



## subject focus

# Academic prep. in Australia

Many students find an academic preparation course in Australia to be a valuable experience.

Academic preparation courses in Australia are growing in popularity, and schools report that these programmes are the ideal preparation for the demands of undergraduate study.

Melinda Binley from the ACL Sydney English Centre in NSW upholds that the courses are a valuable component of international study in Australia. "Not only does the course increase student confidence through improved language level, but it develops study skills relevant for the Australian vocational and tertiary sectors," she says.

ACL is just one school whose courses provide a direct route into universities and vocational colleges in Australia. This is not applicable to all academic preparation courses, however, and at the Australian International College of Language (AICOL) in Southport, QLD, where there is no automatic pathway from their courses into tertiary education in Australia, Viviana Browne believes that direct entry programmes can actually do students a disservice. She says that by taking a course that offers direct entry on to a higher education course, "students fulfil a time requirement rather than a skills requirement". In this instance, Browne suggests students may commence their further education courses without having the necessary levels of skill and understanding.

Nevertheless, Binley insists that, "independent study, research, critical thinking and exam skills" are all gained by ACL's English for academic purposes course, and at the University of Queensland Foundation Year,

administered by International Education Services (IES) in Brisbane, QLD, focus is also on developing skills that enable the student to function in a different teaching and learning environment.

Furthermore, schools offering such courses make sure that they stay up-to-date with the ever-evolving teaching styles at universities, and various measures are taken to ensure course material is relevant to students.

Academic skills, however, are not the only area of importance among the academic preparation courses on offer. IES counts pastoral support as a vital element of their course given that many international students lack experience in independent living upon arrival in Australia. Lynne Stevens at IES says, "For most students [this is] the first time in their life that they have had to live apart from their family."

Smooth integration into the local student community is another factor that plays a large role for international students, and Jenny Byatt from the West Coast International College of English in Bunbury, WA, says their academic preparation candidates "get to know students and staff and feel like they 'belong' there before they have even started their course".

A standard language course will not provide the cultural, social and personal development essential for adapting to life in another country. As Stevens concludes, "International students focus usually on meeting the entry requirements for their chosen undergraduate programme. Often they are surprised and proud of the independence they develop." ■

Location	Name of school	Range of academic prep. courses	Min. age of students	Min. lang. proficiency required	Uni admission?
Adelaide, SA	English College of Adelaide	s	17		
Adelaide, SA	SA Institute of Business and Technology	s,yr	16	i	✓
Adelaide, SA	Tafe South Australia	o	-	e	✓
Brisbane, QLD	Global Village Brisbane	o	18	i	✓
Brisbane, QLD	International Education Services	s,yr,o	16	i	✓
Brisbane, QLD	John Paul International College	s,yr	16	e	✓
Bunbury, WA	West Coast International College of English	s	18	e	
Gold Coast, QLD	Bond University ELI	s,yr	16	i	✓
Manly, NSW	International House Sydney	o	17	i	✓
Manunda, QLD	Cairns Language Centre	yr,o	16	i	
Melbourne, VIC	Geos Melbourne College of English	o,s	18	i	✓
Melbourne, VIC	La Trobe International College Language Centre	o	17	i	✓
Melbourne, VIC	Victoria University, ELI	o	18	i	✓
Perth, WA	Kingston International College	s,yr	17	i	✓
Southport, QLD	Australian International College of Language	s,yr,o	-	-	
Surfers Paradise, QLD	Human International Academy	o,yr	n	i	
Sydney, NSW	ACL Sydney English Centre	o	16	i	✓
Sydney, NSW	Tafe English Language Centre, North Sydney Institute	s	16	i	
Sydney, NSW	University of Sydney CET	o	18	i	
Townsville and Cairns, QLD	James Cook University	yr	18	i	✓

e elementary i intermediate n none o other s semester v varies yr year round - info not supplied

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