

Gifted and Talented Policy

Policy

Comprehensive schools cater for the full range of learners, including the gifted and talented. Whilst every learner is unique, some types of learners need particular attention.

Gifted students are those whose potential is distinctly above average in one or more of the following domains of human ability: intellectual, creative, social and physical.

Talented students are those whose skills are distinctly above average in one or more areas of human performance. Gifted and talented students vary in terms of the nature and level of their abilities.

Gifted and talented students benefit from a number of opportunities, programs and strategies that recognise their abilities (gifts) and enhance their performance (talents).

School communities have a responsibility to:

- identify their gifted and talented students.
- foster collaborative home-school partnerships to support gifted and talented students.
- provide a range of opportunities and to monitor and evaluate programs for their gifted and talented students.

Teachers have a responsibility to:

- identify the gifted and talented students in their classes, with support.
- select and implement a variety of teaching strategies for the inclusion in programs for the range of gifted and talented students in their classes.

Schools have a responsibility to:

- coordinate school provisions for gifted and talented students where it is feasible for more than one school to share this responsibility.
- provide opportunities for staff development in the education of gifted and talented students for principals, teachers and other appropriate personnel.

Procedures and Programs

Identification

At WGHS students are identified for the Year 7 extension class for selected students via a placement test designed and marked by the University of NSW. The date of the test session is advertised to feeder primary schools and in the local paper. The test is conducted in mid March on a Saturday morning. The test covers literacy, writing, numeracy and science.

For Years 8, 9 and 10, students earn their place in the extension classes from year to year on the basis of their assessment and examination results. New enrolments are considered for extension class placement on the basis of their most recent school reports. See grouping strategies for Years 11 and 12.

In addition, students who may not have been identified through the school's usual testing and course assessment practices may be identified as a result of nomination by teachers, parents, peers or self referral. Screening, which includes a range of objective measures, such as off-level testing, IQ tests and standardised tests of creative ability, can be used to confirm observations. Monitoring can be done through formal observations and the collection of data.

The school counsellor's role is to provide assessment and support, information and advice to students, parent and teachers.

Grouping strategies

WGHS groups its most able students into separate classes for differentiating their instruction. Learning gains are more likely to be maximised when gifted and talented students spend the majority of their time in the academic core areas with others of similar abilities.

Year 7 students of high ability are placed in a full-time ability grouping (extension class). The students in this class are in the same or similar class for all their subjects.

Years 8, 9 and 10 students of high ability are sorted according to their subject achievement into different extension classes. This process takes place for English, Mathematics and Science, Geography and History.

In Years 11 and 12 students studying English and Mathematics are grouped according to their achievement, with higher ability students placed in the more demanding courses for English and Mathematics; that is, advanced and extension courses. Students with high ability in other areas of the curriculum where extension courses are offered or specific expertise is desirable are encouraged to study the appropriate course and level.

Acceleration

Accelerated progression is based upon the proposition that students learn at different rates and in different ways and should be able to progress according to their ability, readiness and motivation. Students who are accelerated must be truly outstanding.

In Mathematics, for example, students who are judged as likely to achieve in the top 5% of students at the highest level in Mathematics when they sit for the HSC, or in their candidature for the School Certificate, can be considered for the accelerant program. The main principle governing acceleration in Mathematics is that accelerating students must be capable of compacting required study rather than omitting requirements. Students can access this program at any time under the direction and supervision of the Head Teacher Mathematics.

Curriculum differentiation

Curriculum differentiation is the modification of the curriculum through adjustments to content, processes, skills and products. It provides a planned, documented and challenging curriculum that matches the ability of gifted and talented students to learn at faster rates, find and solve problems more readily and manipulate abstract ideas and make connections to an advanced degree.

Differentiation includes enrichment and extension activities. Enrichment refers to the broadening of the curriculum, whereas extension refers to the deepening of knowledge, understanding and skills.

It is expected that students in the extension classes will be provided with differentiated programming. Such programming includes:

- high expectations for each student
- permitting students to progress at their own pace
- providing different avenues to acquiring content, processing or developing products
- providing multiple assignments within each unit
- allowing student to choose ways of learning and how to demonstrate their learning
- flexible groupings within the class based on the student's needs

Extracurricular programs provide opportunities for enrichment (and extension). The school offers a diverse array of general and subject-based offerings on top of the mandatory curriculum. There are over 80 programs, including competitions, awards, exhibitions, ensembles and teams, both external and internal to the school. See *Continuing Programs* hand-out. These programs are promoted through the subject areas and in the Newsletters. The school provides funding support for targeted GATs programs.