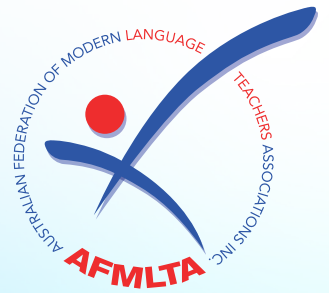


# Professional Standards for accomplished teaching of languages



## Acknowledgement of country

The Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations (AFMLTA) acknowledges the traditional custodians of Country throughout Australia and recognises the continued connection to languages, culture, land and waterways. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

## Accomplished teaching of languages

Being an accomplished teacher of languages means being a person who knows, uses and teaches languages in an ethical and reflective way. It involves continuous engagement with, and commitment to learning, both as a teacher and as a life-long learner. It means more than teaching knowledge of languages; it includes teaching learners to value, respect and engage with languages, and their associated cultures, in their own lives and to use this in their interactions with diverse others. It means taking a stance which approaches the integrated nature of language, culture and learning with respect, empathy, commitment, enthusiasm and personal responsibility.

Accomplished languages teaching is reflected through the following dimensions:

- educational theory and practice
- language and culture
- language pedagogy
- ethics and responsibility
- professional relationships
- active engagement with wider context
- advocacy
- personal characteristics.

These Standards recognise that accomplished languages teaching can only occur in an appropriate and supportive teaching context and so the Standards document includes not only Standards for accomplished teaching, but also Program Standards, which the profession knows are necessary for effective teaching to occur.

## Guidelines for using the Standards

These Standards are designed to reflect the high levels of achievement of teachers of languages. They represent what is to be aimed for and developed over a teacher's career.

The Standards are designed to assist teachers to understand and develop their own practice. They are intended as a guide for thinking through one's current professional work and identifying needs for future development - an opportunity for learning.

The Standards are aspirational, not designed nor intended for use in evaluating teachers' performance, but as a framework for understanding teachers' professionalism. Teachers may use them to assist in developing portfolios for use in applications for promotion or for professional evaluation.

Both the teacher Standards and the program Standards apply equally to every teacher of languages and all teaching contexts, and should be used together to maintain and improve teaching quality, and enhance student learning.

These discipline-specific Standards work in combination with the [Australian Professional Standards for Teachers](#).

These Standards are part of a suite of materials available on the AFMLTA website ([afmlta.asn.au](http://afmlta.asn.au)) including:

- Professional Standards for lead teachers of languages
- Language-specific annotations
- AFMLTA-AITSL Standards aligned.

There are professional learning materials based on the Standards available on the AFMLTA website.

These Professional Standards were originally published as the [Professional Standards for Accomplished Teaching of Languages and Cultures](#) (AFMLTA 2005) with funding by the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training under the School Languages Program.

# Teacher Standards

## Educational theory and practice

Accomplished teachers of languages have knowledge of learner development appropriate to the level at which they teach, and apply this knowledge in all aspects of their teaching.

They:

- ◆ identify the learning needs of individual learners
- ◆ prioritise positive relationships with students and understand the connection between students' health and wellbeing and their academic progress
- ◆ engage with current theories of education, general principles of teaching and learning, and classroom management
- ◆ keep up to date with developments in the field of education through professional learning, professional reading and/or research
- ◆ are aware of the culture(s) of schooling in the contexts in which they teach
- ◆ actively engage with school and education policies, and curriculum frameworks
- ◆ are able to locate languages within a wider educational context, creating connections with other curriculum areas, school priorities and with extracurricular activities.

### *Suggested questions for reflection*

- ◆ What do you know about the individual learners you teach and their needs, interests and capabilities?
- ◆ How do you establish and maintain positive relationships with learners and support their wellbeing?
- ◆ How comprehensively do you understand and engage with the discipline, traditions and debates in languages teaching?
- ◆ What is the culture of the school in which you teach?
- ◆ What do you know about policy and curriculum documents which are relevant to languages teaching, in your school and more broadly? How can you use this knowledge to inform your teaching?
- ◆ How do you make connections with other curriculum areas and with extra curricular interests?

## Language and culture

Accomplished teachers of languages are both users and teachers of linguistic and cultural knowledge.

They:

- ◆ have knowledge of the languages and cultures they teach, which enables them to participate in interactions in the language, in and out of the classroom
- ◆ have a developed intercultural awareness and communicate effectively across languages and cultures
- ◆ understand that learners bring their own language and culture experiences to the classroom, and actively acknowledge and seek to include these experiences in the classroom
- ◆ are actively involved in maintaining and developing their knowledge of the languages and cultures they teach and seek out opportunities to use their knowledge and to keep up to date with how the target language is used in and amongst language communities
- ◆ have explicit knowledge and a working understanding of the linguistic and cultural systems of the language and how these systems work in the social lives of people
- ◆ understand the relationship between language and culture and have an awareness and understanding of the role of language and culture in human interaction and identity
- ◆ use this knowledge to enhance their students' learning.

### *Suggested questions for reflection*

- ◆ How do you explore your own understanding of language and culture?
- ◆ How do you come to understand the language and culture experiences of learners in your classroom?
- ◆ How do you express your intercultural understanding in teaching, and in daily life?
- ◆ How do you use and develop your language abilities?
- ◆ What sorts of language-based activities are you involved in outside the classroom?
- ◆ What sorts of contacts do you have with target language communities, personally or through digital means?
- ◆ What recent activities have you undertaken to develop your language and cultural knowledge of the language you teach?
- ◆ How do you deal with issues of identity in your teaching (including your own identity)?
- ◆ How do you encourage learners to see the world from other cultural perspectives, and in relation to their prior experience and knowledge?
- ◆ What understandings do your students take away from their experience of language learning about the relationship between language, culture and learning?

## Language pedagogy

Accomplished teachers of languages have a developed understanding of the language learning process. Their understanding comes from their formal and informal learning about teaching and learning, and also from their own experiences of being a language learner and user, either of the language(s) they teach or additional languages.

They:

- ◆ have knowledge of current developments in language learning and teaching research and develop their knowledge further by engaging in professional learning, professional reading and/or research
- ◆ use their knowledge of language and culture in order to promote learning in ways that are appropriate for learners in context, and which differentiate for the diversity among their students, using authentic language and resources
- ◆ create a culture of learning in their classrooms that fosters interest in languages and their users, and encourages learners to accept responsibility for their own learning
- ◆ select in a principled way from a range of methodologies for languages teaching, taking into consideration the learners, the learning context, curriculum goals, and the aspect of language being taught. These choices are made at both the overall level of planning and in teaching in the classroom
- ◆ have a cohesive view of curriculum in which planning, teaching, resourcing, assessing, evaluating and renewing are done coherently according to a principled approach to languages teaching. Accomplished teaching is reflected by an ability to explain the choices being made in planning and teaching to multiple audiences including students, parents, and other teachers
- ◆ use assessment to examine understanding, learning, and performance, and to foster, evaluate, and plan for future learning
- ◆ know and use a range of assessment approaches and select assessment tasks which are appropriate to the purposes of the assessment and learners, and use the assessment to provide effective feedback, making informed decisions about the next steps in learning, and reporting
- ◆ use various kinds of data to evaluate and modify learning and teaching programs for continuous improvement
- ◆ integrate technology to enhance language learning and teaching and as a means of communication to make language use more relevant and meaningful.

### *Suggested questions for reflection*

- ◆ What knowledge about patterns of development in language and additional language learning and literacy inform your curriculum and teaching decisions?
- ◆ What recent activities have you undertaken to develop your knowledge of language learning and teaching?
- ◆ What sorts of language-based activities are involved in your professional learning?
- ◆ How have you applied your recent learning to enhance your language teaching?
- ◆ How do you engage learners in languages in the classroom and school?
- ◆ How do you decide on which methodologies or approaches to use in your teaching? What factors influence your decisions?
- ◆ How do you determine key ideas or concepts in planning for teaching and learning in your classroom? What informs these choices and why?
- ◆ How do you adapt your teaching to your learners and to the material you are teaching? How do you explain your reasons for using a particular pedagogical approach in your teaching?
- ◆ What range of learning opportunities do you provide so that all students are able to build on their prior experiences and knowledge in language use, and to improve literacy skills, including in English?
- ◆ How do you assess learners' language development? How does this allow them to demonstrate their improving proficiency in the language and their intercultural understanding?
- ◆ How do you decide which assessment approaches to use? What factors influence your decisions?
- ◆ How do you use technology to enhance student learning and as a means of communication? What factors influence your decisions?



## Ethics and Responsibility

Accomplished teachers of languages take responsibility for the teaching and learning relationship and for social and cultural relationships in their teaching.

They:

- ◆ have a developed knowledge of their current students, and strategies at their disposal to get to know new groups or individual students
- ◆ establish trust with their learners that fosters an empathetic and inclusive view of self and others
- ◆ know and reflect on their own values and ideological positions and demonstrate respect for the different values of learners, communities and cultures
- ◆ understand their role as a representative of the profession
- ◆ seek to enable students to understand issues from multiple perspectives so that they can make their own choices and judgments
- ◆ view themselves as activators of potential, not just deliverers of curriculum.

### *Suggested questions for reflection*

- ◆ How do you demonstrate care and concern for all your students in the context of fostering their development of language skills and knowledge?
- ◆ What do you know and understand about the communities to which your students belong and their aspirations?
- ◆ What ideas and values inform your languages teaching? Where do these come from?
- ◆ How do you plan for all students to have the confidence to take risks in language learning?
- ◆ In what ways is the language classroom characterised by dignity and mutual respect?



## Professional relationships

Accomplished teachers of languages are part of a professional educational community and they establish professional relationships with students, with parents/caregivers, with other languages teachers, with teachers in other disciplines, and with school communities.

They:

- ◆ contribute to the profession in a range of ways that work to develop a culture of professionalism
- ◆ establish and maintain professional relationships through links to and collaboration with colleagues in their schools and in the wider educational community
- ◆ work as a team with school leaders to advance languages learning in their specific context
- ◆ actively network with other languages teachers informally and through professional associations
- ◆ prioritise positive relationships with their language teaching colleagues and understand the connection between teacher health and well-being and classroom and whole-school cohesiveness.
- ◆ actively participate in mentoring partnerships with other teachers, including more and less experienced teachers, for mutual benefits
- ◆ lead and actively engage with/in language-related areas locally, regionally, nationally and/or internationally.

### *Suggested questions for reflection*

- ◆ How do you contribute to your profession?
- ◆ How are you actively involved in school, community and wider professional contexts?
- ◆ How do you establish and maintain positive relationships with teaching colleagues and demonstrate an interest in and concern for their wellbeing?
- ◆ How do you work with colleagues, parents/caregivers and community members to develop the quality of teaching and learning in the school?
- ◆ How do you use your own expertise to support other teachers, and to learn from them?

## Active engagement with wider context

Accomplished teachers of languages establish relationships to wider contexts and are able to connect the local to the global.

They:

- ◆ engage with contemporary dynamic social, political, economic, and technological contexts
- ◆ connect with a wide sphere of understanding of how languages and language learning relate to global realities
- ◆ understand the impact of languages and cultures on the local and global context and on how people understand their place in the world
- ◆ foster learners' active engagement with such broader issues and prepare their students to become knowledgeable and responsible adult participants in the global community.

### *Suggested questions for reflection*

- ◆ How do you explain the knowledge, skills and understandings you most value in the teaching and learning of languages?
- ◆ How do you connect language learning to what is happening in the contemporary world?
- ◆ How do you use language learning as an opportunity for learners to explore what is happening in other parts of the world and how they understand their place in it?

## Advocacy

Accomplished teachers of languages advocate for language learning, intercultural communication and sensitivity, and linguistic and cultural diversity.

They:

- ◆ are advocates for languages both with and for students, schools and communities, and engage the wider community in the advancement of language learning
- ◆ articulate the importance of language learning in a comprehensive, future-focused education.

### *Suggested questions for reflection*

- ◆ How do you increase understanding of the importance of language and culture learning in your community?
- ◆ How do you increase understanding of the importance of diversity in your community?
- ◆ How do you engage the wider community in supporting language learning?

## Personal Characteristics

Accomplished teachers of languages value their profession. They are committed to teaching and teaching languages and cultures.

They:

- ◆ demonstrate a love of language as a source of interest, curiosity and pleasure
- ◆ are role models who demonstrate a commitment to their own continuing professional and personal learning
- ◆ connect and engage with their learners and inspire students and others
- ◆ have high expectations and a belief in their students as emerging bilinguals/multilinguals developing the knowledge and awareness they need to become effective intercultural communicators
- ◆ adopt a critical stance on their own work and to themselves as mediators of languages and cultures, which they demonstrate through ongoing reflection, questioning, inquiry and/or research into their practices, values and beliefs.

### *Suggested questions for reflection*

- ◆ How do you model and promote language as a source of interest, curiosity and pleasure?
- ◆ How do you demonstrate your commitment to professional learning?
- ◆ How do you demonstrate, and inspire in students, a passion for texts that have personal and cultural significance for them?
- ◆ How do you demonstrate to students how much they can successfully achieve in the target language?
- ◆ How do you evaluate the success of your own teaching?
- ◆ What steps do you take to ensure your students' learning continues to improve?

# Program Standards

Effective languages programs are visible and actively valued within the school culture. Languages teaching and learning are valued explicitly in schools' statements and implicitly in the schools' planning and review and processes, timetabling and resourcing for languages. Schools actively acknowledge and foster connections between languages and other curriculum areas.

Effective language programs:

- ◆ focus on progression in language learning for all students, both during the year and across years. They acknowledge learners' progress through the program and ensure that prior knowledge is maintained and developed. They recognise that language learning is a life-long process and needs sustained learning during schooling
- ◆ have timetabling for languages which allocates adequate time, in both overall hours and frequency of lessons, to enable effective and sustained language learning, recognising that achievement in language learning is dependent on time on task
- ◆ are adequately staffed to ensure that language learning can be allocated appropriate curriculum time and language class sizes can be limited. Ideally there should be a team of teachers involved in teaching languages in a school. Staffing models must support teachers in forming effective professional relationships with students, colleagues and the wider school community
- ◆ are characterised by the allocation of dedicated space which is suitable for the teaching and learning of languages
- ◆ have budgets that ensure appropriate access to resources for the teaching and learning of languages, including print and digital materials and digital technologies
- ◆ include provision for professional learning for teachers of languages and with the wider school staff
- ◆ recognise the practical and performance-based nature of language learning and the need for class sizes which are appropriate for facilitating language learning as a practical and intensive form of learning. The creation of language class groups also takes into consideration the learning and personal background of students
- ◆ recognise that students arrive with differing levels of knowledge of and exposure to the languages taught in the school and have strategies to facilitate transitions and enhance learning.

### *Suggested questions for reflection*

- ◆ How does the school demonstrate that it values the learning of languages?
- ◆ How does the school demonstrate and foster connections between languages and other curriculum areas?
- ◆ How is the program planned to build on learners' knowledge across the years of schooling?
- ◆ How does the school support sustained language learning over a number of years?
- ◆ How does the teacher support sustained language learning over a number of years?
- ◆ How does the school decide what is adequate time for language learning?
- ◆ How does the school make adequate time available for language teaching and ensure frequent and regular time on task?
- ◆ How does staffing for languages in the school affect the language program?
- ◆ How do staffing decisions in the school have an impact on the language teachers' work and the presence and visibility of languages in the school?
- ◆ What space is made available to the languages program? How does this affect the nature of the program?
- ◆ How does the school decide what is an adequate budget for language learning? What resources does the school make available for language learning? How do these decisions affect language learning in the school?
- ◆ How does the school decide on class sizes and class groupings for language learning? How do these decisions affect language learning in the school?
- ◆ How does the school promote language and culture learning to the community?
- ◆ How does the school provide for professional learning for teachers of languages and with other staff?



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