QAIS Secondary Inclusivity Policy

"**Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome.**"
Booker T. Washington, educator and civil rights activist

"**We could learn a lot from crayons; some are sharp, some are pretty, some are dull, while others bright, some have weird names, but they all have learned to live together in the same box**
Robert Fulghum, author

"**I have grown up in a positive household. I'm a normal person, just a lot smaller. I get on with it. Everybody should do that. You only live once and you need to enjoy life, to go out and achieve whatever you want to.**"
Ellie Simmonds, Four times gold medal winning Paralympian

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1. Philosophy

Definition: "Inclusion is the ongoing process that increases access and engagement of all learners in learning."

Education at QAIS is an inclusive education that embraces the diversity and uniqueness in us all. Based on the philosophy of equality, sharing, participation, and the worth and dignity of individuals, we believe an inclusive classroom is the most enabling environment for all students all of the time.

We believe that inclusive education provides everyone with meaningful and respectful learning experiences that engenders self-confidence and a sense of belonging to a larger community. We embrace the challenge of serving the whole family across the spectrum of human differences, and the challenge of shaping our school to meet the needs of the community we serve. Our IB programmes are designed to be inclusive from which all students can benefit and inclusivity and commitment to these programmes also represents another facet of the IB learner profile (IB, 2014, p.10). Our Montessori Programme does not discriminate against any student or applicant because of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic level, national origin, physical ability, or learning style. (AMS, 2014)

We strive to support each child to develop their emotional, intellectual, physical, and spiritual capacity so as to help them become active, responsible, and caring lifelong learners who embrace diversity and who learn from multiple perspectives.

We also believe that all learners have learning difficulties. These very in extent and may be transient or chronic and that: "… schools with (…) inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discrimination, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all."The Salamanca Statement, UNESCO, 1994.

2. Objectives

- To encourage shared responsibility in the school to support our inclusivity policy at all levels of education
- To ensure that all students have the maximum access to the whole curriculum
- To have inclusivity as a foundation for all decision making in the school
- To support inclusivity by imbedding its principles and practices in teaching and learning and so help prevent marginalization of learners
- To identify and remove barriers to learning and participation.
- Where needed, to provide an appropriate physical space and appropriate equipment to support inclusivity
- To build the capacity to support inclusivity in the school through professional development, training, and the employment of specialist teachers where and when appropriate
- To promote the use, and monitor the effectiveness of new and alternative methods for teaching and learning
- To identify how students can best be supported in their learning and to use strategies to assist them in and out of the classroom
- To encourage faculty to maintain high expectations for learning in their classes appropriate to the aptitude, ability and current understandings of the learner
- To ensure assessment offers equity of opportunity to students both in the classroom and in examination situations
- To promote diversity as a positive resource which can be used to understand and develop individuals ascaring, principled, internationally minded and culturally aware people
- To develop and use systems to monitor, record, and recognize the holistic progress and achievements of students
- To provide a climate of warmth and compassion
- To communicate this policy to all our stakeholders

3. Admissions and learning support guidance

Inclusivity is not meant to imply that we admit all applicants to our programs, but that when admitted, they are treated on an equitable basis with all other students, and we admit students who will benefit from our educational programs. We are currently not able to provide a program to support children within our program with acute difficulties on the learning spectrum such as severe autism or speech difficulties where the levels of support are beyond those available in the school, or a program for students who have gross motor problems where access to the facilities are not possible.

It is beyond the scope of this document to prescribe clear instances where the school will, or will not, be able to admit students with severe or extreme learning difficulties to our programs. Each admission will be based on the identified learning difficulties of the applicant, the level of professional external and school-based student support available, and understandings and support provided by parents or guardians.

In order to best serve the interests of applicants, we require as a condition of entry a psycho-educational or medical assessment from a licensed educational psychologist or medical doctor respectively, which was made within the previous two-year period of the date of application. (See QAIS Admissions Policy)

We also require parents or guardians to supply the results of any previous testing, which must be communicated at the time of application. In some cases, parents or guardians will be required to commit to providing supplemental resources for the education of their child.

4. Creating an inclusive curriculum

At QAIS we expect that teachers will consider inclusivity when designing or adapting curriculum, and subsequently modify curriculum to fit the needs of students that the original planning did not foresee. "Teachers can differentiate teaching and learning by providing examples (work samples or task-specific clarifications of assessment criteria); structuring support (advance organizers, flexible grouping, peer relationships); establishing interim and flexible deadlines; and adjusting the pace of learning experiences." (MYP: From Principles into Practice, 2014)

To this extent, QAIS requires the following curriculum design principles for inclusive practice:

Consideration of whether the curriculum promotes opportunities for differing perspectives.
Are case studies and exemplars understandable to all groups of students?
Is the material culturally and geographically appropriate for our learners (for example, does the investigation of inventions and discovery relate principally to Asia if our students are Asian)?
Do activities encourage both individual and group work?
Is the selected curriculum relevant to the students, engaging and exciting?
Does the curriculum meaningfully promote learner profile attributes and international mindedness?
Will the range of teaching and assessment methods accommodate different learning needs?
Is assessment transparent and clearly articulated so that students can access what is required?
Are methods of assessment and criteria appropriate to student needs?
Have there been adequate opportunities for informal, formative feedback to and from all students for summative assessments?
Is the language used effective in allowing students to access the curriculum?
How will physical challenges be catered for?

Teachers should try to apply as many of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) practices conceived by Rose at the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) to create more flexible learning environments for student needs.
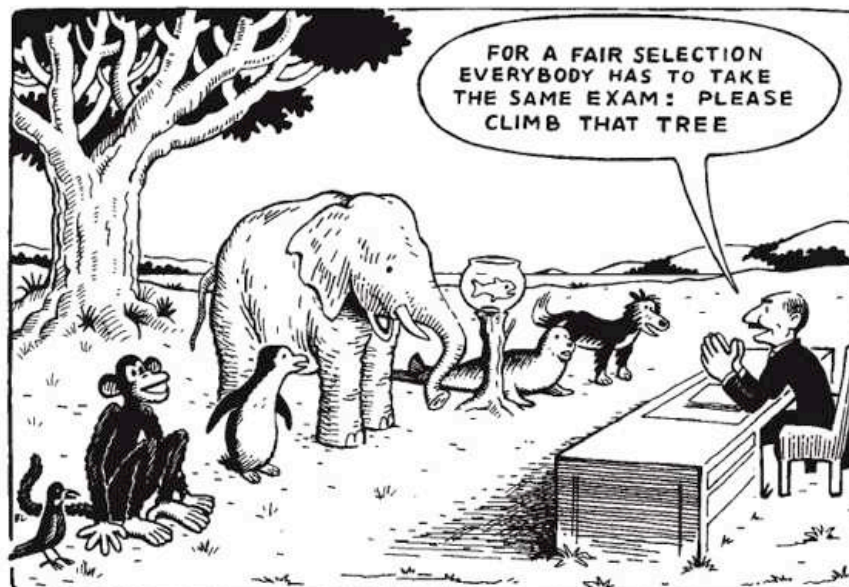

Figure 1: http://ginacarson.com/ud/universal-design/

5. Inclusive assessment arrangements (see also the QAIS MYP Assessment Policy section 4)

As an inclusive school, we try to differentiate both learning and assessment. We want students to be able to show what they are able to do, and in this respect we assessment positively and not by deficit. In order for students to show what they can do, it may be necessary to adapt assessments to the needs of students. There are many possible opportunities to ensure that assessment promotes inclusivity for cognitive and behavioural learning difficulties so that assessment is inclusive and equitable including:

If a student has learning support requirements, including acute requirements such as an injury that prevents him/her from undertaking a written examination in the usual manner (for example, an injured hand, which prevents writing), inclusive assessment arrangements will be made (for example, the use of a word processor and/or amanuensis if the student is unable to write). In the MYP, these actions are termed *reasonable adjustments* (actions taken to remove or decrease a disadvantage faced by students with learning support requirements) but these adjustments must be made so as to keep the overall learning outcome the same.
For students with more challenging learning support requirements, the MYP framework may be modified to accommodate their needs, but the IB will not validate grades or award the MYP certificate where achievement levels have been modified in this way.

In the IBDP, there is a formal process to recognize inclusivity in assessment. This relates not only to physical challenges but also to cognitive issues such as dyslexia.

6. Reporting to parents (See also QAIS MYP Assessment Policy sections 4 & 7)

Being sensitive to cultural norms of the family where the phrases such as "learning difficulties" or "learning support" may have an associated cultural stigma, or simply be read as a pejorative statement about a student's general cognitive ability, any reports specifically focused on learning difficulties or learning support will be issued as a separate document to the main report.

7. Policy disseminating mechanisms

A. Digital copies to teachers with the option of them printing a hard copy
B. Staff and student wikis
C. ManageBac
D. School's web site (opportunities for feedback from the global community)
E. Collaborative Planning meetings (opportunities for feedback from IB practitioners)
F. Community Meetings (opportunities for feedback from IB students and teachers)
G. Meetings with Parents (opportunities for feedback from parents)
H. Curriculum
I. Teaching and Learning (developmentally appropriate documents concerning academic integrity)
J. Age appropriate written information on Academic Integrity for MYP students
K. The QAIS Student Council (opportunities for feedback from students

8. Policy review process

We aim to review our academic honesty policy at the calendar year and the end of each academic year to ensure that it is coherent with any changes in the student and community demographics or other circumstances, and that policy and practice are aligned, and we incorporate new research, perspectives and understandings. These reviews will stem initially from collaborative planning meetings in the different sections of the school, where coordinators and teachers can provide their professional input, and then move to the academic leadership team. Input from the student council and parents will also be solicited. Finally, it is the responsibility of the Head of School to authorize the policy. Policy and changes will be disseminated to the community through the school website, ManageBac and news bulletins, and added to the relevant induction packages for teachers new to the programmes.

This policy may be revised between formal reviews if deemed appropriate. Opportunities of this type may occur, for instance, during new teacher induction where policies will be reviewed by teachers new to the school, or by collaboration with the student council or parent's body.

9. Related documentation

American Montessori Society (2014) AMS School Accreditation Standards and Criteria (Effective November 1, 2014)

Inclusive Education in Action (2015) http://www.inclusive-education-in-action.org/

Carson, G (2012) Universal Design http://ginacarson.com/ud/universal-design/

Center for Applied Special Technology (2014) http://www.cast.org/udl/

International Baccalaureate Organization (2009) Diploma Programme: Candidates with assessment access requirements

International Baccalaureate Organization (2010) Learning Diversity in the International Baccalaureate programmes: Special educational needs within the International Baccalaureate programmes

International Baccalaureate Organization (2010) Learning diversity and the IB Programmes: Special educational needs within the International Baccalaureate programmes

International Baccalaureate Organization (2011) Diploma Programme: Candidates with special assessment needs

International Baccalaureate Organization (2011) Language and learning in IB programmes

International Baccalaureate Organization (2013) Meeting student learning diversity in the classroom,

International Baccalaureate Organization (2014) MYP: From Principles into Practice (updated September 2014)

International Baccalaureate Organization (2015) 国际文凭全纳教育指南:支持学校整体发展的资源

Mental Health Foundation (2014) Mental Health Statistics: Children & Young People http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/help-information/mental-health-statistics/children-young-people/

Monash University (2014) Inclusive Assessment: Assessment and Feedback http://www.monash.edu.au/lls/inclusivity/Assessment/

National Down Syndrome Society (2013) https://www.ndss.org/Resources/Education/Education--Down-Syndrome/

Robinson, K (2006) Bring on the Learning Revolution available online http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9LelXa3U_I

UNESCO (2009) Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0017/001778/177849e.pdf

QAIS Admissions Policy (2013)

QAIS Staff Handbook for Grades 7-10 (2014)

Wikipedia contributors (2014) Universal Design for Learning, *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia,* http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_Design_for_Learning

Appendix A: General guidance to promote the awareness of learning support issues and needs

This list of general issues should be used to help indicate how assistance should be provided to students as necessary and as appropriate. None of these should be considered mutually exclusive of each other.

The key to success is ensuring that teaching and learning are significantly differentiated so as to accommodate the diverse learning needs of individuals.

A. Prior knowledge

Cultural – some students may have very different attitudes, values, and ways of doing things to the Western model of education that QAIS provides. While everyone has to make some adaptations between cultures, some individuals will have to make greater and more profound changes than others. However, it is also fair to question whether a homogeneous Western model is the best way for all students to learn, and what can be learned from indigenous education systems within our school.

Linguistic – students will find learning difficult after admission if they find language acquisition difficult. Those students whose English and Chinese are non-existent or very limited will have greater learning difficulties than others. Students who are developing two languages at once often face even more considerable difficulties.

Developmentally appropriate – students who have not worked with material that is developmentally appropriate may find difficulties fitting into the learning structures within the classroom.

B. Physical access

These may be permanent or temporary and may include mobility and/or sensory issues. Problems may include access to practical lab work, the physical size of chairs and desks, negotiating obstacles or stairs, or travel distance and time.

C. Affective domain

These are attitudes that are emotional and behavioral. They may exhibit themselves when a student persistently lacks self-management issues, is uncooperative with their learning behaviors, unsociable or anti-social, unable to shoulder responsibility for their own actions, lacks of self esteem, lacks empathy or compassion for others, or has issues with integrity or honesty. When recognized, learning support using the parents, teachers, individuals and peers can help students develop appropriate skills and attitudes in the affective domain provided there is a consistency of approach from all the groups concerned. Behavioral reports, counseling, homeroom teacher support, peer support, parent support and attitude grades (in the IBMYP and IBDP) are some of the ways that we can help students improve their affective domain skills.

Students on the spectrum often find the affective domain challenging.

D. Cognitive domain

Problems may be apparent when there is repeated limited ability to grasp a range of age-appropriate concepts and show basic understanding at the range of ability being examined or when work is repeatedly produced by a student that is well beyond the expected range of age appropriate ability. Feedback from assessments of achievement or achievement grades, where and when applicable, will help inform students, parents and teachers about development in the cognitive domain. However, the following learning issues will have a strong influence on key aspects of cognitive development.

Dyslexia– a common reading and writing disorder characterized by difficulty with learning to read fluently and with accurate comprehension. There is no correlation with cognitive ability. Problems include difficulties with phonic awareness and decoding, orthographic coding, auditory short-term memory, and language processing speed. While common, there are other reading disorders than dyslexia including vision issues.

Dyslexia is not characterized in the same way throughout different cultures and Chinese dyslexics do not have problems with phonics, but difficulty creating meaning from characters.

Children with dyslexic problems typically need more time to complete work, and structured, sequential and closely monitored reading activities to make progress with reading.

Hyperlexia – is the ability to read, often with fluency, but without comprehending the text.

Dyscalculia – this is an innate or developmental problem and distinct from acalculia which is caused by brain injury. Its associated problems include telling the time and the passing of time, number comparisons, difficulties with arithmetic operations, recalling simple formulae, differentiation of left and right, and low concentration during mentally intensive tasks. There is software available to help remediate this problem.

Aphasia/dysphasia – are language problems associated with brain damage from tumors, strokes, infection or injury.They can be permanent or temporary and there are a complex variety of issues relating to the formation and comprehension of language. Either could occur after a student is enrolled in the school.

Speech disorders– Some of these need to be treated by a speech-language pathologist to be remedied. The nature and severity of the speech disorders range from sound disorders (such as omissions and distortions), to fluency disorders (stuttering), voice disorders (phonation or resonance) or functional disorders involving a single sound (lisping or rotacism).

E. Mental health issues

The Mental Health Foundation (2014) estimates that in any one year, 20% of students will have mental health issues and that at any one time, 10% of a student population will have issues at any one time. Mental health issues, like physical health issues, can be acute or chronic. Fostering well-being is an important

F. Medical and other issues

The following should not have an impact on inclusivity and admissions except as noted in the main policy. However, it will mean that there may need to be a greater shared emphasis and understanding of the nature of these issues throughout the school community.

Trisomy-21/Down syndrome–As this covers a great variety of behavioral and physical phenotypes, it is hard to prescribe the whole gamut of issues that Trisomy-21 students have. Much evidence shows that those with average or better cognitive abilities benefit from inclusive education. There is a great lack of research into the development of second languages by these students.

Premature mortality -There are a variety of diseases, often genetic in origin and including Trisomy-21, which place limits to the extent to which a person will be expected to live the full average life-span. This knowledge can have quite intense impacts on student learning in a variety of ways. This applies to a range of illnesses including leukemia, cystic fibrosis, sickle cell disease, and Huntington's disease.

G. Further guidance

The IB publication "Meeting student learning diversity in the classroom" gives specific guidance for the challenges, strategies and resources that can be applied to students with identified learning support needs including:

ADD/ADHD
Autism spectrum (including Asperger's syndrome)
Dyscalculia
Dyslexia
Dyspraxia (DCD and motor leaning difficulties)
Gifted, talented or exceptionally able
Hearing impairment
Medical conditions
Mental Health issues (including schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, conduct disorder, self-harm, eating disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder and OCD)
Physical disabilities (genetic disorders and injury)
Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)
Visual impairment

Appendix B: Guidance on general and specific difficulties (extracted from the QAIS Staff Handbook for grades 7-10)

QAIS Guide to Differentiation

How do we differentiate?

Differentiation is about taking the core and related concepts of the curriculum and applying different approaches to learning (ATLs) to provide access for the widest range of possible students.

First of all, examine the documented information we have about our students. This should include the language profile as well as the admissions information to determine cultural experiences and educational background. Further information will be available on ManageBac.
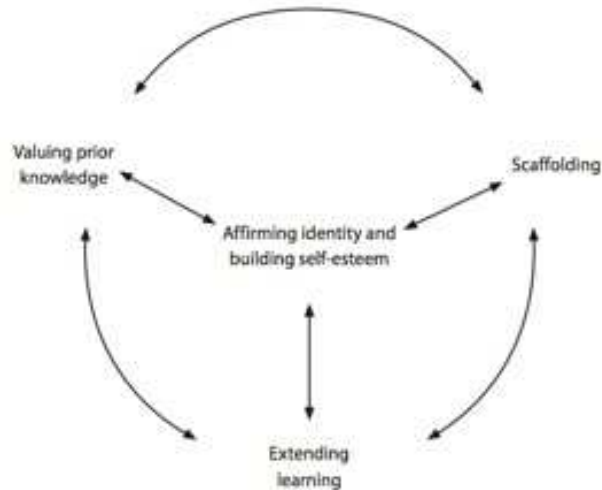
Principles of good practice for differentiated learning
(MYP: From Principles to Practice, May 2014, p.68)

- Teachers can differentiate teaching and learning by providing examples (work samples or task-specific clarifications of assessment criteria); structuring support (advance organizers, flexible grouping, peer relationships); establishing interim and flexible deadlines; and adjusting the pace of learning experiences.

- Managing student groups so that students can most effectively learn with and from each other.

- Changing aspects or elements of each task to suit individual student needs and their learning styles

- Applying differing styles of teaching, learning and management strategies

- To facilitate differentiation teachers need to give more or less teacher support to individuals and groups, and this may involve a different set of resources and challenges for different students.
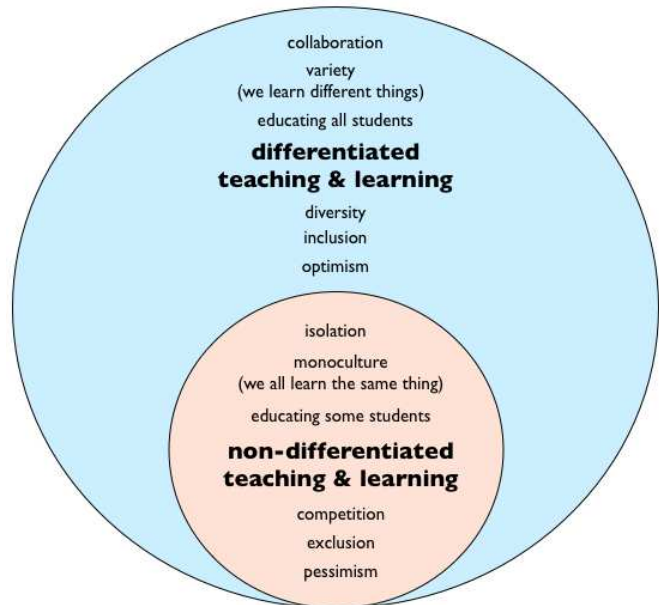
QAIS Guide to Differentiation

Benefits of differentiation?

Differentiation means identifying the learning needs of individuals and groups in your class, and developing bespoke challenges, pathways and materials for those individuals and groups.

Working towards differentiation can reframe your values and identity as an educator. In order to improve the differentiation in your teaching and learning you can try a few changes at a time to explore and develop the experience necessary to ultimately promote better learning in your classroom.

Examples of ways to differentiate

- Groupings based on motivation, knowledge, skills, and understandings

- Exploring leadership roles within the student body

- Giving more or less support to individuals or groups

- Challenging students with more or less complex tasks

- Vary the way tasks are communicated

- Change the balance of goal orientation or instruction orientation between groups and individuals.

- Change the perspective of the task for some students

- Use different amounts of motivation or cooperation in class

- Being flexible with submission dates and allowing interim agreements and arrangements

Partial resource list

Teachers need to investigate available resources and consider what additional resources might be necessary for the unit. Important resources to consider include:

- instructional materials and classroom technologies

- textbooks and other written and visual texts

- teaching materials developed by businesses and not-for-profit organizations

- educational games and simulations

- teaching aids and manipulatives

- learning environments beyond the classroom

- students' diverse languages and cultures

- families, experts and other primary sources in the school and the community

- school, university and community libraries

- digital resources, including the internet.

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