

***Study Area Specification***

# Functional English

2006



*Functional English Study Area Specification*

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Queensland Studies Authority, PO Box 307, Spring Hill, Queensland 4004, Australia

Phone: (07) 3864 0299

Fax: (07) 3221 2553

Email: [office@qsa.qld.edu.au](mailto:office@qsa.qld.edu.au)

Website: [www.qsa.qld.edu.au](http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au)

# Contents

<b>1. Rationale</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Aims</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>3. Objectives</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>3.1 Knowledge of contextual factors</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>3.2 Knowledge of textual features</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>3.3 Knowledge and understanding of texts</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>3.4 Affective</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>4. Course organisation</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>4.1 Time allocation</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>4.2 Course requirements</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>4.3 Study area core</b> .....	<b>6</b>
4.3.1 Basic Skills Unit .....	6
<b>4.4 Contexts</b> .....	<b>8</b>
4.4.1 Work.....	8
4.4.2 Community.....	8
4.4.3 Leisure.....	8
<b>4.5 Planning a course of study</b> .....	<b>8</b>
4.5.1 Possible topics for units of work.....	8
4.5.2 Units of study .....	9
4.5.3 Moving from Functional English.....	10
<b>5. Learning experiences</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>5.1 Aspects of communicative competence and literacy experiences</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>6. Assessment</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>6.1 Introduction</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>6.2 Principles of assessment</b> .....	<b>13</b>
6.2.1 Continuous assessment .....	14
6.2.2 Balance.....	14
6.2.3 Mandatory aspects of the syllabus .....	14
6.2.4 Significant aspects of the course of study .....	14
6.2.5 Selective updating .....	15
6.2.6 Fullest and latest information.....	15
<b>6.3 Characteristics of assessment tasks</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>6.4 Assessment guidelines</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>6.5 Suggested assessment techniques</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>6.6 Arriving at a holistic judgment of student achievement for a task</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>6.7 Exit criteria</b> .....	<b>17</b>

6.7.1 Knowledge of contextual factors.....	17
6.7.2 Knowledge of textual features.....	17
6.7.3 Knowledge and understanding of texts.....	18
<b>6.8 Determining exit levels of achievement.....</b>	<b>18</b>
6.8.1 Arriving at a holistic judgment of level of achievement for a folio of student work .....	18
<b>6.9 Standards associated with exit criteria.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>7. Language Education, Quantitative concepts and skills.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>7.1 Language education.....</b>	<b>24</b>
7.1.1 Sources of texts for language experiences .....	24
<b>7.2 Quantitative concepts and skills .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>8. Educational Equity.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>9. Resources.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Appendix 1.....</b>	<b>28</b>
Sample program of study in Functional English. ....	28
<b>Appendix 2.....</b>	<b>29</b>

# 1. Rationale

Effective communication is integral to our society. New technologies, the influences of globalisation and the restructured workplace require students to be able to interpret, construct and make judgments about meanings in texts, in preparation for lifelong learning.

Students undertaking the study area specification *Functional English* will have particular language needs. This course is designed to support those students in further development of their basic literacy skills. They require these skills to participate confidently and constructively when interacting with others, and to use language clearly and effectively to achieve purposes and convey meanings.

Literacy requires "... a teaching and learning process (including assessment) which is focused on meaning making ... rather than merely reproducing uncritically what they have been taught, learners should be able to make sense of the world and develop their own perspectives. This implies both an understanding of the world and the capacity to critically evaluate that world. If this broader conception of literacy is overlooked, then literacy becomes little more than the mastery of the series of sub-skills, rather than the genuinely transforming experience which current conceptions of literacy — as social practice, critical engagement, context-specific and multiple — suggest it should be."<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, programs developed from this study area specification should foster success for students by further developing and reinforcing their functional language skills to help them critically evaluate the world around them. Students should access a significant level of support, and emphasis is on practical real-life learning experiences, where students use language to think, interpret and communicate effectively. Learning experiences will reflect a range of individual and community contexts and purposes in which language is used.

The study area specification *Functional English* is informed by the national Framework of Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competence<sup>2</sup>, which describes six different aspects of the communication process. They are:

- Personal (expressing identity)
- Cooperative (interacting in groups)
- Systems (interacting with organisations)
- Public (interacting with the wider community)
- Procedural (performing tasks)
- Technical (using technology)

In any text or context, some or all of these aspects will be involved. Each one overlaps with and is dependent on the others.

The study area specification *Functional English* continues to develop the language and social practices described in the Years 1 to 10 English syllabus in which students need to:

- make meanings in and of everyday, mass media and literary texts, understanding the influence of cultural contexts and social situations

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<sup>1</sup> Lonsdale M. and McCurry D. 2004, *Literacy in the New Millennium*, NCVER.

<sup>2</sup> Australian Committee for Training Curriculum, 1993.

- develop abilities in speaking (signing), listening, reading, viewing, writing and shaping practices, responsive to and effective in diverse social contexts
- become confident, effective and critical users of texts and language, making judgments to accept or challenge meanings.

The study area specification *Functional English* is designed to reflect the National Reporting System (NRS) indicators of competence at level one and two in reading, writing and oral communication<sup>3</sup>.

This study area specification has been developed as a two-year Authority-registered subject to take into account the needs of students from a variety of cultural, social, linguistic and economic backgrounds. A program of study developed from this study area specification will build on the needs, interests and future aspirations of those who select it. Accommodating these needs should afford students opportunities for negotiated learning and assessment, individual goal setting, and developing confidence and self-concept.

The concept of language and literacy as social practice is fundamental to *Functional English*. Because of this, a contextualised approach to teaching and learning is encouraged through the study area specification.

This study area specification provides opportunities for the incorporation of the key competencies<sup>4</sup> in a range of learning and classroom experiences such as those described above. Students will collect and organise information, and check information for usefulness, completeness and accuracy. They will communicate information, ideas and opinions using specified forms and contexts. Students are encouraged to develop the skills associated with planning and organising work activities, and with interacting with others as part of a team.

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<sup>3</sup> *National Reporting System (NRS)*, Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training

<sup>4</sup> The key competencies are: KC1: collecting, analysing and organising information; KC2: communicating ideas and information; KC3: planning and organising activities; KC4: working with others and in teams; KC6: solving problems; KC7: using technology.

## 2. Aims

A program of study derived from this study area specification aims to help students develop:

- the ability to produce and present texts in a variety of forms, appropriate for different audiences and purposes
- skills in interpreting texts presented in a variety of forms
- the ability to use a range of information and communication technologies
- the ability to use language to make informed decisions for action in their personal, work and social lives as active and informed citizens
- confidence in planning and negotiating with others in the contexts of work and the wider community
- the ability to collaborate with others, perform tasks and enact plans to achieve personal and group goals
- the ability to reflect on their own and other people's knowledge, values and practices
- a sense of self-respect and self-esteem
- a desire to build on acquired knowledge and skills to enable lifelong learning.

# 3. Objectives

The objectives of the program of study are divided into four categories, namely:

- Knowledge of contextual factors
- Knowledge of textual features
- Knowledge and understanding of texts
- Affective.

The first three objectives are reflected in the three assessment criteria. At the completion of the course, all categories of objectives must be covered and the first three must be reflected in the assessment tasks.

In this study area specification, it is appropriate that students have access to support from:

- teachers and mentors
- scaffolding, modelling, and feedback
- other language support where available.

## 3.1 Knowledge of contextual factors

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Students develop knowledge about how to make meaning in familiar and predictable contexts. In doing so, students should:

- know that genres have patterns and conventions
- locate specific information relating to familiar contexts
- take part in short interpersonal exchanges for the purpose of establishing relationships
- use a variety of modes and mediums.

## 3.2 Knowledge of textual features

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Students develop knowledge about how to communicate through selecting and using textual features that are appropriate to audiences and purposes. Students should:

- make use of textual features appropriate to familiar audiences and purposes relating to work, community and leisure contexts
- demonstrate the use of a variety of features: visual, auditory, digital, spoken/signed
- sequence two or more familiar events and order information
- convey meaning using the conventions of written language
  - sentence structures
  - control of basic paragraphing and punctuation
  - selecting appropriate vocabulary
  - spelling frequently used words
  - consistency in use of tense
  - link ideas using repeated or related words, simple pronouns and conjunctions.



### 3.3 Knowledge and understanding of texts

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Students develop knowledge about how texts can be interpreted and constructed. They demonstrate this through:

- identifying different ways people, places, groups and things are represented in texts
- identifying one or more meanings in texts
- making language choices to represent people, places and things in different ways
- identifying that texts can influence how people think or behave.

### 3.4 Affective

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The affective objectives refer to the attitudes, values and feelings students develop.

Students should:

- have confidence in using a range of language skills
- value the need for clear communication
- appreciate the value of working cooperatively with others in a range of group and individual activities
- gain personal enjoyment from reading, viewing, writing, speaking/signing and listening
- appreciate that effective communication involves trust, respect for others, cooperation and tolerance, including a commitment to non-discriminatory language
- develop the desire to engage in lifelong learning.

# 4. Course organisation

Functional English allows schools to develop programs of study based on a flexible combination of topics.

## 4.1 Time allocation

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The time allocation for a program of study in Functional English is a minimum of 55 hours per semester of timetabled school time, including assessment.

## 4.2 Course requirements

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The requirements for a course in Functional English are:

- the three objectives (see section 3)
- the Study Area Core delivered within the three contexts of Work, Community and Leisure.

## 4.3 Study area core

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The study area core is the **Basic Skills Unit**. It may be used for the initial identification of the level of student needs (for example, level of assistance required or capacity for independence), and as recurring reinforcement of basic literacy skills.

The skills identified in the unit should be taught specifically when student need is identified. **The basic skills unit is best taught by integration into all units of study to provide continuous reinforcement.**

### 4.3.1 Basic Skills Unit

The Basic Skills Unit in table 1 incorporates skills of speaking/signing and listening, reading and viewing, and writing and shaping.

**Table 1: Basic Skills Unit**

Skills	Possible learning experiences
<p>Speaking/signing and listening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elicit and give factual information or personal details</li> <li>• Participate in meaningful short interpersonal exchanges</li> <li>• Listen for relevant information from oral texts</li> <li>• Recognise the differences between the formal and informal registers of spoken texts and that when social relations change, language (verbal and non-verbal) may also change</li> <li>• Use and interpret facial expressions, stance, gestures and vocal tone to assist with communicating or interpreting meaning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using the telephone including taking and leaving messages</li> <li>• Providing a face-to-face explanation</li> <li>• Practising conventions of introducing, greeting and farewelling</li> <li>• Giving and follow directions</li> <li>• Transmitting messages from one person to another</li> <li>• Asking questions to clarify meaning</li> <li>• Role playing various formal and informal scenarios.</li> </ul>
<p>Reading and Viewing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read and identify letters of the alphabet in a language context</li> <li>• Read and interpret short, simple, personally relevant texts</li> <li>• Locate specific information relating to familiar contexts in paper and electronic texts which may contain data in simple graphic, diagrammatic, formatted or visual form</li> <li>• Make meanings from print, signs and symbols</li> <li>• Distinguish between real and imaginary representations in texts</li> <li>• Read and interpret visual representations in texts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying names of self and peers on a class roll or other lists</li> <li>• Interpreting common symbols, accepted signage (e.g. road signs, warnings) and gestures (e.g. stop, come here)</li> <li>• Interpreting graphic representations of data (e.g. maps, graphs, floor plans)</li> <li>• Retrieving information from paper and electronic texts (e.g. web pages, timetables, directories, manuals, instructions)</li> <li>• Discussing construction of visual texts (e.g. advertising, web pages, media).</li> </ul>
<p>Writing and shaping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write basic personal details about self or others such as name, address and signature</li> <li>• Write about a familiar topic using simple sentence structure</li> <li>• Complete forms or write notes using factual or personal information relating to familiar contexts</li> <li>• Use basic models to construct simple texts suitable for particular audiences and purposes</li> <li>• Distinguish between genres and use some of these features in own writing</li> <li>• Sequence writing with some attention to organising principles of time, importance, etc.</li> <li>• Use language appropriate to a range of interactional purposes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Filling in forms in paper and electronic formats (e.g. ballot papers, banking, licences, subscriptions)</li> <li>• Practising keyboard and handwriting skills</li> <li>• Constructing letters and emails</li> <li>• Producing and using a variety of simple texts (e.g. memos, text messages, electronic discussions/chats)</li> <li>• Writing personal histories, narratives and recounts.</li> </ul>

## 4.4 Contexts

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The three contexts (work, community and leisure) form the basis of a program of study in Functional English. Contexts may form separate units of work or may be integrated.

### 4.4.1 Work

In this context, students have opportunities to develop knowledge of and skills in making language choices for texts, which draw their audience and purpose from workplace contexts.

### 4.4.2 Community

In this context, students have opportunities to develop specific knowledge and skills to enable them to take part in and understand their current, national and global communities.

### 4.4.3 Leisure

In participating in a range of leisure activities, students have opportunities to develop knowledge and skills to create, enjoy, appreciate and use various texts available in contemporary society.

## 4.5 Planning a course of study

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A course of study consists of a sequence of units of work, which will integrate the basic skills unit with one or more of the contexts of work, community and leisure.

In designing units of work, which must be at least 10 hours in length, consideration should be given to:

- activities based on real-life or lifelike contexts
- a range of texts, audiences and purposes
- a balance of texts, modes and media drawn from work, community and leisure contexts
- individual differences
- local community diversity and resources.

Appendix 1 contains a sample course of study.

### 4.5.1 Possible topics for units of work

Schools are encouraged to be flexible in developing programs of study. Each unit of work must be based on one or more of the three contexts of work, community and leisure. The program of study should reflect a balance amongst the three contexts.

Teachers have found the suggestions in table 2 below, used individually or in combination, to be useful topics for units of work. The table offers suggestions only and is not exhaustive.

**Table 2: Possible unit topics**

Work	Community	Leisure
Conflict resolution	Active citizenship	Clubs
Workplace relationships	Spirituality	Comedy
Keeping that job	Community service	Festivals
Changing jobs	Environmental issues	Film
Managing finance	Families and friends	Youth culture
Mentors and buddies	Festivals	Holidays and travel
The right job for me	Staying healthy	Sport
Trade unions	Fundraising	Memories
Workplace health and safety	Getting involved	Money
Personal presentation	Heroes and role models	Arts and music
Preparing for work	Tradition	Moving on and moving out
Rights and responsibilities	Knowing the law	Parties
Voluntary work	Sport	Reading for pleasure
Self-employment	Moving out	Self/identity
Small business	Shopping	Soap operas/sitcoms/reality TV
Work experience/traineeships	Social justice	Relationships

### 4.5.2 Units of study

The following tables illustrate *generic unit outlines* in each of the contexts of work, community and leisure. Schools should use this format as a guide to devising their units of study, while considering the details of the study area core in planning learning experiences and assessment. The generic sample learning experiences and assessment possibilities provided could be adapted to suit specific units designed by the teacher to meet the needs of students.

Appendix 2 contains sample units of study in each context.

**Table 3: Generic Unit Outline — Work**

Context	Sample learning experiences	Assessment possibilities
Work	Visit various workplaces Assist in organising a function or event Investigate a career path Apply workplace health and safety practices Participate in a meeting Read and use workplace documents	Role playing among groups and teams Complete workplace documents Participate in an interview Use a webpage for a particular purpose Give a simple demonstration Create a portfolio Follow instructions or procedures Describe a possible career

**Table 4: Generic Unit Outline — Community**

Context	Sample Learning experiences	Assessment possibilities
Community	Listen to and interact with guest speakers Participate in community events Assist in organising community events Discuss consumer issues Discuss community, national and global issues and events Discuss environmental issues Plan a travel itinerary Investigate life after school Visit and use community facilities Access business and government services and agencies	Introducing and thanking guest speakers Produce a publication (e.g. flyer, poster, brochure, menu) Compose a letter or email Report on a community issue Recount an experience Complete forms Role play consumer interactions Multimedia presentation (e.g. PowerPoint) Explain use of a community facility

**Table 5: Generic Unit Outline — Leisure**

Context	Sample Learning experiences	Assessment possibilities
Leisure	Appreciate, enjoy and create leisure texts Participate in games Organise a celebration Discuss appropriate behaviour and participate in various social situations Attend a festival Prepare for travelling Attend a performance or sporting event Use computer software Use the internet Discuss current trends in leisure activities	Review a film or book Act out scenarios Write stories, poems and song lyrics Recount stories or experiences Report on a media issue Send a text message Research a leisure event using the internet Plan a trip using the internet Demonstrate use of technology and equipment for leisure purposes Role play leisure scenarios (e.g. dinner in a restaurant, movie outing)

### 4.5.3 Moving from Functional English

It may be beneficial for students who are successful in their studies of Functional English, and have completed at least one full semester of the subject, to undertake the English Communication Study Area Specification. The school should make such decisions, taking into account school resources, student achievements and needs.

# 5. Learning experiences

Learning experiences in Functional English are to be activity-based and life-related as much as possible. They will typically be practical and spoken/signed. The learning environment will emphasise group interactions and participation. Learning experiences should cater for individual differences in personal development, ability, learning styles and interests and derive from teaching strategies that actively encourage participation and reward effort.

Teachers should expect that students at various times will require considerable assistance, especially when engaging in new tasks, activities or experiences. Familiarity with a range of social contexts and related literacy practices will promote independent, autonomous engagement by students. Cooperative learning environments will also encourage student progression from reliance on teacher assistance to greater independence.

Teacher modelling and guidance will be features of these strategies and must be used in ways that enhance student confidence and develop positive attitudes.

In all learning experiences, students should be encouraged to use a range of technologies, where appropriate and available. The continual updating and expansion of new technologies gives rise to a range of contexts in which literacy practices are flexible and evolving.

For suggested learning experiences in Functional English, teachers should refer to those outlined in the basic skills unit (table 1) and the generic unit outlines provided for the contexts of work, community and leisure (tables 2–5).

## 5.1 Aspects of communicative competence and literacy experiences

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Australian Committee for Training Curriculum 1993 *National Framework of Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competence* indicates that there are six aspects or facets of communication required at work, in education, and in community and family life. These are:

- personal (expressing identity)
  - writing a personal message to a friend
  - keeping a diary or journal
  - recounting personal experience
- cooperative (interacting in groups)
  - undertaking a group project
  - taking turns at group roles
  - performing a role-play
  - participating in online environments
- systems (interacting with organisations)
  - applying for a drivers licence
  - filling in forms
  - making a telephone enquiry
  - accessing employment networks
- public (interacting with the wider community)

- helping promote an activity within the school
- taking part in community service
- writing a letter of thanks to a community representative
- procedural (performing tasks)
  - following instructions
  - filling out an evaluation form
  - giving directions
- technical (using technology)
  - electronic banking
  - accessing email on a computer
  - manipulating digital images
  - accessing information online.



# 6. Assessment

## 6.1 Introduction

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The purposes of assessment are to provide feedback to students and parents about learning that has occurred, to provide feedback to teachers about the teaching and learning processes, and to provide information on which to base judgments about how well students meet the general objectives of the course. In designing an assessment program, it is important that the assessment tasks, conditions and criteria are compatible with the general objectives and the learning experiences. Assessment then is an integral aspect of a course of study. It can be formative or summative. The distinction between formative and summative assessment lies in the purpose for which that assessment is used.

Formative assessment is used to provide feedback to students, parents, and teachers about achievement over the course of study. This enables students and teachers to identify the students' strengths and weaknesses so students may improve their achievement and better manage their own learning. The formative techniques used should be similar to summative assessment techniques, which students will meet later in the course. This provides students with experience in responding to particular types of tasks, under appropriate conditions. So that students can prepare it may be that feedback on any early assessment tasks can be used in a formative sense also to assist students' preparation for later assessment tasks.

Summative assessment, while also providing feedback to students, parents and teachers, provides cumulative information on which levels of achievement are determined at exit from the course of study. It follows, therefore, that it is necessary to plan the range of assessment techniques and instruments/tasks to be used, when they will be administered, and how they contribute to the determination of exit levels of achievement. Students' achievements are matched to the standards of exit criteria, which are derived from the general objectives of the course. Thus, summative assessment provides the information for certification at the end of the course.

## 6.2 Principles of assessment

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The policy on exit assessment requires consideration to be given to the following principles when devising an assessment program for the two-year course of study.

- Information is gathered through a process of continuous assessment.
- Balance of assessments is a balance over the course of study and not necessarily a balance over a semester or between semesters.
- Exit achievement levels are devised from student achievement in all areas identified in the syllabus as being mandatory.
- Assessment of a student's achievement is in the significant aspects of the course of study identified in the syllabus and the school's work program.
- Selective updating of a student's profile of achievement is undertaken over the course of study.
- Exit assessment is devised to provide the fullest and latest information on a student's achievement in the course of study.

*These principles are to be considered together and not individually in the development of an assessment program. Exit assessment must satisfy concurrently the six principles associated with it.*

### **6.2.1 Continuous assessment**

The major operating principle is “continuous assessment”. The process of continuous assessment provides the framework in which all the other five principles of balance, mandatory aspects of the syllabus, significant aspects of the course, selective updating, and fullest and latest information exist and operate.

This is the means by which assessment instruments are administered at suitable intervals and by which information on student achievement is collected. It involves a continuous gathering of information and the making of judgments in terms of the stated criteria and standards throughout a two-year course of study.

Decisions about levels of achievement are based on information gathered, through the process of continuous assessment, at points in the course of study appropriate to the organisation of the learning experiences. Levels of achievement must not be based on students’ responses to a single assessment task at the end of a course or instruments set at arbitrary intervals that are unrelated to the developmental course of study.

### **6.2.2 Balance**

Balance of assessments is a balance over the course of study and not necessarily a balance within a semester or between semesters.

Within the strand course, it is necessary to establish a suitable balance in the general objectives, assessment techniques and instruments/tasks, conditions and across the criteria. The exit criteria are to have equal emphasis across the range of summative assessment. The exit assessment program must ensure an appropriate balance over the course of study as a whole.

### **6.2.3 Mandatory aspects of the syllabus**

Judgment of student achievement at exit from a course of study must be derived from information gathered about student achievement in those aspects stated in the study area specification as being mandatory, namely

- the general objectives of Functional English and
- the study area core.

The exit criteria and standards stated for the strand must be used to make the judgment of student achievement at exit from a course of study.

### **6.2.4 Significant aspects of the course of study**

Significant aspects refer to those units/electives/contexts that the school selects in accordance with the particular structure of the strand. Significant aspects can complement mandatory aspects or be in addition to them. They will be determined by the context of the school and the needs of students at that school to provide choice of learning experiences appropriate to the location of the school, the local environment and the resources available.

The significant aspects must be consistent with the general objectives of the study area specification and complement the developmental nature of learning in the strand course.

### 6.2.5 Selective updating

In conjunction with the principle of fullest and latest information, information on student achievement should be selectively updated throughout the course.

Selective updating is related to the developmental nature of the course of study and operates within the context of continuous assessment. As subject matter is treated at increasing levels of complexity, assessment information gathered at earlier stages of the course may no longer be representative of student achievement. The information therefore should be selectively and continually updated (not averaged) to accurately reflect student achievement.

The following conceptions of the principle of selective updating apply:

- a systemic whole subject-group approach in which considerations about the whole group of students are made according to the developmental nature of the course and, in turn, the assessment program. In this conception, developmental aspects of the course are revisited so that later summative assessment replaces earlier formative information
- an act of decision-making about individual students — deciding from a set of assessment results the subset which meets study area specification requirements and typically represents a student's achievements, thus forming the basis for a decision about a level of achievement. In the application of decisions about individual students, the set of assessment results does not have to be the same for all students. However, the subset which represents the typical achievement of a student must conform to the parameters outlined in the school's study plan for the strand.

Selective updating must not involve students reworking and resubmitting previously graded assessment tasks. Opportunities may be provided for students to complete and submit additional tasks. Such tasks may provide information for making judgments where achievement on an earlier task was unrepresentative or atypical, or there was insufficient information upon which to base a judgment.

### 6.2.6 Fullest and latest information

Judgments about student achievement made at exit from a school course of study must be based on the fullest and latest information available. This information is recorded on a student profile.

“Fullest” refers to information about student achievement gathered across the range of general objectives. “Latest” refers to information about student achievement gathered from the most recent period in which the general objectives are assessed. As the assessment program in a strand is developmental, fullest and latest information will most likely come from Year 12.

Information recorded on a student profile will consist of the latest assessment data on mandatory and significant aspects of the course, which includes the data gathered in the summative assessment program that is not superseded.

## 6.3 Characteristics of assessment tasks

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As this course will be developed for a range of school sites and student needs there will be considerable variation in task design.

Assessment tasks should provide:

- clear and realistic contexts with purposes and audiences related to work, community and leisure
- a description of the task written in a manner that is accessible to students
- a statement of conditions involved in the task
  - length of task
  - time allocation

- access to material and human resources
- drafting and/or rehearsing.

## 6.4 Assessment guidelines

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In the assessment of student achievement, the following guidelines should be applied:

- There should be a balance of written and spoken tasks — approximately 30–50 per cent of tasks should be predominantly written and 50–70 per cent should be predominantly spoken/signed and/or practical (both individual and group). This will reflect the resources on which the course is based.
- Where students undertake a summative assessment task in a group or team, teachers should design the task so that they can validly assess the work of the individual only and not apply a judgment of the group product to individual students.
- Tasks that require written responses should vary in length. In any given unit, responses ranging from 100 to 250 words may be appropriate depending on the task and conditions under which the task is carried out.
- Tasks which require spoken, signed or practical responses may also vary in length from one to two minutes per person for both individual and group presentations. The length of the response should match the task and conditions under which the task is carried out.
- Task requirements and timing should reflect the increasing independence of the student as a learner.

The body of evidence on which judgments are based should consist of a reasonable, but not onerous, number of tasks.

## 6.5 Suggested assessment techniques

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Examples of the range of assessment techniques available are given below.

The techniques shown here should be used to measure student achievement in terms of all of the assessment criteria.

- **Observation** involves teachers observing students in contexts related to work, community and leisure. This occurs continually as part of the teaching and learning process and can be used to gather a broad range of information about students' learning.
- **Consultation** involves teachers conferring with students, and can be used to verify evidence gathered using other techniques.
- **Focused analysis** involves teachers examining students' responses to tasks or learning experiences in detail. It provides detailed evidence of students' demonstrations of learning.
- **Self- and peer assessment** involve students in developing evaluative expertise to assess their own work and the work of their peers.

## 6.6 Arriving at a holistic judgment of student achievement for a task

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Holistic judgment should be made when matching a student's response to specified criteria and standards — all three criteria will be taken into account in each assessment task. The following steps are taken in the process of arriving at a holistic judgment.

Teachers need to:

- familiarise themselves with the criteria and standards specified in the study area specification
- read, view or listen to the entire student response and make an interim informed holistic judgment using task criteria and standards schema
- take account of the conditions under which the task was completed
- re-examine the initial judgment of student achievement against each of the specific task requirements
- confirm or review the initial judgment
- consider seeking a second opinion if the initial judgment is not consistent with the reviewed judgment.

## 6.7 Exit criteria

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Student achievement is to be judged on three criteria:

- Knowledge of contextual factors
- Knowledge of textual features
- Knowledge and understanding of texts.

These three criteria are defined as follows:

### 6.7.1 Knowledge of contextual factors

This criterion refers to students' ability to demonstrate knowledge of meanings in texts in familiar and predictable contexts. In doing so, students should:

- know that genres have patterns and conventions
- locate specific information relating to familiar contexts
- take part in short interpersonal exchanges for the purpose of establishing relationships
- use a variety of modes and mediums.

### 6.7.2 Knowledge of textual features

This criterion refers to students' ability to communicate by selecting and using textual features. In producing their own texts, students should:

- make use of textual features appropriate to familiar audiences and purposes relating to work, community and leisure contexts
- demonstrate the use of a variety of features: visual, auditory, digital, spoken/signed
- sequence two or more familiar events and order information
- convey meaning using the conventions of written language
  - sentence structures

- control of basic paragraphing and punctuation
- selecting appropriate vocabulary
- spelling frequently used words
- consistency in use of tense
- link ideas using repeated or related words, simple pronouns and conjunctions.

### **6.7.3 Knowledge and understanding of texts**

This criterion refers to students' ability to demonstrate knowledge of how texts make meanings in contexts. In interpreting and constructing texts, students should:

- identify different ways people, places, groups and things are represented in texts
- identify that texts can have more than one meaning
- make choices to represent people, places and things in different ways
- identify that texts can influence how people think or behave.

## **6.8 Determining exit levels of achievement**

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On completion of the program of study, the school must award an exit level of achievement for each student based on the three exit criteria listed above, and the principles of assessment described in section 6.2. The standards associated with the three exit criteria are described in section 6.9. The school is required to award an exit level of achievement from one of five categories:

Very High Achievement

High Achievement

Sound Achievement

Limited Achievement

Very Limited Achievement

### **6.8.1 Arriving at a holistic judgment of level of achievement for a folio of student work**

A student folio is a collection of individual components, but it is to be judged as a whole rather than a sum of the parts. It is not appropriate to add up or total grades to arrive at an overall judgment about the level of student achievement.

The process of arriving at a holistic judgment of a student folio to determine the level of achievement is essentially a classification exercise. It entails evaluating the student folio in terms of the specified standards associated with the three exit criteria. The standards associated with the exit criteria are specified in section 6.9.

## 6.9 Standards associated with exit criteria

**Table 6: Very High Achievement**

Knowledge of contextual factors	Knowledge of textual features	Knowledge and understanding of texts
<p>The student has demonstrated knowledge of texts in familiar and predictable contexts by:</p>	<p>The student has demonstrated knowledge of the appropriateness of textual features for purposes and audiences by:</p>	<p>The student has demonstrated knowledge of how texts make meanings in contexts by:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• using patterns and conventions of a small range of generic structures to achieve particular purposes</li> <li>• selecting and making some interpretations of appropriate subject matter</li> <li>• explaining key events or ideas</li> <li>• sequencing and making connections between some events</li> <li>• adopting and usually maintaining different roles for different audiences</li> <li>• selecting appropriate features of designated modes and media to shape particular meanings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• using a logical sequence when listing and ordering events</li> <li>• using patterns of simple sentences and some compound sentences</li> <li>• using paragraphing and punctuation with some accuracy</li> <li>• selecting vocabulary appropriate to subject matter including some specialist words</li> <li>• usually controlling spelling of frequently used words</li> <li>• linking ideas using repeated or related words and phrases, simple pronouns and some simple conjunctions</li> <li>• controlling tense to indicate when action takes place</li> <li>• selecting and using visual, auditory and digital features with some effect</li> <li>• selecting and using spoken/signed and non-verbal features for some effect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identifying different representations of people, places, groups and things in texts</li> <li>• identifying one or more meanings in texts</li> <li>• making appropriate choices to represent people, places and things in different ways</li> <li>• identifying some ways texts influence how people think or behave and making choices in their own texts to influence how people think or behave.</li> </ul>

**Table 7: High Achievement**

Knowledge of contextual factors	Knowledge of textual features	Knowledge and understanding of texts
<p>The student has demonstrated knowledge of texts in familiar and predictable contexts by:</p>	<p>The student has demonstrated knowledge of the appropriateness of textual features for purposes and audiences by:</p>	<p>The student has demonstrated knowledge of how texts make meanings in contexts by:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• replicating patterns and conventions of a small range of generic structures</li> <li>• selecting mostly appropriate subject matter</li> <li>• identifying the main idea and key ideas</li> <li>• describing key events in sequence</li> <li>• adopting different roles for different audiences</li> <li>• selecting mostly appropriate features of designated modes and media for effect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• listing events and information in order</li> <li>• using patterns of simple sentences</li> <li>• using paragraphing and some punctuation</li> <li>• using vocabulary appropriate to subject matter</li> <li>• controlling spelling of frequently used words, with occasional lapses in accuracy</li> <li>• linking ideas using repeated or related words and phrases</li> <li>• using tense to indicate when action takes place</li> <li>• using familiar visual, auditory and digital features to add meaning</li> <li>• using some spoken/signed and non-verbal features to add meaning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recounting some ways people, places, groups and things are represented in texts</li> <li>• recounting meaning in texts, adding some detail</li> <li>• making choices to represent people, places and things in different ways</li> <li>• recounting some ways texts influence how people think or behave and making some choices in their own texts to influence how people think or behave.</li> </ul>



**Table 8: Sound Achievement**

Knowledge of contextual factors	Knowledge of textual features	Knowledge and understanding of texts
<p>The student has demonstrated knowledge of texts in familiar and predictable contexts by:</p>	<p>The student has demonstrated knowledge of the appropriateness of textual features for purposes and audiences by:</p>	<p>The student has demonstrated knowledge of how texts make meanings in contexts by:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in the main, replicating patterns and conventions of a small range of generic structures</li> <li>• generally selecting appropriate subject matter</li> <li>• identifying the main ideas</li> <li>• restating key events in sequence</li> <li>• generally adopting a role appropriate to a particular audience</li> <li>• using features of designated modes and media.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in the main, listing events and information in order</li> <li>• using simple sentence structure, with lapses in accuracy</li> <li>• using some punctuation, though not paragraphing</li> <li>• using mostly appropriate vocabulary</li> <li>• controlling spelling of frequently used words, with lapses in accuracy</li> <li>• linking some ideas</li> <li>• making some use of tense to indicate when action takes place</li> <li>• using some basic visual, auditory and digital features</li> <li>• using some spoken/signed and non-verbal features.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• listing some ways people, places, groups and things are represented in texts</li> <li>• retelling basic ideas in texts</li> <li>• making some choices to represent people, places and things</li> <li>• listing some ways texts influence how people think or behave.</li> </ul>

**Table 9: Limited Achievement**

Knowledge of contextual factors	Knowledge of textual features	Knowledge and understanding of texts
<p>The student has demonstrated knowledge of texts in familiar and predictable contexts by:</p>	<p>The student has demonstrated knowledge of the appropriateness of textual features for purposes and audiences by:</p>	<p>The student has demonstrated knowledge of how texts make meanings in contexts by:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• unevenly replicating patterns and conventions of a small range of generic structures</li> <li>• selecting some subject matter</li> <li>• identifying topics</li> <li>• restating some key events</li> <li>• sometimes adopting a role appropriate to the audience</li> <li>• using some basic features of designated modes and media.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• unevenly listing events and information</li> <li>• using simple sentence structure, with frequent lapses in accuracy</li> <li>• using some punctuation</li> <li>• using some appropriate vocabulary</li> <li>• spelling words inaccurately</li> <li>• inconsistently using tense</li> <li>• occasionally using basic visual, auditory and digital features</li> <li>• occasionally using basic spoken/signed and non-verbal features.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• describing people, places, groups and things</li> <li>• identifying events in texts</li> <li>• occasionally identifying some ways texts influence how people think or behave.</li> </ul>

**Table 10: Very Limited Achievement**

<p>Knowledge of contextual factors</p> <p>↔</p>	<p>Knowledge of textual features</p> <p>↔</p>	<p>Knowledge and understanding of texts</p>
<p>The student has demonstrated knowledge of texts in familiar and predictable contexts by:</p>	<p>The student has demonstrated knowledge of the appropriateness of textual features for purposes and audiences by:</p>	<p>The student has demonstrated knowledge of how texts make meanings in contexts by:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sometimes replicating some stages of genres</li> <li>• selecting some information</li> <li>• restating some information</li> <li>• sometimes adopting a role</li> <li>• occasionally using some basic features of designated modes and media.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• listing some information</li> <li>• selecting some words</li> <li>• spelling words incorrectly so meaning is impeded</li> <li>• indiscriminately using some visual, auditory, digital, spoken/signed and non-verbal features.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identifying people, places, groups, things and events in texts.</li> </ul>

# 7. Language Education, Quantitative concepts and skills

## 7.1 Language education

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It is the responsibility of all teachers to develop students' language skills and to monitor their progress in using language. This responsibility entails developing students' abilities to understand what they see, hear and read so they can communicate this information in appropriate and effective language when they speak and write about the subject matter.

Teachers should assist students to:

- recognise letters and words
- use vocabulary appropriate to the range of social contexts common to everyday experience, such as informal social interaction, interactions between retail personnel and customers, employment-related situations
- use textual features such as spelling and punctuation, intonation and gesture to express intended meaning
- become familiar with the language and format of advertising, newspapers and magazines, and other popular media
- recognise and use the terminology associated with electronic equipment and devices, and entertainment media
- recognise signs, symbols and other visuals in everyday contexts
- present information in a variety of forms.

### 7.1.1 Sources of texts for language experiences

A text is a coherent piece of spoken/signed, written, nonverbal, visual or auditory language, or some or all of these in combination. Texts include a wide range of objects and practices that carry meaning through words or signs. They include stories, novels, motion pictures, songs, and even people and events. Different text types have their own conventions about how they are "read". Familiarity with the conventions of different texts, such as those of, for example, suspense movies, application forms, websites and computer games, allows students to use and understand language in a wide range of print, spoken, visual and multimedia formats for personal and employment purposes.

Teachers will need to identify and select texts and develop learning experiences that fit the contexts of work, community and leisure and that allow students to experience the aspects of communicative competence and language experiences detailed in section 5.1. Table 11 may be useful in this regard.

**Table 11: Examples of text types for aspects of communicative competence**

Procedural	Technical	Personal	Group (cooperative)	Organisational (systems)	Public
Job application forms Instructions Signs Directions Recipes Directions in product manuals Flowcharts in guides Handbooks Help menus Safety procedures	Logos Signs Directions for using automatic teller machines Simple computer commands Directions in appliance manuals, e.g. camera, microwave oven Telephone messages Fax messages Explanations in guides	Change of address forms Greeting cards Shopping transactions Diary entries Telephone chats Online communication Inquiries Personal recounts of films, videos, TV programs Gestures Screen directions in computer games Cartoons	Celebratory cards Agendas for meetings, discussions Directions, messages Lists, directories Rules Oral recounts, explanations Facial expressions or body position Diagrams or illustrations	Safety signs Timetables Notes Statements of account and transactions Bank forms Application forms Ballot papers	Maps or diagrams of natural or artificial features Signs Notices Petitions Newspaper report or article Magazine feature article Food labels Public inquiries Lists of TV programs

The assigning of the text types to one of the six aspects of communicative competence is arbitrary. Some items will obviously have a place in more than one column, e.g. “timetables” could have both a personal and an organisational aspect.

## 7.2 Quantitative concepts and skills

Success in dealing with issues in work, community and leisure depends on the development and integration of a range of abilities, such as being able to:

- comprehend basic concepts and terms underpinning the areas of number, space and measurement
- extract, convert or translate information given in numerical forms, diagrams, graphs or tables, e.g. timetables, conversion tables, statistics, graphs, spreadsheets, statements
- make use of calculators and computers, phones, fax machines, photocopiers, personal and electronic diaries and other technology used in communication
- use skills or apply concepts from one problem or one study area to another.

In Functional English, students should be encouraged to develop their understanding and to learn through the incorporation — to varying degrees — of mathematical strategies and approaches to tasks.

## 8. Educational Equity

Equity means fair treatment of all. In developing programs of study from this study area specification, schools are urged to consider the most appropriate means of incorporating the following notions of equity.

Schools need to provide opportunities for all students to demonstrate what they know and what they can do. All students, therefore, should have equitable access to educational programs and human and material resources. Teachers should ensure that the particular needs of the following groups of students are met: female students; male students; Aboriginal students; Torres Strait Islander students; students from non-English-speaking backgrounds; students with disabilities; students with gifts and talents; geographically isolated students; and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

The subject matter chosen should include, where appropriate, acknowledgment of the contributions and experiences of all groups of people. Learning contexts and community needs and aspirations should also be considered when selecting subject matter.

In choosing appropriate learning experiences, teachers can introduce and reinforce non-racist, non-sexist, culturally sensitive and unprejudiced attitudes and behaviour. Learning experiences should encourage the participation of students with disabilities and accommodate different learning styles.

It is desirable that the resource materials chosen recognise and value the contributions of both females and males to society and include the social experiences of both sexes. Resource materials should also reflect the cultural diversity within the community and draw from the experiences of the range of cultural groups in the community.

Efforts should be made to identify, investigate and remove barriers to equal opportunity to demonstrate achievement. This may involve being proactive in finding out about the best ways to meet the special needs, in terms of learning and assessment, of particular students.

The variety of assessment techniques in the study plan should allow students of *all* backgrounds to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in a subject in relation to the criteria and standards stated in this syllabus. The syllabus criteria and standards should be applied in the same way to all students.

Teachers may find the following works useful for devising an inclusive work program:

*Guidelines for Assessment Quality and Equity* 1996, Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities. Available through the Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies (QBSSSS), Brisbane.

*A Fair Deal: Equity guidelines for developing and reviewing educational resources* 1991, Department of Education (Education Queensland), Brisbane.

*Access and Equity Policy for the Vocational Education and Training System* 1998, Department of Training and Industrial Relations, Queensland, Brisbane.

*Policy Statement on Special Consideration* 1994, Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, Brisbane.

*Language and Equity: A discussion paper for writers of school-based assessment instruments* 1995, Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, Brisbane.

*Studying Assessment Practices: A resource for teachers in schools*, 1995, Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, Brisbane.

# 9. Resources

In implementing programs of study in Functional English, teachers draw upon a wide range of resources including:

- texts produced specifically for older adolescents — popular culture; media and multimedia; hypermedia and emergent technologies
- spoken, written, visual and electronic everyday texts from the contexts of work, community and leisure
- reflective texts such as journals, biographies, memoirs, diaries
- scripted drama and drama performed as film, television and theatre
- contemporary literature from Australia and other cultures.

Resources may be enhanced by accessing:

- assistance of members of the community
- assistance of other staff with relevant expertise
- physical resources, e.g. local gym, local park
- technology — computer, phone, fax, email
- business and government services and agencies
- available part-time work, work experience, work placements, traineeships or apprenticeships.

Between 30 and 50 per cent of resources are to be predominantly written. Between 50 and 70 per cent of resources used in class are to be predominantly spoken/signed and/or visual. This balance will be evident in the assessment plan as indicated in section 6.4.

# Appendix 1

## Sample program of study in Functional English.

Semester	Time (Weeks)	Context	Unit	Assessment
1	8	Community/Leisure	Me, myself, I	Oral Presentation
	10	Work	The World of Work	Folio Interview of employer
2	9	Leisure	Media and Entertainment	Review of film Survey of TV watching habits
	9	Community/Leisure	Health and Lifestyle	Food intake journal Demonstration of recipe
3	9	Community	Out on Your Own	Completion of forms Present poster of information
	9	Community/Leisure	Let's Go Travelling	PowerPoint presentation about destination
4	16	Work	Getting That Job	Résumé Letter of Application Mock Interview



# Appendix 2

The following units are provided as examples for development of units in each context.

## Example One:

**Unit context:** *Work*  
**Time allocation:** *6 weeks*

Unit Title/Description	Learning Experiences	Assessment
Interview Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare for an interview – class discussion</li> <li>• Interview questions</li> <li>• Role play</li> <li>• Practice sessions with a partner using common list of questions</li> <li>• Complete a typed current resume</li> </ul> Useful resource: <i>Video Job Interviews for Senior Students</i>	Participate in a (mock) job interview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Select a job advertisement, and attend a 10–15 minute interview with a current résumé</li> </ul> NB – Interviews are best carried out by outside agencies or other school personnel

## Example Two:

**Unit context:** *Community*  
**Time allocation:** *6 weeks*

Unit Title/Description	Learning Experiences	Assessment
Community Event: Literary Festival Participate in Community Literary Festival as personal guides for presenters on the days of the Festival.	Discuss and role-play appropriate “meeting & greeting” procedure. Using Festival program and map, locate rooms for presenter and locate major facilities (e.g. toilets, food, enquiries) Listen and interact with presenters. Attend all lectures with presenters. Discuss format of “thank you” letter/email with class group. Practise writing “thank you” letter/email.	Role-play introduction of student to presenter. Prepare an itinerary for presenter from the Festival program and map. Recount individual experiences of Festival to class group. Compose a “thank you” letter/email to the presenter.

**Example Three:****Unit context:** *Leisure***Time allocation:** *8 weeks*

<b>Unit Title/Description</b>	<b>Learning Experiences</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
Travel the World! Investigate a country you would like to visit	Guided research using print and electronic mediums Visit travel agency/guest speaker Complete a passport application Discuss visa requirements Discuss cultural and religious traditions Discuss customs regulations and duty free shopping Visit Customs section of Airport	An oral presentation with either a PowerPoint presentation (5–10 slides) or a poster A brochure containing useful information for overseas travellers

**NB:** It may be appropriate to design units that cover more than one context. For example, Work/Community, Community/Leisure etc.