

International education in Catholic schools in Queensland

Position Statement



Introduction

The Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) is committed to international education that promotes international cultural intelligence among students and staff at Catholic schools in Queensland.

Intercultural understanding is one of the General Capabilities in the Australian Curriculum¹ which describes how students learn to value their own cultures, languages and beliefs, and those of others. Students who contribute to an intercultural understanding could be those on Visas², from different countries including English-speaking countries or could be Australian citizens from different cultural backgrounds.

All students and staff in Catholic schools benefit from an interactive process whereby a school community incorporating diverse social and cultural backgrounds exchanges expertise, knowledge, and experiences. This process enhances everyone's understanding and capacity to effectively live and work in changing local and international communities.

Students on visas may require a combination of intensive English language and school education. Their diverse educational backgrounds might differ significantly from a schooling equivalent to their age peers in Queensland. They may have experienced severe emotional or physical trauma that could affect their learning.

Those overseas students on a 571 subclass visa usually stay with a host family from within the school community and in this way experience the unique Australian lifestyle. In some cases these experiences are enriched by the inclusion of community and business engagement, work experience opportunities, provision of holiday excursions as well as career advice and access to course opportunities provided by the tertiary sector. In this way overseas students benefit from a safe, caring and rich educational experience.

Definition

- International education is a whole of school approach to the development of international cultural intelligence. There are a variety of school approaches to engaging with international education, including:
 - cultural immersion programs for students and staff
 - study tours and holiday programs that combine educational, tourism and cultural exchange activities for overseas student groups visiting Queensland
 - institutional linkages and 'sister school' relationships
 - English Language Intensive Course for Overseas Students (ELICOS) provision
 - offshore program delivery and campuses
 - enrolment of Full Fee Paying Overseas Students (FFPOS). This school sector 571 subclass visa requires the student to study in a CRICOS registered school, and the course in which the

¹ <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/generalcapabilities/intercultural-understanding/introduction/introduction>

² Students on **Visas** include **Overseas Students**, who are defined for **funding** purposes in *Div.2 s6* of the [Australian Education Act 2013](#) and *Div.2A s6* of the [Australian Education Regulation 2013](#).

- student wishes to enrol must also be CRICOS registered.
- an approved secondary school exchange program³ on a 571 visa subclass.
- enrolment of students or dependents of families on a permanent or temporary visa including Temporary Protection Visas, Safe Haven Enterprise Visas and those children of families already living in the community under community detention arrangements or on bridging visas
- enrolment of students with Visitor Visas. These students will usually be limited to a maximum study period of 3 months. Students on study tours or enrolling in schools for holiday programs will usually have a Visitor Visa.
- International cultural intelligence is the ability of an individual to adapt to different people from diverse cultures and the ability to manage interconnectedness harmoniously and productively (Earley, Ang, & Tan, 2006, p5).

Rationale

The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians affirms that due to global integration and international mobility there is an increased need to nurture an appreciation of and respect for social, cultural and religious diversity, and a sense of global citizenship. The first goal of the Declaration requires school sectors to contribute to a socially cohesive society that respects and appreciates diversity (p. 7). The second goal of the Declaration requires school sectors to support all young Australians to relate to and communicate across cultures and become responsible global and local citizens. (p. 9)

While globalisation has increased the interdependence of peoples, international education promotes cultural intelligence among students and staff. The Congregation for Catholic Education states that through open dialogue among cultures, different religions make a decisive contribution to forming an awareness of common values and building a more united and peaceful world⁴. This dialogue enables Catholic schools to reflect on their own identity⁵ whilst pursuing the good of all in a climate of mutual trust⁶.

Catholic schools in Queensland seek to be places where everyone is safe, supported, engaged and included. Schools aim to achieve this through whole-school approaches which provide pastoral care, protection of students, student behaviour support and foster social and emotional wellbeing. By this means, Catholic schools aim to build the capacity and resilience of school communities to effectively prevent or intervene early in a number of social issues that could be precursors to radicalisation.

For international students, Catholic schools provide the support, care and encouragement they need to achieve their full academic potential in a safe and focused learning environment. This environment improves students' English skills, self-confidence and independence. Although all students benefit from a whole of school approach that fosters the development of international friendships and networks, international students are able to learn about Australia's way of life, its tourist attractions and opportunities for further career development.

Position Statement

The Queensland Catholic Education Commission advocates that Catholic education authorities commit to establishing appropriate policies and procedures that:

- promote a whole of school approach to international cultural understanding
- raise the level of international cultural intelligence
- promote students and staff from diverse social and cultural backgrounds to exchange expertise, knowledge, and experiences
- enhance understanding and capacity to effectively live and work in local and international

³ <http://education.qld.gov.au/schools/cricos/student-exchange.html>

⁴ Congregation for Catholic Education, *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools Living in Harmony for a Civilization of Love*, Vatican City 2013, nn 19 – 20.

⁵ *Ibid*, n 57.

⁶ *Ibid*, n 59.

communities

- address appropriate education programs for international students.

Implications

Catholic schools in Queensland might consider their:

- information on international cultural intelligence to engage staff, parents and the wider school community
- professional learning to encourage the development of international cultural intelligence. Existing students may require a cultural awareness program
- curriculum policies and practices for the development of intercultural understanding as one of the General Capabilities in the Australian Curriculum⁷ which describes how students learn to value their own cultures, languages and beliefs, and those of others
- capacity and resources for delivering international education. Visa students may require additional pastoral support. Students schooled in one culture may take years to 'retrain' themselves to different conventions of gesture and body language. Learning is often culturally loaded and visa students may have additional or alternative understandings that need to be considered when teaching or when communicating.
- Where students experience English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D), they will require support to build the English language skills needed to access the general curriculum, in addition to learning area-specific language structures and vocabulary. The particular challenge is that they need to concurrently learn English, learn through (or in) English, and learn about English. A student may be at different stages in writing, reading, speaking and listening. EAL/D resources, however, can be shared in the classroom for the benefit of all students
- support programs and pastoral arrangements such as induction and farewell programs, tutoring and inclusive processes for international students
- currency of information regarding emerging issues with respect to international education
- professional development for staff on a range of international education issues including cultural sensitivities, requirements of the Education Services for Overseas Students Act and duty of care responsibilities
- understanding of the complexity and costs of becoming CRICOS registered if intending to enroll overseas students on a 571 subclass visa. This includes providing the resources for compliance, the organisation and monitoring of homestay arrangements and the complexity of involving parents of international students in school life.

References

- Congregation for Catholic Education, *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools Living in Harmony for a Civilization of Love*, Vatican City 2013
- Earley, P.C., Ang, S. & Tan, J. (2006). *CQ: Developing Cultural Intelligence at Work*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.
- John Paul II (1995), Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*.
- The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (December 2008), *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, Melbourne: Curriculum Corporation.

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⁷ <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/generalcapabilities/intercultural-understanding/introduction/introduction>