PATHWAYS TO IMPROVEMENT:

A program for the development of community language schools

Program framework

Introduction

The Pathways to Improvement Program (PIP) supports the development of quality teaching and operations in community language schools in Western Australia.

The aim is to improve and maintain quality language teaching and learning – for school leaders to understand how well a school is operating and how it can be even better.

The PIP helps administrators, teachers, parents, community members and students understand what makes a good community language school and a quality language program.

The PIP is delivered as part of the Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI), Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, Community Languages Program (CLP).

Community Languages Program

The CLP supports not-for-profit community organisations to teach community languages and cultural maintenance programs outside of school hours.

The program provides a free professional learning program for community language school teachers and administrators, and grant funding for new and established community language schools.

The PIP explained

The PIP supports the development of community language schools through an assessment and evaluation process. It provides community language schools with tools to assess their effectiveness and progress towards best practice in the management and delivery of community language learning.

The PIP comprises:

- **four stages of development** that reflect how community language schools operate
- **standards and domains** for school effectiveness and progress
- **information and tools** that measure effectiveness and progress, and identify areas for improvement – this includes a school self-assessment tool and a formal evaluation process.

The PIP is based on the principles of instructed language learning (Ellis & Shintani, 2014), the professional standards of the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, and Community Languages Australia's Quality Assurance Framework (2008).

The program has been developed with the unique nature of the community languages sector in mind, where classes are held out of school hours, with limited time and where most teachers and administrators are volunteers. It is intended to guide school development in the context of the available resources.

The PIP can be accessed by all not-for-profit community language schools in WA, including those not funded through the CLP.

Stages of development

The PIP has four stages. Schools choose the stage of development they are ready to apply for.

1. **Registration** – the initial level of development; indicates to schools that they meet OMI funding eligibility criteria.

2. **Preliminary** – reflects understanding of the elements of administration, teaching and learning that are required for full development.

3. **Competent to be accredited** – reflects a sufficient level of understanding and demonstrated use of all elements of the framework – that is, in the areas of teaching and learning, leadership and governance, and community links.

4. **Competent to teach ATAR courses** – Schools are recognised by the School Curriculum and Standards Authority to teach ATAR courses. Teachers of ATAR courses must be fully qualified language teachers registered with the Teacher Registration Board of WA (TRB).

School quality standards

A standard is a level of quality or achievement, for example 'the hotel is rated only 2-stars because of its low standard of cleanliness' or 'the students from their school always demonstrate a high standard in writing but not such a high standard in speaking. They are working to improve their standard of speaking'.

The standards are quite big ideas that are made up of several outcome areas. The standards are grouped into 'domains' of school effectiveness that align with the three focus areas of the CLP:

1. **Teaching and learning**
2. **Leadership and governance**
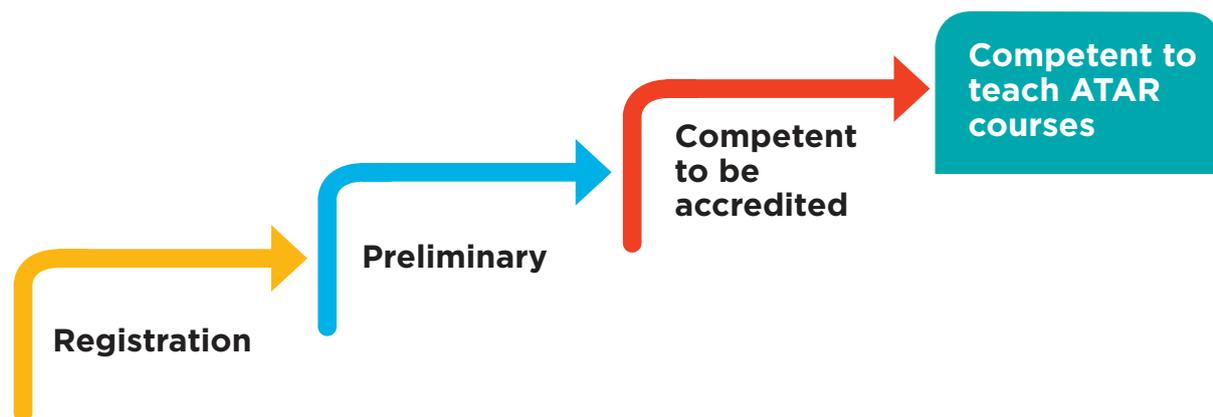3. **Community links.**

Toolkit

To support schools on their development pathway, the PIP includes:

1. Supporting information: Standards Compendium, Standards Side by Side and Stages of Development Outcomes Matrix

2. Assessment and evaluation tools: for Preliminary, Registration, Competent to be Accredited, and Competent to Teach ATAR stages

3. Planning templates

The stages of school development

Registration → Preliminary → Competent to be accredited → Competent to teach ATAR courses

School quality standards

Teaching and learning
1. Know students and how they learn
2. Know how to teach
3. Know how to teach language
4. Know the content and curriculum

Your school development vision and plan

Community links
1. Connect classroom learning to the family and wider language community
2. Share language and culture with the wider Australian community

Leadership and governance
1. Demonstrate leadership in language education
2. Practise good governance

Domain	Standard	Outcome area
Teaching and learning	**1. Know students and how they learn**	• Creating the culture of the classroom • Using texts to support learning and the acquisition of language • Designing tasks to support learning
	2. Know how to teach	• Organising and working in a community language school context • Engaging students • Planning, structuring and sequencing learning • Assessing and reporting student learning
	3. Know how to teach language	• Creating a classroom environment that supports real and extensive language use • Using language for communication in interpreting, creating and exchanging meaning • Focusing on both meaning and form in language learning • Supporting the development of interculturality • Assessing language practice and language use • Teaching students how to learn and how to learn language
	4. Know the content and curriculum	• Knowing the community language and culture • Knowing about the acquisition and teaching of language • Knowing about curriculum • Knowing about curriculum alignment
Leadership and governance	**5. Demonstrate leadership in language education**	• Planning for language teaching and learning • Developing curriculum • Monitoring, reviewing and renewing school curriculum • Developing teachers
	6. Practise good governance	• Responding to community needs • Accounting for decisions • Making sure that decision making is transparent • Making decisions consistent with relevant legislation • Meeting the Community Languages Program (CLP) eligibility requirements • Managing school operations • Welcoming to everyone
Community links	**7. Connect classroom learning to the family and wider language community**	• Bringing the community into the school • Taking the school into the community
	8. Share language and culture with the wider Australian community	• Linking language, culture and communities

Benefits to your school

The PIP offers your school:

- access to advice and guidance on areas for improvement through the formal assessment process
- a customised professional learning program
- eligibility to apply for OMI funding when your school achieves registration
- public recognition of the school's commitment to quality.

Most importantly, application of the PIP demonstrates to parents and community members that your community language school is committed to quality, continuous learning and improvement.

Ways to apply the PIP to your school

Schools can choose the development pathway they want to follow – either an internal, school-led process, or via an independent evaluation and development process conducted by an external PIP Evaluator.

Option 1:
Self-assessment by your school

- Your school assesses its own level of achievement against the standards in each domain.
- Reviewing and planning is undertaken at a whole-school and community level. Working together helps everyone in the team to understand how well the school is operating and to decide how areas may improve.
- Developing a strategic plan together means everyone shares an understanding of the goals of the school and knows what they need to do to contribute to the achievement of the goals.

Option 2:
Assessment by an independent agency

- OMI has commissioned an external agency to evaluate the schools that take part in the PIP.
- The evaluation includes an assessment by the school and the external agency against the relevant development level standards.
- It will identify where schools would benefit from professional learning, and include a plan for improvement.

How do schools move to the next stage of development?

To move to the next stage of development, your school will need to follow these steps:

Review: the stage at which the school is currently operating against the quality standards

Decide: the stage of development your school is aiming for

Identify: what areas need improvement in your school to achieve the next stage of development.

Prepare: a strategic plan for the next one to two years to achieve the next stage of development.

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