Intensive English Program for Refugee Students
Guidelines for high schools in rural and regional areas 2015

Refugee students in NSW schools
In recent years, an increasing number of refugee students have enrolled in schools in both metropolitan and regional and rural areas of the state. Most newly arrived refugee students enrol in schools having had no or very limited and disrupted prior schooling. Most have had no previous exposure to English and many older students have no literacy skills in their first language/s.

In addition, many refugee students have a background of traumatic and stressful experiences including living in refugee camps for long periods, physical violence and the loss of family members, friends and homes.

For many refugee students, enrolling in a high school in Australia may be their first experience of formal schooling. These students need intensive support to help them to adjust to school and to develop the English language and literacy skills they will need for their continuing education.

A range of programs and services are available to assist schools in supporting refugee students, both from within the Department of Education and from other community and government agencies. These include advice and support in relation to student welfare and settlement issues as well as issues related to education.

Intensive English support for newly arrived students
Under the English as an Additional Language (EAL) New Arrivals Program, newly arrived non-English speaking students, including refugees, receive short term intensive English language support when they first enrol.

Primary school students receive this initial intensive English language tuition in their school, as part of the EAL/D program. High school students in metropolitan Sydney and Wollongong may enrol in an Intensive English Centre or the Intensive English High School. High school students in rural and regional areas, where there are no Intensive English Centres, receive the support in their school.

In rural and regional areas, high schools which enrol significant numbers of newly arrived refugee students may apply for additional support to establish a short term intensive English class. This additional support recognises the greater level of need of secondary aged refugee students.

1. Aim of the program
The purpose of the program is to provide intensive English instruction to support refugee students’ English language and literacy development and develop initial curriculum concepts and skills to support their participation in mainstream classes.
2. Students eligible for the program

To be eligible, students must be refugee or humanitarian program entrants with a relevant visa, enrolled in a rural and regional high school, in any year from Year 7 to Year 11.

Students must also:
• require intensive EAL tuition
• have had no or minimal schooling
• have low levels of literacy in English and their first language
• have enrolled in their first Australian school within the previous 18 months.

3. Schools eligible for the program

The intensive English class program is only available for high schools in rural and regional areas. A school must have a minimum of seven eligible students to establish an intensive English class.

In some cases other types of flexible arrangements may be established. For example, where a high school has a neighbouring primary school with newly arrived refugee students the two schools may choose to establish a joint intensive English class. Alternatively, Year 6 students could be accommodated in the high school intensive English class, where appropriate. These types of arrangements would need to be agreed between the schools concerned and the Manager of Multicultural Programs. For more information, contact Equity.

4. Bilingual support

Each intensive English class also attracts a School Learning Support Officer (Ethnic) (SLSO-E) allocation to support the program. These staff provide bilingual and bicultural support for refugee students to assist student learning, to help support the ‘settling in’ of students into their school and facilitate communication between the school and the students and their families.

For more information on the role of SLSO-Es, engaging a suitable person and managing the support program in the school, see School Learning Support Officer (Ethnic) Guidelines for schools or contact the Multicultural Programs Unit.

5. Teaching and SLSO allocations

The level of teacher and SLSO (E) support depends on the number of eligible students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Teacher EFT allocation</th>
<th>SLSO-E EFT Allocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 -10</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>1.5</td>
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<td>16-20</td>
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<td>21-25</td>
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<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26+</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Applying for an intensive English class

The school must complete and return an Application for EAL New Arrivals Program Intensive English Class to the Multicultural Programs Unit. The school must provide student details, including visa subclass, dates of arrival and enrolment, age and year of schooling and EAL/D phase. For more information, contact Equity.

7. How long is the teacher allocation for?

A class is initially established for up to two terms. The class continues on a term by term basis with student enrolments reviewed at the end of each term. Generally, intensive English classes will operate for between 12 and 18 months from the date of commencement. Note: This will depend on enrolments being maintained.

8. Engaging teachers for the Intensive English Program

It is very important that the intensive English class/es be taught by qualified and experienced EAL/D teacher/s employed on a casual basis. Schools should make every effort to locate a suitable teacher.

For assistance please see a list of support personnel at the end of this document.

9. Role of Intensive English Program teachers

Intensive English class teachers are responsible for:
• initial assessment of students’ language and learning needs
• planning and programming for the class/es, taking into account the school years and subjects of individual students
• teaching the class programs and assessing student learning outcomes
• liaising with the school’s learning support team on appropriate on-going support for refugee students
• reporting on learning outcomes to school executive, other teachers and parents.
Teachers will be required to assess and report on students’ progress using the ESL Scales. The Intensive English Program Curriculum Framework will also be a core document, providing an outcomes framework and text based approach for teaching English through key learning areas. Reporting to parents will follow the ESL Reporting Scale.

Schools determine how the staffing allocation for the intensive class is used. It may be used by an existing teacher or a casual teacher may be appointed to teach the class or the allocation may be shared.

10. Organisation of the Intensive English Program

Refugee students require maximum available time in an intensive program in order to develop skills in how to learn as well as English language and literacy skills. As their English proficiency improves, the students continue to learn English through the subject areas. The program should include the teaching of subject-specific language and literacy skills to prepare students for transition to mainstream classes.

The organisation of the Intensive English Program needs to take into account individual students’ needs. Timetabling for the class/es will generally include a combination of some or all of the following:

- students from different years grouped together for intensive English tuition
- students grouped in smaller year or subject cohorts for subject-specific language development
- refugee students in mainstream classes team-taught by the intensive English program teacher and the class teacher in order to support their development of subject specific language and skills.

Students are integrated into mainstream classes whenever they are not timetabled to participate in an intensive English class.

Increased time in mainstream classes will be a feature of the transition from intensive English support over the duration of the program as students’ language skills develop. During this period the program organisation may need to be modified so the Intensive English Program teacher can provide advice and support to mainstream teachers, to assist them to meet the language and literacy needs of students.

Individual schools decide on the most appropriate model for their school, taking into account available support and the needs of students, their ages and school years.

11. Professional Learning

Professional learning support is available for both classroom and EAL New Arrivals Program teachers of newly arrived students and refugees. For information on professional learning programs, contact Equity.

12. EAL New Arrivals Program Teacher Mentors

EAL New Arrivals Program teacher mentors are qualified and experienced EAL/D teachers who provide support and advice to newly appointed EAL - NAP teachers in rural and regional schools. The support will focus in particular on the learning needs of refugee students.

Contact Equity for updated information on teacher mentors.

For more information

Coordinator, EAL New Arrivals Program:
Phone (02) 9244 5349

Coordinator, Refugee Support:
Phone (02) 9244 5314

EAL New Arrivals Program (Rural and Regional) consultant:
Phone (02) 9244 5764