

Latin literature review

Senior syllabus redevelopment

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Contents

Executive summary	1
Introduction.....	1
Overview of methodology and findings.....	1
Summary of findings.....	4
Summary of recommendations.....	5
1 Significant emerging trends in Latin	6
1.1 Assessment.....	6
1.2 Pedagogical approaches.....	8
1.3 Implications for redevelopment of the Queensland syllabus in Latin	12
1.4 Recommendations.....	12
2 Overview, comparison and connections	13
2.1 Comparable syllabuses from selected Australian and international jurisdictions.....	13
2.2 Connections with the Australian Curriculum	15
2.3 Recommendation	15
3 Learning expectations	16
3.1 Scope of learning across Australian and international jurisdictions	16
3.2 Recommendation	17
4 Future focus: 21st century skills	18
4.1 Implications for redevelopment of the Queensland syllabus in Latin	18
4.2 Recommendations.....	19
5 Enrolments in Latin	20
5.1 Implications for redevelopment of the Queensland syllabus in Latin	21
5.2 Recommendations.....	21
Bibliography	22
Syllabus documents examined	23

Executive summary

Introduction

In jurisdictions and schools where Latin is taught, both within Australia and internationally, it is seen as a valuable and valued subject, having many educational benefits for students. Latin is usually offered as an elective or optional subject in secondary schools, especially in circumstances where there is a focus on preparing students for university courses. In some instances, schools offer Latin as one of the introductory language options from Year 7, not only to expose students to languages as future study choices, but also for its educational benefits.

It is an optional study in French secondary schools; in Italy and the Netherlands, it is compulsory in secondary schools preparing students to enter certain university courses. In Greece, Latin is compulsory for students wishing to study law, social and political sciences and humanities, and compulsory for students in Spain studying humanities subjects in Years 11 and 12. Latin is a choice for the compulsory second language in the German *gymnasium*, the main type of secondary school preparing students for university entry.

In Australia, only three states provide syllabuses for Latin in the senior secondary school — New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland.

Overview of methodology and findings

Methodology

This literature review focuses on syllabus documents from New South Wales and Victoria, and on a selection of international syllabus documents from the United Kingdom; Ontario, Canada, as well as the International Baccalaureate (IB).

Data collected from curriculum documents¹ focused on trends in teaching, learning and assessment practices across these jurisdictions. Pedagogical approaches to the teaching of Latin were investigated and some research into the history of Latin pedagogy highlighted changing attitudes towards its treatment in formal instruction. Contemporary acknowledgement of the educational benefits of studying Latin, and the influence of Latin on the development of many modern languages, has strengthened moves to change its perception as a ‘dead’ language to a ‘world’ or a ‘living’ language. Studying Latin also affords ample opportunity to develop valuable 21st century skills.

¹ syllabuses, assessment guidelines and other supporting documents

Australian jurisdictions

The syllabus documents from New South Wales and Victoria were chosen for review as they are the only two Australian jurisdictions, apart from Queensland, that offer Latin.

New South Wales offers both Latin Continuers and Latin Extension courses (2009). This review considers only the Continuers course, as Queensland does not offer an extension course in Latin.

Syllabuses are developed as 120-hour unitised courses. High School Certificate (HSC) subjects contribute directly to tertiary entrance and have Year 11 and Year 12 components — a Preliminary Course (Year 11), Units 1 and 2, and the HSC Course (Year 12), Units 3 and 4. Units 1 and 2 are prerequisites for Units 3 and 4.

Victoria offers a Latin Study Design (2005) consisting of four units, each involving at least 50 hours of timetabled school time. There are no prerequisites for entry to Units 1, 2 and 3, but students must undertake Unit 3 prior to undertaking Unit 4. Units 1 to 4 are designed to a standard equivalent to that of the final two years of secondary education.

International jurisdictions

United Kingdom

Schools in the United Kingdom have a very long history of teaching Classical languages, especially in the public school system. Grammar schools were originally schools for teaching the classical languages, in particular, Latin. Although Latin has not been an entry requirement for Medicine and Law degrees for decades in England, three British examination boards offer Latin as a school subject.

The OCR² offers an Advanced GCE syllabus in Classics: Latin (2014). The General Certificate of Education (GCE³) Advanced Level, or A-level, is a secondary school leaving qualification in the United Kingdom. GCE A-level is an entry qualification for universities in the United Kingdom and worldwide. An A-level requires studying an offered A-level subject over a two-year period and sitting an examination at the end of each year (A1/S and A2, respectively). As this qualification is more academically rigorous than the GCSE,⁴ it is considered that the A-level course is the one most aligned with the senior secondary qualification in Queensland.

² Oxford Cambridge and RSA; part of the Cambridge Assessment Group, Europe's largest assessment agency and a department of the University of Cambridge.

³ The General Certificate of Education Advanced Level, more commonly known as the GCE A Level, is a school leaving qualification offered by secondary schools, sixth form colleges and further education colleges in the United Kingdom, some Commonwealth countries, and at many international schools around the world.

⁴ General Certificate of Secondary Education. GCSEs normally take two years and the final exams, in a range of subjects, are taken when students are 16. It is the qualification taken by most people between 14 and 16 years old, and precedes A-level studies.

Ontario, Canada

The Ontario curriculum in Latin was reviewed because PISA data have identified Ontario as a system that provides ‘high quality, high equity’ outcomes for students.⁵ High quality, high equity education systems are characterised by a balance of ‘informed prescription’ and ‘informed professionalism’ and it is believed that Ontario has achieved such a balance. Elements of the Ontario system provided key data for researchers in developing recommendations for a new design template for P–12 syllabuses for Queensland schools.

The program ‘Classical Studies and International Languages’ (2000) encompasses a course in Latin.

International Baccalaureate (IB)

The International Baccalaureate is an international educational foundation offering challenging educational programs that are well received worldwide and universally recognised by universities. The curriculum consists of the Diploma Program core and six subject groups. The Diploma Program has three required components or elements that aim to broaden students’ educational experience and challenge them to apply their knowledge and skills.

The three core elements are:

- theory of knowledge
- the extended essay, an independent, self-directed piece of research
- creativity, action, service, in which students complete a project related to those three concepts.

Students choose courses or programs from the following subject groups: studies in language and literature; language acquisition; individuals and societies; sciences; mathematics; and the arts.

The Diploma Program in Language Acquisition offers a course in Classical Languages (2014), which covers Latin and Classical Greek.

Assessment

As a point of difference, the selected jurisdictions cover differing assessment regimes: school-based only, external only, and a mix of internal and external assessment.

⁵ *Development of a set of principles to guide a P–12 syllabus framework: A report to the Queensland Studies Authority*, Luke, Weir & Woods, Queensland, Australia, 2008, p. 13.

Summary of findings

Content

There is consistency in the curriculum content for Latin across all jurisdictions reviewed. Three key study focuses are identified:

The study of:

- language
- history and culture
- literature.

Assessment

There is significant alignment in the assessment focuses for Latin across all jurisdictions reviewed. The key assessment requirements are:

- **translation** and demonstrated understanding of passages of Latin
- demonstrated understanding of the use and purpose of **scansion** in Latin poetry
- manipulation, identification and explanation of **accidence and syntax** in Latin sentences and passages
- identification and discussion of themes and relevant **aspects of the historical, social, political and cultural contexts in Latin texts**
- comprehension, interpretation and **analysis of Latin texts in terms of the literary, stylistic and structural techniques** used.

Pedagogical approach

The pedagogical approach to the study of Latin — one of critical social and linguistic inquiry — appears to be common to all these jurisdictions, even where not explicitly stated.

Point of difference

The major difference among these jurisdictions relates to processes and procedures for awarding final grades, levels of achievement or qualifications.

Summary of recommendations

Based on the research and review of literature, if a revision of Latin is undertaken, the following recommendations are made.

Assessment

Recommendation 1: That the current scope of assessment be maintained.

Recommendation 2: That, in keeping with the subject in other jurisdictions and the recommendations from the ACER Review, external assessment in Latin is appropriate and should be considered in Queensland.

Recommendation 9: That, due to limited enrolments over a period of time, the Authority subject Latin be offered as an external examination only.

Recommendation 10: That, due to the close alignment between the content of the Queensland syllabus and the two interstate jurisdictions offering Latin, consideration be given to borrowing the Latin syllabus from one of these jurisdictions, and requesting that this agency be responsible for the assessment of Queensland student papers (i.e. the setting, vetting and marking of the written examination).

Teaching and learning

Recommendation 3: That the redevelopment of the Queensland syllabus should encourage and support a more modern, contemporary language-teaching pedagogical approach, in line with current trends in pedagogical practices and in recognition of the educational benefits for students of learning Latin.

Recommendation 4: That the Queensland syllabus maintain its current curriculum features, due to the high degree of similarity across jurisdictions in the teaching, learning and assessment of Latin, and in the absence of an Australian Curriculum in the language.

Recommendation 5: That the Queensland syllabus maintain its current scope, due to the high degree of similarity across jurisdictions in the scope of learning in Latin, and in the absence of an Australian Curriculum in the language.

21st century skills

Recommendation 6: That the syllabus provides opportunity for each student to develop 21st century skills in teaching, learning and assessment.

Recommendation 7: That, where appropriate, 21st century skills should be embedded in the objectives.

Subject offering

Recommendation 8: That, in view of the educational benefits for students, a syllabus in Authority Latin be maintained as a subject offering for Queensland students.

1 Significant emerging trends in Latin

1.1 Assessment

Jurisdictions with internal assessment only — Queensland and Ontario

Assessment in Queensland is school based and externally moderated. Levels of achievement are based on objectives in three broad categories — language knowledge and appreciation, complex reasoning and communication skills.

Verbal statements describing the characteristics or qualities of student work at the end of the four-semester course of study are provided in the syllabus for each objective within the three criteria, and for the five levels of achievement. Schools award each student an exit standard for each criterion by matching the characteristics or qualities of student work to these verbal descriptors. When standards have been determined in each of the criteria, an overall exit level of achievement can be awarded.

Assessment in Ontario is school based only. Each course identifies overall and specific expectations. An 'Achievement Chart' is included in the curriculum policy document for each discipline, providing a reference point for all assessment practice and a framework within which to assess and evaluate student achievement. These achievement charts provide verbal descriptors of student performance (performance standards) for each of the four levels of achievement of the curriculum expectations, with percentage grades. Each chart is organised into four broad categories of 'objectives' with slight variations in nomenclature according to the nature of individual disciplines:

- knowledge/understanding
- thinking/inquiry
- communication
- application / making connections.

Teacher evaluations conducted throughout the course contribute 70% of the overall grade; a final evaluation (an exam, performance or essay) set and administered by the teacher towards the end of the course, contributes 30% of the overall grade. This final grade is recorded for every course; course credit is only granted if the student's grade is 50% or higher.

Jurisdictions with external assessment only — United Kingdom

The OCR course 'Advanced GCE in Classics: Latin' consists of four units, consisting of two units at Advanced Subsidiary (AS) level and a further two units at Advanced (A2) level. All units are externally assessed by a written exam.

Each paper has two sections; the nature of each section depends on the unit content. For example, both sections of the 'Latin Language' unit require translation of Latin prose into English; the unit 'Roman Society and Thought' requires students to answer a commentary question and an essay question.

Jurisdictions with a mix of internal and external assessment — New South Wales, Victoria, and the International Baccalaureate (IB)

Assessment in New South Wales and Victorian syllabus documents is based on translations of verse and prose; identification, explanation and analysis of grammar in extracts; and comments on texts (including verse scansion).

In both states, Units 1 and 2 focus on building skills in the Latin language, especially in the knowledge, understanding and application of Latin grammar syntax and vocabulary. Through a study of prescribed literature, students are required to translate seen and unseen verse and prose passages of Latin and demonstrate their understanding of the text. They read aloud passages of Latin, with correct pronunciation, and demonstrate the use and purpose of scansion in Latin poetry.

Assessment in Units 3 and 4 contributes towards the award of the certificate — the HSC and VCE respectively. New South Wales uses a standards-referenced approach to assessment. Victorian assessment is outcomes based.

Student achievement is determined by combining school-assessed coursework and the end-of-year examination. In both states, schools provide a result (an assessment mark or level of achievement) for each student, based on the school-assessed coursework. This includes translation of extracts, both prose and verse; identification, explanation and analysis of grammar in extracts; analysis and explanation of literary, stylistic and structural techniques used in Latin texts; identification of accident and syntax of words; responding to questions on content, context, purpose and style; and identification and discussion of themes and aspects of cultural/historical context. The external examination is a written paper requiring students to translate extracts from verse and prose (seen and unseen); identify, explain and analyse grammar in selected extracts; comprehend, interpret and analyse themes and ideas from texts; make comment on Latin prescriptions, including verse scansion; and comment on prescribed English translations.

The IB's approach to assessment is criterion related. Each criterion comprises level descriptors, and each descriptor is worth a prescribed number of marks.

The internal assessment consists of an individual research dossier assessed by the teacher and externally moderated by the IB at the end of the course. Students analyse classical sources and consider their significance and possible interpretations.

The external assessment consists of two written examination papers, each comprising translation (meaning, vocabulary and grammar) and questions based on selected extracts. In Paper 1, students translate an extract from Latin into English, French or Spanish, from the prescribed authors studied. In Paper 2, they respond to questions that require them to demonstrate reading comprehension of text in the original language. They may be required to construct an argument by responding to a prompt or to demonstrate critical analysis by responding to a prompt. Some questions require students to translate portions of set passages.

1.2 Pedagogical approaches

For the most part, Latin is treated as a written language in formal instruction. The majority of the Latin courses currently offered in secondary schools and universities are geared toward translating historical texts into modern languages, rather than using Latin for direct oral communication. (It is interesting to note that some works of modern literature have been translated into Latin to promote interest in the language⁶.)

The learning approach recommended in the Queensland syllabus is a languages inquiry process. This is described as a way of thinking and problem solving that positions intercultural understanding at the centre of student learning. In the process, the student analyses a collection of texts in order to identify a focus for the inquiry and, as part of this, reflects upon values that underpin texts, personal values and beliefs, and the legacy of Greco-Roman antiquity.

The inquiry process asks the student to investigate information and issues presented in a variety of modes and text types in Latin. The student does not just translate texts, but engages with them by collecting and organising information, analysing and evaluating information, and by establishing the purpose of texts and the intention of authors. Intercultural understanding, the ability to know and view the world from multiple perspectives, is integral to this inquiry process and is evident in the decisions made and the strategies proposed.

No clear pedagogical approach was evident in the New South Wales and Victorian syllabus documents reviewed.

Theory of knowledge principles underpin, and directly inform, the study of Latin in the IB. This approach is fundamentally about critical thinking and inquiry into the process of knowing, rather than about learning a specific body of knowledge. Through inquiry, action and reflection, students are encouraged to develop a critical approach to both primary and secondary sources, to compare and contrast, and to discuss how values and knowledge shared by Latin authors and their communities are still relevant to the student's own knowledge and communities.

⁶ For example, *Treasure Island*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Hobbit*, *Charlotte's Web*, and *Harry Potter*.

Latin syllabuses in the United Kingdom are inquiry based. They are concerned with social and linguistic inquiry and developing independent, critical and evaluative approaches to teaching and learning. Teachers have opportunities to design flexible pathways of learning for students offering creative, new approaches to the study of the classical world.

The change in Latin pedagogy

For almost a century, the primary objective of learning Latin was to read and understand the language⁷. Ball and Ellsworth define the central aim of instruction in Latin as ‘to read and understand classical literary texts in the original language’.⁸ Hamilton⁹ believes that ‘the value of the study of Latin is in learning to read Latin’.

But Carpenter¹⁰ acknowledges that curricula in secondary education, colleges and universities have changed since the publication of that original report. He questions this ‘primary objective’ and considers instead the ‘ultimate objectives’ of that report, which include:

- Increased understanding of those elements in English that are related to Latin.
- Increased ability to read, speak and write English.
- Development of an historical and cultural background.
- Development of literary appreciation.
- Elementary knowledge of the general principles of language structure.⁷

These goals are certainly evident in contemporary Latin curricula.

Latin as a ‘world’ language

Discussions about the purpose of learning Latin and the value or otherwise of learning a ‘dead’ language still persist and, in turn, affect the pedagogical approach. Ball and Ellsworth¹¹ argue that Latin is a ‘dead’ language because it is no longer used for communication, and, therefore, should not be taught with methods that are appropriate for modern, ‘communicative’ languages. Indeed, it must be acknowledged that Latin belongs to a different category of languages in that, unlike most ‘modern’ languages, it is not learned in an oral context from infancy, lacking the usual family-to-child oral mode of language learning.

⁷ American Classical League, *The Classical Investigation (Part 1): General report*, Princeton University Press, 1924, 79–80.

⁸ Robert J Ball & J D Ellsworth, ‘Teaching Classical Languages’, *Classical World*, 83.1, 1989, 1–12; 3. www.slu.edu/colleges/AS/languages/classical/latin/tchmat/pedagogy/ulp-ea.html

⁹ As cited in Daniel P Carpenter, ‘Reassessing the goal of Latin pedagogy’, *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 95, No 4 (April–May 2000), pp. 391–393.

¹⁰ Daniel P Carpenter, ‘Reassessing the goal of Latin pedagogy’, *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 95, No 4 (April–May 2000), pp. 391–393.

¹¹ Cited by Claude Pavur in ‘Upgrading Latin Pedagogy’, *Paedagogica*, Latin Teaching Materials Site, Saint Louis University, 1996.

A language is called a 'dead' language when it is no longer spoken by people as their main language. In contrast to 'extinct' languages that cease to have any speakers, 'dead' languages may continue to be used in specific fields; this is certainly the case with Latin in legal, scientific and religious fields. While Latin is no longer the native language of any particular place, and as such is not a developing modern language, it is the root for many languages used today. The concept of 'living' and 'dead' languages is founded on a misconception of what languages are — they are communication systems.¹²

Leonhardt¹³ sees Latin as a 'world language', with a plea to educationalists to turn away from the rigid, 'mathematical' method of teaching Latin that has dominated since the 19th century and to try to return to Latin the status it has had throughout most of its history — that of a 'living language' with no native speakers. Even in the 1980s and 1990s, some Latin educators, realising that their teaching methods were killing the study of this important language, began to learn from their modern languages counterparts that learning is best when it is meaningful, personal, and natural.¹²

The 'Living Latin' movement advocates teaching Latin through speaking and listening, as well as reading and writing. The movement is attempting to reform Latin instruction so it is taught in much the same way as most modern languages.¹⁴ Living Latin, (also known as Spoken Latin), is an effort to revive Latin as a spoken language, and as a vehicle for contemporary communication and publication. Proponents of the movement maintain that Latin can be taught in the same way that modern 'living' languages are taught, i.e. by incorporating oral fluency and listening comprehension, as well as textual skills. This pedagogical approach is supported by Abbott and Davis, who believe that it is through contemporary language-teaching methods that Latin will be more meaningful to students and therefore, more widely learned.¹⁵

Latin seems to be making a comeback in many parts of the world as the benefits of studying the language in all its contexts are once again realised.¹⁶ It has had a resurgence in US schools at the start of the twenty-first century, apparently due in part to Latin professionals modifying out-dated teaching methodologies.¹⁷ In many districts Latin ranks as the second most popular language — second only to Spanish.

¹² www.latininitatis.com/latininitas/textus/latintoday.htm

¹³ Leonhardt, J *Latin: Story of a world language*, Harvard University Press, 2013.

¹⁴ 'Is Latin a spoken language?', Harvard College Languages at Work, 2009.

¹⁵ Cited by Claude Pavur in 'Upgrading Latin Pedagogy', *Paedagogica*, Latin Teaching Materials Site, Saint Louis University.

¹⁶ Moore, T 'The Latin Language: Dead or Alive?', Ashbrook, Ashland University, Ohio, 2003.

¹⁷ State University.com, 'Teaching of Latin in Schools — Enrolments, teaching methods and textbooks, issues, trends and controversies' in *Education Encyclopedia*, <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/2160/Latin-in-Schools-Teaching.html>

A similar resurgence seems to be happening in the United Kingdom, where the number of non-selective state-maintained secondary schools offering the subject grew from around 100 a decade ago to just over 600 in 2014, according to data from a University of Cambridge Schools Classics project.¹⁸

In June 2014 the Australian Federal Government committed to introducing Latin into the Australian Curriculum. As a consequence, in September 2015, a draft context statement and framework for Latin, within the subject group 'Languages Years 7 to 10', was released. This framework encompasses classical languages such as Classical Chinese, Classical Hebrew, Sanskrit, Classical Greek and Latin.

Educational benefits of learning Latin

Latin has played a major part in the development of the English language, and knowledge of its constructs allows students to further develop their literacy skills and deepen their understanding of the structure, grammar and vocabulary of English. Learning Latin has the potential to widen students' vocabulary and improve their spelling, especially through the study of Latin root words. Because students are familiar with grammatical terminology and complex linguistic structures, they gain an advantage when learning other European languages.¹⁹

In fields as varied as mathematics, physics, astronomy, medicine, pharmacy and biology, Latin still provides internationally accepted names of concepts, forces, objects, and organisms in the natural world. It has contributed a vocabulary for specialised fields such as anatomy and law that has become part of the normal, non-technical vocabulary of various European languages and continues to be used in the international scientific vocabulary. Many Latin words, phrases and expressions are still used in English, though generally more in written English than in spoken English.

The study of Latin helps students to think logically, improve their comprehension skills, and develop critical thinking, analytical skills and logical reasoning. Critical thinking is at the core of language learning and the linguistic challenges involved in language learning enhance students' analytical and reflective skills. Complex reasoning skills are needed for the comprehension, interpretation and analysis of texts (such as inferring meaning from context), the justification of viewpoints and interpretations, and accurate translation from Latin to English.

¹⁸ Garner, R 2014, 'Latin makes surprising comeback in state schools in the *Independent*, 19 August, www.independent.co.uk/news/education/schools/latin-makes-surprising-comeback-in-state-schools-9677092.html

¹⁹ *Senior Syllabus in Latin*, Queensland Studies Authority, 2008, p. 2.

Access to and exploration of Latin prose and verse give students opportunities to pursue a liberal education as they investigate social, moral and political value systems, and the ways in which Roman concepts have influenced Western ways of thinking. As the language used by the ancient Romans, Latin provides a background to modern aesthetics including art, music and literature, to the humanities such as history, politics and law, and to a knowledge and appreciation of ancient life and society — the cultural roots of Western societies. This knowledge of ancient civilisations helps students to better appreciate and respect their own heritage and that of others.

1.3 Implications for redevelopment of the Queensland syllabus in Latin

Analysis of the scope of assessment across the jurisdictions shows that there is a high level of consistency. While the processes and methodology may vary, there is strong alignment in the assessment expectations and requirements.

Any redevelopment of the Latin syllabus, therefore, needs to ensure that the current scope of assessment is maintained.

It is noted that assessment in the jurisdictions reviewed, apart from Ontario, includes an external assessment component. This is also a recommendation in the ACER Review. It is appropriate, therefore, for Queensland to have some form of external assessment.

Redevelopment also needs to support and encourage a more modern pedagogical approach to the teaching, learning and assessment of Latin, in keeping with contemporary trends.

1.4 Recommendations

Based on the research and review of literature, if redevelopment of the Latin syllabus is undertaken, the following recommendations are made.

Recommendation 1

That the current scope of assessment be maintained.

Recommendation 2

That, in keeping with the subject in other jurisdictions and the recommendations from the ACER Review, external assessment in Latin is appropriate and should be considered in Queensland.

Recommendation 3

That the redevelopment of the Queensland syllabus should encourage and support a more modern, contemporary language-teaching pedagogical approach, in line with current trends in pedagogical practices and in recognition of the educational benefits for students of learning Latin.

2 Overview, comparison and connections

2.1 Comparable syllabuses from selected Australian and international jurisdictions

This chapter compares the teaching, learning and assessment practices from the selected jurisdictions.

Course organisation

There is variation across the jurisdictions with respect to course organisation.

Jurisdiction	Element
NSW, Vic.	Units
UK, IB	Components
Ontario	Strands
Qld	Whole-of-course course objectives

Content

The content of Latin courses in all jurisdictions reviewed is closely aligned, broadly focusing on three main aspects.

Aspect	Description
Language	Knowledge and understanding of the structural components of Latin through the study of classical literary works and the influences of the language on the development of English
History and culture	The historical, social, political and cultural aspects of Latin/Roman society and the influences of Roman thought and culture on Western civilisation
Literature	The study of Roman literature within its social, political and cultural contexts, ensuring a balance between verse and prose

Prescribed texts

Jurisdiction	Level of prescription
Qld	Extracts from the works of at least three poets and three prose writers should be read during the course. A list of poets and prose writers is given. Works by Virgil and Cicero are mandatory.
NSW	The prescribed verse and prose Latin texts provide the focus for the HSC Course. In each year two prescribed texts from the 'canon' of Virgil, Cicero and Livy are identified and the selections rotated every two years. Each year, specified thematic focus areas are identified for each of the prescribed texts.
Vic.	Texts are prescribed for the end-of year examination. Suggestions for suitable texts for Units 1–3 are provided in Suitable Resources.

Jurisdiction	Level of prescription
UK	Verse and prose texts are prescribed in the syllabus.
Ontario	There is no evidence of prescribed texts in the syllabus.
IB	The prescribed authors/texts are Cicero or Ovid for the Study of Language, with options for additional texts. There are passages prescribed for the Study of Literature.

Other prescriptions

Jurisdiction	Prescription
Vic., NSW, Qld, Ontario	Grammatical features and language knowledge, e.g. accident and syntax
Vic., NSW, Qld	Literary, stylistic and structural techniques literary terms/devices
UK	Vocabulary

Assessment

Jurisdiction	Overview of assessment practices
Qld	The syllabus identifies a variety of assessment techniques, including reading comprehension tests, written translation tests, research assignments and oral/multimodal presentations. Each technique suggests how it is best used to judge student achievement of the objectives.
NSW	Assessment is based on translation, identification, explanation and analysis of grammar in extracts, comments on texts (including verse scansion), and translations of unseen prose and verse.
Vic.	The assessment focus for the course is on comprehension and analysis of Latin language; analysis of literary, stylistic and structural techniques; and analysis of themes and ideas in the literature. In Units 1 and 2 there is a choice of assessment tasks for each outcome; schools must choose four tasks from the list provided for each of these units. Specific assessment tasks for each outcome are identified in Units 3 and 4.
UK	Assessment focuses on translation of Latin prose into English, or translation of a number of sentences from English into Latin. There are comprehension questions on passages of Latin text and on the authors studied, and a short essay.
Ontario	Assessment is school-based only and focuses on categories of 'objectives', namely, knowledge/understanding, thinking/inquiry, communication, and application. Achievement Charts provide a reference point for assessment practice and a framework for assessing and evaluating student achievement.
IB	Assessment focuses on understanding and translating texts in the original language. Students are required to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of texts in the original language and other products of Classical culture within their historical, political, cultural and geographical contexts. They are required to analyse the style of, and demonstrate a critical understanding of, a variety of classical texts in the original language and to construct an argument supported by relevant examples in the original language or supplementary reading.

2.2 Connections with the Australian Curriculum

In June 2014, the Federal government announced that it would fund the expansion of the curriculum to include five new languages, including classical Latin and classical Greek.²⁰ Advocates of the study of Latin say the learning is linked to higher academic performance in English, maths and science. It provides a deeper understanding of the English language, especially in relation to an understanding of grammar, and is an excellent foundation for other subjects. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) had recommended the inclusion of Classical Latin (and Greek) to the curriculum back in 2011, and it had been discussed at both a federal and state level.

Currently, there is no endorsed curriculum for Latin F–10 in the Australian Curriculum. However, a draft Context Statement and a Framework for Classical Languages within the subject group 'Languages Years 7 to 10' has been available since September 2015. This framework encompasses classical languages such as Classical Chinese, Classical Hebrew and Sanskrit, Classical Greek and Latin.

Two strands have been identified — reading, analysing and translating texts, and understanding. A set of sub-strands within each strand reflect dimensions of language learning and the related content to be taught and learnt. The sub-strands are reading texts, analysing and interpreting texts, translating, systems of language, evolution of language and its influences, history and culture of the ancient world, the legacy in the modern world, and reflecting.

The strands and sub-strands are in line with current Latin curricula, both nationally and internationally.

ACARA currently has no plans for a Languages curriculum in the senior secondary area.

2.3 Recommendation

Based on the research and review of literature, if redevelopment of the Latin syllabus is undertaken, the following recommendation is made.

Recommendation 4

That the Queensland syllabus maintain its current curriculum features, due to the high degree of similarity across jurisdictions in the teaching, learning and assessment of Latin, and in the absence of an Australian Curriculum in the language.

²⁰ Chilcott, T 2014, 'Teaching of Latin to be revived in classrooms under Federal Government push', in the *Courier Mail*, 20 June, www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/teaching-of-latin-to-be-revived-in-classrooms-under-federal-government-push/news-story/c5288fc961aac0bc7ecb80dd192c051b

3 Learning expectations

3.1 Scope of learning across Australian and international jurisdictions

The scope of Latin courses is consistent across the Australian and international jurisdictions.

Australian jurisdictions offering Latin

Jurisdiction	Scope of learning
Qld	<p>Learning is organised in three 'components':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the study of the Latin language • knowledge and appreciation of Roman literature and authors • Roman culture. <p>A theme-based approach is recommended to allow students to extend their understanding of the interdependence of language, culture and identity, and to explore the ways in which Roman concepts have influenced Western ways of thinking. Suggestions for themes and associated topics are provided in the syllabus.</p>
NSW	<p>Course content is based upon the study of prescribed Latin texts in order to develop skills in understanding the language and in analysing and evaluating Latin literature. The texts are the key to the study of the Latin language and allow students to experience a variety of stylistic features and literary effects.</p> <p>Learning is described in terms of three objectives, and their respective outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand seen and unseen texts written in the original Latin • understand the linguistic and stylistic features and the cultural references in prescribed Latin texts • understand the prescribed text as a work of literature in terms of the author's purpose. <p>The objectives and outcomes represent the knowledge, skills and understanding that students are expected to achieve by the end of the HSC course.</p>
Vic.	<p>This is a unitised course. Each unit enables students to achieve a set of outcomes, each of which is described in terms of the key knowledge and skills. There are four areas of study common to all four units:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grammar (accidence and syntax) • literary, stylistic and structural techniques • vocabulary • seen texts. <p>Students develop knowledge and understanding of the Latin language, and of Roman literature and culture. They are required to understand Latin texts and how the language works at the level of grammar, syntax and stylistic conventions. Students explore the ideas underlying Latin texts and their relationships to social, cultural, historical and religious contexts.</p>

International jurisdictions offering Latin

Jurisdiction	Scope of learning
UK	<p>The OCR subject <i>Latin</i> is organised in four mandatory units:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latin Language • Latin Verse and Prose Literature • Latin Verse • Latin Prose. <p>The course encompasses the study of the language, and of verse and prose literature. It involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • translating from Latin into English • developing language skills through a study of prescribed verse and prose texts • understanding literary techniques • studying Latin through prescribed verse and prose texts • responding to authentic passages.
Ontario	<p>Courses in <i>Classical Languages</i> place emphasis on written rather than oral forms of communication. They cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • oral communication (listening, which includes listening to hear standard pronunciation and improves reading comprehension; speaking, which includes reading aloud and giving responses to questions in Latin) • reading (for comprehension) • writing (translations, summaries and paraphrases) • application of knowledge of the classical language to other contexts (consolidating understanding of texts in English and other languages, expanding vocabulary, enriching understanding of their own and other cultures).
IB	<p>Linguistic skills are at the heart of the Classical Languages (Diploma Program). Students learn to translate Latin works and study different genres of classical texts within their historical, political and cultural contexts.</p> <p>There are three major aspects to the course:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • study of language, which equips students with the language skills necessary to read and understand classical authors in the original language • study of literature, a detailed study of literature from two options in the original language, focusing on elements of style, vocabulary and grammar, which allows students to consider how the artistry of language contributes to meaning • research dossier, an individual study in which students explore and reflect upon aspects of classical studies (classical language, literature or civilisation).

3.2 Recommendation

Based on the research and review of literature, if redevelopment of the Latin syllabus is undertaken, the following recommendation is made.

Recommendation 5

That the Queensland syllabus maintain its current scope, due to the high degree of similarity across jurisdictions in the scope of learning in Latin, and in the absence of an Australian Curriculum in the language.

4 Future focus: 21st century skills

Through its own initial research, the QCAA has determined a set of 21st century skills — the skills and attributes students need to prepare them for higher education, work and engagement in a complex and rapidly changing world.

4.1 Implications for redevelopment of the Queensland syllabus in Latin

The contribution of Latin towards the development of 21st century skills is perhaps best summed up in this statement from the Ontario curriculum.

Through activities such as presentations, reports, debates, and seminars, students learn to work cooperatively, develop thinking and communication skills, and acquire self-confidence. The study of classical languages and civilisation challenges students intellectually and gives them an opportunity to develop the knowledge and discipline they need to succeed in post-secondary studies and the workplace of the twenty-first century.²¹

Critical thinking

Critical thinking is at the core of language learning and the study of Latin. The linguistic challenges involved in language learning enhance students' critical, analytical and reflective skills. In an inquiry-based subject such as Latin, developing a critical approach to the investigation of primary and secondary sources, both in terms of language and context, are paramount.

The complex reasoning skills associated with the comprehension, interpretation and analysis of texts, (such as the ability to infer meaning from context), the development and justification of viewpoints and interpretations, and accurate translation from Latin to English contribute to the development of critical thinking.

Creative thinking

Creative thinking is associated with critical thinking and evident in composition and creative writing activities in both learning and assessment activities. It is most evident in activities that require composition and creative writing, in performance presentations (e.g. roleplaying), and in making links between ancient cultures and the present day.

²¹ The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 11 and 12, 'Classical Studies and International Languages', Ontario Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 7.

Communication

The development of communication skills is a key element in any language learning. The Queensland syllabus identifies communication as one of three categories of general objectives. Communication is also one of four broad categories of 'objectives' in the Ontario Classical Studies syllabus.

Communication skills include translating, interpreting passages of authentic Latin text, presenting research findings, and expressing ideas, information and viewpoints. These skills are evident in classroom interactions and activities as students share ideas, information, opinions, arguments and conclusions, and work with others to plan and undertake activities.

Personal and social skills

These are evident in, and aligned with collaboration and teamwork skills. Self-management and time management skills are crucial to the successful planning and organising of assessment activities and tasks.

ICT skills

Students use and apply a range of relevant information technologies to gather information for research, to access language learning and presentation applications, and to use word-processing skills.

4.2 Recommendations

Based on the research and review of literature, if redevelopment of the Latin syllabus is undertaken, the following recommendations are made.

Recommendation 6

That the syllabus provides opportunity for each student to develop 21st century skills in teaching, learning and assessment.

Recommendation 7

That, where appropriate, 21st century skills should be embedded in the objectives.

5 Enrolments in Latin

Latin as a subject in Queensland secondary schools has had a long history. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, the curriculum in Queensland grammar schools was dominated by classical subjects such as Latin and Greek, following the traditional English model. It has been a curriculum offering in public schools since the Senior Public Examinations in the 1960s. In fact, Latin has featured in Australian education since the early 1800s, and was a pre-requisite for university entrance in Australia until the 1950s.²²

For many years now, however, only two Brisbane-based schools have regularly offered the Authority subject Latin. On occasion, the subject has been offered by a third (non-metropolitan) school.

As illustrated below, enrolment statistics for Latin are not encouraging. The number of students in Queensland exiting with four units of credit in Latin over the last three years has gone from 24 to 20. In percentage terms, it has dropped from 0.05% to 0.03% of the total candidature issued with a QCE.

In NSW, the number of students completing the HSC Latin Continuers course over the last three years has gone from 170 to 163 — in percentage terms, from 0.25% to 0.23% of the total HSC candidature. The number of students completing the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) Latin course over the last three years has gone from 215 to 194 — in percentage terms, from 0.43% to 0.39% of the total HSC candidature.

Latin enrolment data

	2012				2014			
	students	schools	total	%	students	schools	total	%
Qld	24	2	41,330	0.05	20	2	50,069	0.03
NSW	170	–	66,590	0.25	163	–	68,004	0.23
Vic.	215	–	49,724	0.43	194	–	49,262	0.39

²² Draft Context Statement, Australian Curriculum: Languages — Latin, September 2015.

5.1 Implications for redevelopment of the Queensland syllabus in Latin

Despite initiatives to revive interest in Latin and increase student uptake of the language, Latin in Queensland senior secondary schools appears not to be a growing subject.

The question needs to be asked, therefore, whether the QCAA can maintain an externally moderated school-based Authority syllabus in Latin for so few students, especially in view of the resourcing required to redevelop Authority syllabuses resulting from the ACER Review.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the research and review of literature, if redevelopment of the Latin syllabus is undertaken, the following recommendations are made.

Recommendation 8

That, in view of the educational benefits for students, a syllabus in Authority Latin be maintained as a subject offering for Queensland students.

Recommendation 9

That, due to limited enrolments over a period of time, the Authority subject Latin be offered as an external examination only.

Recommendation 10

That, due to the close alignment between the content of the Queensland syllabus and the two interstate jurisdictions offering Latin, consideration be given to borrowing the Latin syllabus from one of these jurisdictions, and requesting that this agency be responsible for the assessment of Queensland student papers (i.e. the setting, vetting and marking of the written examination).

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