ENGLISH LANGUAGE POLICY

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First approved by:	University Council		
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Responsible Division & Unit:	Learning, Teaching and Curriculum (LTC) Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)		
Supporting documents, procedures & forms of this policy:	Admissions Procedures Conferrals and Issuance Policy Course and Subject Approval Procedures – Less Significant Amendments to Existing Courses Course and Subject Approval Procedures – New Offerings and Significant Amendments to Existing Courses Course Progress Policy Coursework Rules Curriculum Review Procedures Curriculum Review Guidelines Procedure for Monitoring Comparative Student Outcomes Teaching and Assessment: Code of Practice – Teaching UOW Standards & Quality Framework for Learning and Teaching		
References & Legislation:	*Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2011* *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act)* *Australian Qualifications Framework 2013* Common European Framework of Reference for Languages		
Audience:	Public		

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1 Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the University's commitment to the preparedness of graduates and the quality of their communication skills, including English language proficiency. The policy has been developed in response to: the legislative requirements of the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2011, Course Accreditation Standards*; the regulatory requirements of the *Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF); and* the pedagogical requirements of the former *DEEWR Good Practice Principles for English language proficiency for international students in Australian universities* and the *UOW Curriculum Transformation Model*.

2 Definitions

Word/Term	Definition
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
Course	A *course* is a program of study that includes those courses leading to higher education awards and non-award courses. A *course* consists of a subject or combination of subjects and other requirements as specified in the *course* structure.
English language proficiency	English language proficiency in this Policy refers to a student's ability to comprehend and create meaning effectively in all modes of English language communication in order to participate effectively in the social, academic and professional contexts to which their education relates.
English language proficiency requirements	The minimum English language proficiency requirements for students to be admitted to a *course* at the University.
HESF	[Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2011](#).

3 Application & Scope

1. This Policy applies to:

   - all students undertaking UOW undergraduate and postgraduate courses in which English is the language of instruction and assessment, including higher degree research programs, both offshore and onshore, other than those listed in 3.2.
   - all UOW staff and those employed by our educational partners who have responsibility for designing and delivering UOW courses and programs.

2. Exemption from this Policy for a particular *course* may be granted by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) where there is clear evidence that the cohort does not require the support stipulated by the Policy.

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4 Policy Principles

1. Responsibility for the ongoing assessment and development of students' communication skills, including English language proficiency, is shared between students, teaching staff and the University.

2. Undergraduate and postgraduate degree programs at UOW are conducted in upper-intermediate, advanced and fluent levels of English and UOW students are expected to comprehend, learn and communicate effectively within this environment.

3. The quality assurance of students' communication skills development is most appropriately and successfully achieved as part of the assurance of learning within a *course*.

4. UOW students can expect appropriate access to facilities, resources and materials that help their development of communication skills, including English language proficiency.

5 Admissions

1. The University will set *English language proficiency requirements* for admission at a standard that allows students to fully participate in their studies at UOW.

2. The relevant Faculty Education Committee will regularly monitor and review *English language proficiency requirements* for each *course* with respect to student performance to ensure they remain current and valid.

3. The Academic Quality and Standards Sub-committee of the University Education Committee may request Faculty Education Committees to submit reviews of student performance against *English language proficiency requirements*.

4. The biannual Comparative Student Outcomes report will include data on international student performance by entry pathway and English language qualification.

6 Assuring English language development in coursework studies

1. Consistent with the requirements of the AQF, HESF and the UOW Standards Framework, all UOW courses will be designed to explicitly foster and assess students' development and achievement of the communication skills embedded within the course learning outcomes, including *English language proficiency*. This will be achieved through the following measures:

2. Students will be provided with the opportunity to obtain feedback and further develop their communication skills across a wide range of purposes, audiences and contexts relevant to the discipline by ensuring variety in communicative assessment tasks.

3. *Course* Learning Outcomes will clearly articulate the development and achievement of written and oral communication skills, including *English language proficiency*, appropriate to the level and qualification type.

4. Core subjects within a *course* of study will explicitly foster and assess students' development and achievement of specific aspects of the *Course* Learning Outcomes pertaining to

communication skills, including *English language proficiency*, through the design of the learning environment, assessment activities, and teaching strategies and resources.

5. Early assessment within a *course* will be used to identify students at risk due to *English language proficiency*.

6. Students identified at risk due to *English language proficiency* will be provided with additional support.

7. Additional support for students will be negotiated between the Faculty and Learning, Teaching and Curriculum staff.

8. A capstone or equivalent final year subject within a *course* will assure students' achievement of communication skills, including *English language proficiency*.

7 Assuring English language development in Higher Degree Research studies

1. To ensure students are sufficiently competent in the English language to participate effectively in Higher Degree Research studies, and achieve the higher degree research *Course* Learning Outcomes, a range of strategies will be used to verify language competence prior to acceptance into a HDR program.

2. HDR students who enter with the minimum *English language proficiency requirements* for their *course* will be expected to undertake and demonstrate satisfactory performance in *RESH900/901: Fundamentals for HDR Writing* or equivalent subject.

3. The [Commencement of Candidature Form](#) and *Research Proposal Review* will be used to identify students' communication needs, including *English language proficiency*, early in their candidature.

4. The *Annual Progress Report* will be used to monitor students' development of communication skills, including *English language proficiency*.

5. HDR supervisors will provide their students with constructive feedback on their research writing skills.

6. Professional development of HDR supervisors will include methods for providing constructive feedback on students' communication skills.

7. Language support for HDR students will be negotiated between the Faculty and Learning Teaching and Curriculum staff.

8 Roles and responsibilities

Student responsibilities

1. Students are responsible for:

    a. addressing their own language development needs;

    b. acting on feedback provided about their *English language proficiency*, and

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c. making use of available resources for language development provided by the University.

Faculty responsibilities

Coursework Studies

2. The Associate Dean (Education) or nominee in each faculty in conjunction with course coordinators are responsible for:

   a. ensuring *Course* Learning Outcomes clearly articulate the achievement of communications skills, including *English language proficiency* appropriate to the level and qualification type; and

   b. ensuring selected subjects within a *course* are designed to explicitly foster and assess students' development and achievement of communication skills, including *English language proficiency.*

3. The Associate Dean (International) or nominee, in consultation with Transnational Education & Alliances staff and University language providers, is responsible for ensuring that appropriate levels of English language use, development, appraisal, and feedback, as required, are provided to students enrolled in *courses* delivered at the University's transnational partner institutions.

4. The *course* coordinator (or equivalent within each Faculty) is responsible for:

   a. identifying which subjects within a course will explicitly address the development of students' communications skills, including *English language proficiency;*

   b. reviewing Learning Outcomes to ensure they explicitly address students' communications skills, including *English language proficiency;*

   c. ensuring that across the selected subjects, students have the opportunity to develop their communication skills across a wide range of purposes, audiences and contexts relevant to the discipline by ensuring variety in communicative assessment tasks; and

   d. liaising with language providers to arrange for appropriate language development provision.

5. Subject coordinators of core or selected subjects are responsible for:

   a. ensuring Learning Outcomes are embedded into subjects to foster communication skill development appropriate to the *course* of study and level of qualification;

   b. engaging in appropriate forms of feedforward and feedback processes that provide students with constructive feedback and opportunities to develop their communication skills;

c. developing assessment tasks and criteria that explicitly address students' communication skills, and where appropriate, identify students at risk due to *English language proficiency*; and

d. where appropriate, liaise with language providers to ensure relevant and timely support is provided to students at risk.

HDR studies

6. The Associate Dean (Research) or nominee is responsible for:

    a. ensuring processes are in place to verify the *English language proficiency* of students prior to their acceptance as HDR candidates;

    b. ensuring students who enter with the minimum *English language proficiency requirements* enrol and demonstrate satisfactory performance in *RESH900/901: Fundamentals for HDR Communication* or equivalent subject; and

    c. ensuring supervisors are informed of their responsibilities in addressing *English language proficiency* in the Commencement of Candidature Form, Research Proposal Review and the Annual Progress Report.

7. The Head of Postgraduate Studies (or equivalent) is responsible for:

    a. ensuring HDR student supervisors adequately address students' use of *English language proficiency* in the Annual Progress Report;

    b. identify opportunities for the professional development HDR student supervisors; and

    c. liaising with language providers to arrange for appropriate English language development opportunities for HDR students and systems for monitoring student uptake of these.

8. HDR student supervisors are responsible for:

    a. providing students with constructive feedback on the quality of their English language communication;

    b. accessing appropriate professional development to improve their own ability to provide students with feedback on their communication skills; and

    c. liaising with language providers to support the process of supervising students deemed to be at risk

    d. encouraging students to access appropriate language development services throughout their candidature.

Learning, Teaching and Curriculum

9. Learning, Teaching and Curriculum staff are responsible for:

    a. consulting with the Associate Deans (Academic), (Global Strategy), and (Research and Innovation) regarding the English language needs of their respective cohorts;

b. negotiating with faculties the most appropriate provision of language education for students identified as being at risk due to *English language proficiency;*

c. where appropriate, delivering language education services to students identified as at risk;

d. collaborating with *course* and subject coordinators to ensure *course* learning outcomes, design, teaching and assessment appropriately scaffold students' achievement of the specified communication skills;

e. providing discipline staff with the opportunities to develop their understanding of the role of language in learning and of approaches that may be used to develop and assess the communication skills including the *English language proficiency* of their students;

f. providing assistance to staff who teach in *courses* with large cohorts of students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds or literacy levels; and

g. providing assistance to staff who teach subjects identified as explicitly developing student *English language proficiency*.

9 Supporting policies and procedures

This Policy will be implemented through a range of existing UOW frameworks, policies and procedures, including:

1. Admissions

Admissions Rules and the Admissions Procedures
Procedure for Monitoring Comparative Student Outcomes

2. Course design and review

UOW Standards & Quality Framework for Learning and Teaching
Curriculum Review Guidelines

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10 Version Control and Change History

Version Control	Date Effective	Approved By	Amendment
1	5 December 2014	University Council	First Version. Update DVC nomenclature, effective 1 January 2015.
2	1 January 2015	University Council	Implementation of revised DVC nomenclature.
3	4 December 2015	University Council	Consequential amendment to remove reference to rescinded Graduate Qualities Policy.

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