

Australian foundation

Foundation programmes that prepare students for tertiary education in Australia are becoming more sophisticated and both international students and Australians lacking the right academic qualifications are keen to enrol.

Foundation courses are a step ahead of English for academic purposes (EAP) programmes. Available to both local and international students, they are designed for those candidates who don't have the adequate academic qualifications to enrol directly into a university and are considered to provide the equivalent tuition level of the final year of high school.

There will typically be an English language requirement (Toefl or IELTS score) for entry onto a foundation course, although further English language tuition – often targeted towards academic needs – will be offered.

Talking of the advantages of their foundation programme, Michael Wallace, Vice Principal of Royal Brisbane International College in Brisbane, QLD, relates, "The [English] tuition is focused specifically on communication in an academic and business environment, including the skills required to get the best results at university."

Typical foundation programmes incorporate critical reading in various different academic areas (for example, science, engineering or technology) combined with study skills and targeted English study. Jessica O'Neill at QUT International in Brisbane, QLD, explains, "Students study units such as mathematics,

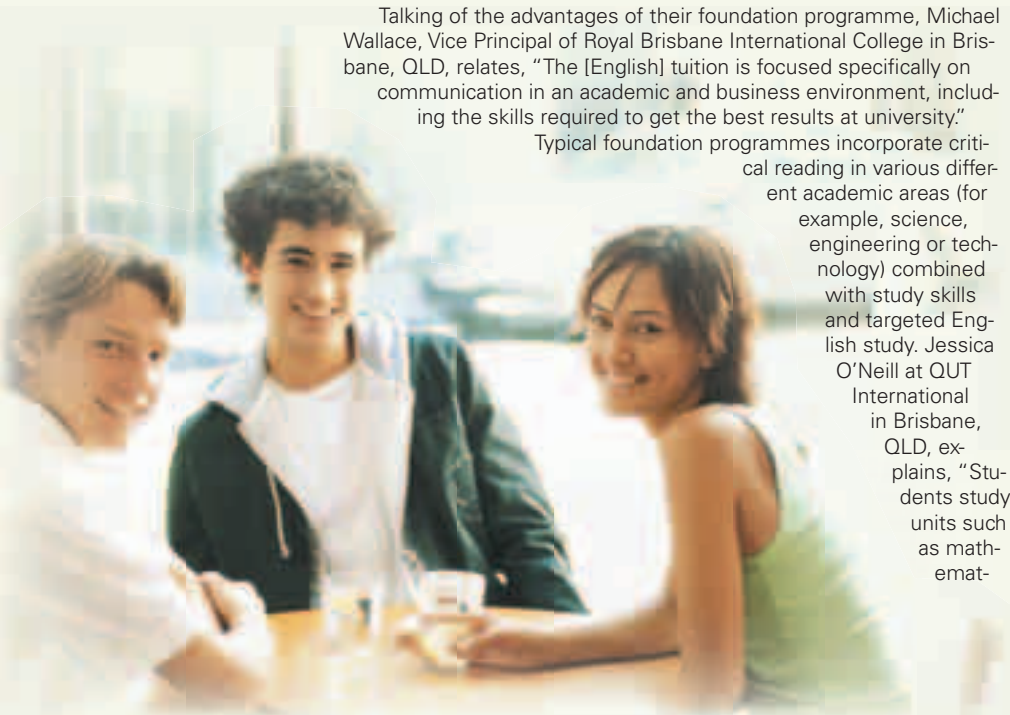
science, etc, depending on their desired bachelor programme, and they also study communication units, which are English language units that support the academic units the student is taking." In general, students will focus on research and analytical skills, presentations, groupwork and in some cases, IT literacy. Sample lectures may also be included in the course programme.

Undertaking such foundation programmes at a university can also give students an introduction to life on campus, helping students settle into university life and meet new people. Robyn Donnelly at the South Australian Institute of Business and Technology (SAIBT), at the University of South Australia in Adelaide, SA, says, "Australian students comprise 30 per cent of the SAIBT student population thus allowing international students to meet, make study groups and network with Australian students in a more supportive university environment."

She adds, "The classes are smaller than at university and introduce students over the two semesters into the university lecture and tutorial system."

Another benefit of such programmes is that successful completion of the course will lead to automatic entry into a university or college programme, or in some specialised cases, into the second year of a degree programme. This can be the case at SAIBT. Students with an IELTS score of at least 5.0 study English in the first four-month semester with two certificate or diploma-level subjects, and then complete the remaining certificate or diploma-level subjects in the following two semesters. Upon completion of the course, students benefit from direct entry into some first-year or second-year bachelor degrees at the University of South Australia.

To ensure they match the requirements of both the universities and international students, foundation programmes are constantly being tweaked. At ANU College in Canberra, ACT, James Kelly says, "The range of subjects on offer has grown and the course itself has become more flexible to students' needs." Similarly, Helmer Lich, Director of Studies at Queensland International Business Academy in Gold Coast, QLD, states that their foundation course now "contains more business management theory and university-level case studies and assignments". This, according to Lich, has resulted in a high success rate for foundation course students. He sums up, "Students gradually become research-based learners and confident users of English for academic study."



Selection of programmes available

School location	Name of institution	Min.course length (wks)	Course includes	Direct uni. entry
Adelaide, SA	SA Inst. of Business & Technology	28	ss,sl,w,r	yes
Brisbane, QLD	Royal Brisbane International College	25	pf	yes
Brisbane, QLD	QUT International	18	m,v,ss,r	yes
Canberra, ACT	ANU College	28	sl,r,o	yes
Gold Coast, QLD	Queensland Int. Business Academy	12	r,w,ss,sl,o	yes
Melbourne, VIC	RMIT Uni. International College	22	ss,sl,p,w,it,o	yes
Sydney, NSW	La Trobe University ACN	16	ss,p,w,r	yes
Sydney, NSW	Macquarie University NCELTR	7	ss,p,w,r,m	yes
Sydney, NSW	Sydney West Int. College, UWS	10	ss,sl,p,w,r	yes
Sydney, NSW	University of New South Wales	33	ss, r, w, sl, m	yes
Wollongong, NSW	Wollongong University College	28	-	yes

it IT literacy m mentor programme o other p presentations pf postgraduate focus r critical reading
sl sample lectures ss study skills v faculty visits w writing skills – information not supplied