for Learning and Teaching.

### **Internationalisation at home: Enhancing intercultural capabilities of business and health teachers, students and curricula (PP10-1810) (2013)**

This project provided an account of how to develop intercultural capacity in teachers, **domestic students and international students**, with the aim of internationalising teaching and learning practices in business and health higher education. Towards this end, it provided a set of tested resources that can be used to develop intercultural competency within the curriculum. A key outcome of the project was a resource that integrates readily with an existing intercultural training program EXCELL (Excellence in Cultural Experiential Learning and Leadership). The target of **capacity building of disciplinary academics** that this project had is of direct relevance to this guide. It demonstrated that in order to achieve meaningful change within the curriculum, academics require both resources and training.

#### **Key Resources:**

- Mak, A., and Barker, C. (2013). *Internationalisation at home: Enhancing intercultural capabilities of business and health teachers, students and curricula (Final Report 2013)*. Sydney: Office for Learning and Teaching.
- The project website:  
<https://sites.google.com/site/internationalisationathome/home/links>

### **Good Practice Principles: Teaching Across Cultures (SI11-2105) (2013)**

This project attempted to provide, with its six principles for teaching across cultures, a practical set of teaching and learning principles that academics can use to guide their teaching practices in a complex intercultural environment, and foster the development of intercultural competence in their students. The six principles that were developed in the project are:

- 1: Focus on students as learners
- 2: Respect and adjust for diversity
- 3: Provide context-specific information and support
- 4: Facilitate meaningful intercultural dialogue and engagement
- 5: Be adaptable, flexible and responsive to evidence
- 6: Prepare students for life in a globalised world

As part of the project, a set of guides that relate to different areas of teaching and learning were developed on the basis of the principles. Of particular relevance is 'A quick guide to developing English language skills'. In this guide, a variety of strategies for helping students develop their English language skills within the curriculum were outlined (IEAA, 2013). Amongst a variety of strategies centered on in-class interaction, there were detailed strategies for satisfying the demand that 'across a program, there is clarity and consensus in setting assessment standards for English language competence'. Here a variety of methods for **making English language standards in assessment explicit to students** were outlined (IEAA, 2013, p. 5). An outcome of this guide is that it proposes that English language development for students should expand to include more than just

methods for developing students' English language capacities within classroom activities, but also to assessment methods.

**Key resources:**

- A report outlining the principles, and all of the guides developed on the basis of the principles, can be found at: <http://www.ieaa.org.au/resources/learning-teaching-across-cultures>

## OLT projects and fellowships in progress: Direct focus on ELP

### Demystifying 'Grammar': Rethinking language awareness for teacher training (SD13-3330) (2013)

This project will respond to the Australian Curriculum, Reporting and Assessment Authority's (ACARA) imperative that primary and secondary school teachers, even those without formal language training, need to have some awareness of the particular ELP development needs of EAL students. The aim of the project is to investigate the kind of training that is required for them to **develop an awareness of students' English language needs, in particular EAL students' needs**. It will have a particular focus on pre-service teacher training programs. It is a seed project, and the aim of it is to develop the groundwork for a larger, more comprehensive national study.

**Key resources:**

- R. Neilsen. (2013). *Demystifying Grammar: Rethinking language awareness for teacher training (Seed Project Proposal)*. Sydney: Office for Learning and Teaching.

### Integrating English language learning outcomes within disciplinary curricula: Strategies and options (2014)

The fellowship activities offer strategies to move the sector forward in addressing the issue of assuring students' ELP upon graduation. The findings suggest that while higher education institutions have developed strategies for assuring the ELP of their graduates, practices can be disjointed and not connected to disciplinary assessment. It is not possible to protect minimum standards for oral and written English language and literacy unless these are assessed, and the most appropriate place for this assessment to occur is within disciplinary teaching and learning. However, there is still much debate about who is responsible for developing and assessing students' ELP. What is required is an integrated approach that includes a variety of strategies that fit together to develop and assess students' ELP. This does not mean that it is shared evenly but rather that it is distributed according to the professional responsibilities of key people involved in teaching and learning. The idea of distributed responsibilities is useful in considering how various approaches contribute to ensuring students have attained threshold levels of English language and literacy upon graduation. The resources developed from the Fellowship that can guide practices within a distributed responsibilities approach are available at: <[www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/arkoudis\\_fellowship](http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/arkoudis_fellowship)>.

## OLT projects and fellowships in progress: Graduate attributes and learning outcomes

### Achievement Matters: External Peer Review of Accounting Learning Standards (ID11-1913) (2013)

Assuring graduate attributes with assessment in accounting courses is the aim of the forthcoming OLT project 'Achievement Matters: External Peer Review of Accounting Learning Standards'. The proposed outcomes of the project are described in detail as follows:

1. External peer-reviewed evidence of accounting learning outcomes in all types of higher education providers, benchmarked against the accounting threshold learning standards.
2. A model process for assessing learning outcomes against standards (that is sustainable, reliable and efficient), satisfying external quality assurance needs and motivating continuous improvement.
3. Professional development of academics about assessment.
4. Enhanced understandings in the external environment of our standards model (Hancock, et al, 2013, 9).

One learning outcome described in this project is **'written communication skills' for both professional and non-professional audiences**. This learning outcome pertains to both discipline specific and general English language skills, and is targeted at meeting the threshold standards (6). It is expected that with this project there will be **a substantive framework through which to determine if institutions are meeting, amongst other things, ELP threshold standards in accounting courses**. The project may also provide valuable insights into **how to develop quality assurance measures that can ensure that threshold standards are met** in other disciplines.

#### Key resources:

- Hancock, P., and Freeman, M. (2013). *Achievement Matters: External Peer Review of Accounting Learning Standards (Interim Report 2013)*. Sydney: Office for Learning and Teaching.

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- Arkoudis, S., Baik, C., & Richardson, S. (2012). *English language standards in higher education*. Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research.
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