

The place of English language development in the higher education curriculum

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This poster will present the findings from a project funded by the Australian Government's Office for Learning and Teaching. Entitled Degrees of Proficiency: Building a strategic approach to university students' English language assessment and development, the project investigated institutional approaches to post-entry English language assessment and language development in the university sector. The project team comprised members from four universities across three Australian States: Curtin University in Perth, RMIT and Swinburne University in Melbourne, and the University of Sydney. Data were collected initially from an online survey distributed nationally, which obtained responses from all but two of Australia's universities. This was followed by in-depth interviews with twenty practitioners and experts in the field from a cross-section of universities, and four ethnographic case studies that illustrated varying approaches to the development of student English language proficiency. The team also undertook detailed 'desk research': the analysis of public documents that provided an insight into institutional practices. These included policy documents, internal reports, AUQA and TEQSA reports, documentation for the Streamlined Visa Processing approvals, and other public reports. The project's findings led to the development of an interactive website that identifies good practice, provides information on the processes and procedures involved in establishing an institutional approach to student English language development, and offers advice to institutions embarking on this strategy for the first time. The poster will illustrate the key findings and 'talk through' the website contents, explaining how they can be used in the development of an effective institutional strategy.