



**QUEENSLAND**  
**TEACHERS' UNION**  
OF EMPLOYEES

**QTU Policy**  
**2023 - 2025**

**English as an additional  
language or dialect**

Booklet



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## **Queensland Teachers' Union Policy**

QTU policy is adopted by the Union's Biennial Conference. Amendments to Union policy may be made at the intervening meetings of State Council.

### **Guidelines for changes to existing policy**

Motions designed to change or create policy should be sent to Council. Under Rule 7.5 (Decisions of Conference), policy adopted by Conference remains in effect unless amended by Council, where a two-thirds majority decision is necessary. Thus, a proposal to contradict the sense of, or change the wording of existing policy, needs a two-thirds majority, ie 66.6 per cent, for such a proposal to be successful. A proposal to change existing policy should:

- be presented as an amendment to existing policy, and
- state its location in the existing policy.

If no policy exists on a matter, a simple majority decision, ie >50 per cent, is needed for such a proposal to be added to policy.

### **Implementation of existing policy**

Motions to implement existing policy are usually directed to Executive for consideration. However, where the implementation would involve a significant allocation of QTU resources (eg a major campaign), or where a branch wishes a major emphasis to be put on an aspect of policy, it would then be appropriate to direct such a motion to Council. These guidelines are designed to facilitate debate on policy issues. If branch officials require explanation of these guidelines or assistance with the formulation of policy motions, they should contact the QTU office in Brisbane.

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# English as an Additional Language or Dialect policy

## 2023 -2025

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## 1. Introduction

The education services provided to students from non-English speaking backgrounds (EALD learners) should be supported through transparent and accountable needs-based policy. The QTU English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) policy sets out the Union's position on major issues related to the needs of all EALD learners, and the role EALD teachers play in supporting these students across a range of education settings. The QTU supports access and equity for students from EALD learners backgrounds through quality language support and information services and a socially just, supportive school environment.

## 2. EALD Learners who require support in schools

In Queensland, support in developing proficiency in Standard Australian English may be required by students of any year level who:

- are temporary and permanent visa holders and New Zealand passport holders
- are recently arrived or long-term immigrants or refugees, with permanent residency status
- have had continuous or intermittent residency in Australia
- are permitted to remain in Australia temporarily for specified periods of time and under specified conditions
- have spent time in refugee camps and/or experienced migration trauma due to refugee or migration experience
- have had periods of interrupted schooling in one or more other countries
- have a range of oracy and literacy skills in their first and/or other language(s)
- have some or no prior knowledge of English
- Australian citizens or residents returning from abroad having lived for extended periods of time in countries where their schooling was not in English
- are children born in Australia, including:
  - Aboriginal students whose home language(s) may be Aboriginal English and/or traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages(s)
  - Torres Strait Islander students whose home languages(s) may be Torres Strait Creole and/or traditional Torres Strait Islander language(s)
  - Australian South Sea Islander students whose home languages may be languages other than Standard Australian English
- are children of immigrants who come from homes where:
  - English is not used
  - English is not the only language used
  - English is used as a common language between parents without the same first language.
  - are children who use sign language - it is recognised that children who use sign language require support to develop proficiency in EALD, but these students are not supported by EALD program. Appropriate support can be accessed through AUTHI and hearing impaired (HI) support networks

- are international fee-paying students whose home languages are languages other than English - these students are permitted to reside temporarily in Australia for study purposes and are required to pay fees to further their education in English in Department of Education schools. TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) support should be provided to international fee paying students in state schools when a payment for this particular instruction is negotiated with individual schools, with schools ensuring that payment is channelled into the EALD cost centre.

### **3. Rights of teachers**

The role of the QTU is to protect and enhance the working conditions of teachers in Queensland. In doing so, it also supports the industrial and professional rights of teachers to make decisions about the programs and resources most appropriate for students requiring EALD support in schools, in consultation with students, their families and other advocacy and support providers.

The QTU commits itself to advocating for optimum working conditions for members teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL), and in doing so, improving the learning environments of all EALD students. This support particularly includes advocating for the maximisation of permanent employment for all TESOL teachers, who represent one of the most casualised sectors of the profession.

The QTU shall support members who choose not to provide or to withdraw instruction of educational programs if a workplace meeting of QTU members determines that the level of resources and support at the school are inadequate to the needs of the student or students. If this occurs, then it is the Department of Education's responsibility to provide an appropriate placement for any student, and begin immediate negotiations towards a positive resolution.

### **4. Resourcing**

Resourcing for EALD learners and TESOL programs must be needs-based and adhere to philosophies of equity, social justice and inclusivity. Each program must also take into account and respect the diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences that each EALD learner brings to their school.

Where there are a significant number of EALD learners in a community with multiple schools, the clustering of students needing EALD support in a school with an EALD unit should be encouraged and supported with assistance for free travel to and from the unit for the period that the student requires it.

The QTU believes that access, participation, engagement in and successful learning outcomes for EALD learners will be achieved through:

- the provision of adequate staff, according to a needs-based resourcing model as well as an acknowledgement of the sometimes unreliable and fluctuating enrolment of EALD learners due to world events (for example, conflict and pandemic) through the implementation of floor funding to ensure expertise is maintained at phase 1 centres (e.g. Milpera SHS) and an ability rapidly grow when enrolments suddenly surge
- access to a range of services and programs funded through a needs-based model
- facilities that are designed built and maintained to specifically meet the needs of the students and maximise learning outcomes.

With the loss of specialised and concentrated phase two “units” in schools, new students should be entitled to access 40 weeks of an intense phase one program before moving on to mainstream schools

## 5. Staffing

Staffing models for TESOL programs must be developed that are transparent, fully funded, flexible and needs-based, and schools need to be advised of their staffing allocation and provided with relevant qualified staff in a timely manner.

Teaching staff in TESOL education should include permanent full-time, permanent part-time and casual relief teachers. Maximisation of permanent employment for TESOL teachers should occur in line with the Department of Education’s targets in all other education sectors and in accordance with the conversion to permanency provisions in the Certified Agreement.

EALD school program co-ordinators and head of special education services positions should also be created in schools wherever there are significant numbers of EALD learners. Teachers performing district co-ordination roles should be seconded as education officer’s special duties.

There should be a senior executive service position responsible for the state-wide management of EALD.

## 6. Facilities

Facilities and buildings in which TESOL education programs operate must be of the highest standard. Funding, resources and processes must be put in place to ensure that all facilities and buildings across the state, in all settings, are brought up to standard.

It should be recognised that EALD learners students may require the provision of facilities not found in all schools. When the number of EALD learners requires it, these additional facilities should be funded by the Department of Education, not through the budget of the base school.

The specific TESOL facilities should include appropriately designed and equipped:

- Intensive English Language Preparation Centres
- EALD units in mainstream schools
- Separate EALD teaching spaces in mainstream schools with no EALD unit.

## 7. Curriculum

EALD curriculum and service delivery can be broken up into three distinct areas:

- general
- EALD support
- language maintenance.

### 7.1 General

Many students in Australia speak a language other than English at home and in their community. Such students, if they require assistance with English, are called English as second language (EALD) students.

While many of these students may become bilingual, there is a possibility that, without first language maintenance and development and EALD support programs, some will become semi-lingual in two or more languages.

The Department of Education should ensure that the provision of EALD is integrated across the curriculum. Language across the curriculum and cooperative teaching approaches should be encouraged.

EALD support is distinct from remedial English, although both approaches can play a role in education for a multicultural society.

EALD instruction is important for reasons of equity and social justice, as:

- Each student in Queensland schools must have equity of access and equitable outcomes. English is the medium through which teaching occurs. Equitable opportunity can be attained only when EALD learners are empowered to effectively communicate in English
- Each student in Queensland schools should also have access to the structures within Australian society. These are built, negotiated and transmitted through language. To have access to this culture requires knowledge of English. Provision of support in EALD is required for those whose first language is not English, in order to allow for equitable access to all facets of culture and to empower them for participation in Australian society.

## **7.2 EALD support**

In the case of newly arrived students and Australian-born students with little or no English language proficiency, intensive courses are a necessity.

It is therefore necessary that:

- trained and qualified specialist EALD teachers be available in all schools or clusters that receive funding to support EALD learners
- all teachers working with students with refugee backgrounds are provided with trauma informed practice professional development provided and fully funded to support the needs of these students
- classroom teachers are trained in diagnostic skills so they know when to involve more specialised teachers
- there are specialist teachers able to work with the classroom teacher and to provide ongoing specialist EALD support
- all teachers in all curriculum areas have an awareness of, and basic skills in, developing the language skills of these students
- At both preservice and in-service levels, all teachers receive training in developing the skills of students whose language is not primarily English.
- In the initial stages of language learning, and to ensure later engagement with the Australian Curriculum, students will require modified/adjusted curriculum
- There is recognition of the fact that young people of refugee backgrounds may have received little or no prior formal schooling. These students may require a longer period of time in an intensive centre
- There is acknowledgement that for students, particularly those of refugee background with limited prior schooling may take between 5 and 9 years to develop an academic language
- Bilingual teacher aide support is provided to help students in the acquisition of language and also values first language and identity, supporting acculturation and transition to Australian schooling and culture.

The Department of Education should ensure that teachers with the ability to teach EALD in conjunction with another subject are deployed to small schools where a need for EALD instruction might exist. EALD teaching capability should be considered when placing mainstream teachers.

### **7.3 Language maintenance**

It is important that there are bilingual and/or language maintenance programs for the over 20 per cent of the population who have a language background other than English. Literacy development in a person's first language has an enormously beneficial impact on their acquisition of literacy in English.

Resources in this area have generally been inadequate, particularly in areas relating to:

- funding the long-term commitment necessary to ensure stability of provision
- the provision of basic EALD teaching necessary to meet the need
- Provision of professional development to classroom teachers.

## **8. Qualifications and professional development**

All EALD learners, in all settings, should have access to appropriately qualified teachers. These teachers should be provided an opportunity to gain appropriate qualifications in three ways:

- preservice
- EALD courses for qualified teachers
- in-service.

### **8.1 Preservice**

In keeping with departmental social justice policies, all preservice teacher education courses should include compulsory components which prepare prospective teachers to adequately meet the needs of all their students. Such components would include inclusive curriculum, language acquisition (first and additional languages), learning about language, language for learning across the curriculum. Preservice teachers should be provided with the opportunity to gain an understanding and working knowledge of the relevant departmental policy relating to inclusive education, student protection and anti-racism.

Components for teachers who wish to specialise in TESOL teaching would include TESOL methodology, linguistics, EALD course design and evaluation. A TESOL facility with professional development resources should be maintained in an accessible central location.

### **8.2 EALD courses for qualified teachers**

The Department of Education should provide opportunities for teachers qualified in other areas to undergo training in the theory and practice of EALD learning and teaching. The department should fund at least six months' full-time fully paid release for a course. EALD courses should be given due recognition for classification purposes as well as during the transfer processes.

All teacher education institutions should provide post-graduate courses in the education of culturally and linguistically diverse students. These courses should also be made available externally.

Newly employed EALD teachers with no experience in EALD teaching should be offered a short induction course of not less than 25 hours of theory and practice, until they complete formal EALD qualifications.



### **8.3     *Inservice***

The Department of Education should make available appropriate EALD professional development courses for all TESOL teachers and all classroom teachers who have EALD learners students in their classes.

A state-wide conference for all teachers of EALD learners should be held on an annual basis, in conjunction with professional bodies such as the Queensland Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (QATESOL) if necessary.