

Acceleration of Gifted Students Procedure

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1 Purpose

This Procedure applies to all schools and colleges within the Department of Education (DoE). This Procedure should be read in conjunction with the [Extended Learning for Gifted Students Procedure](#). Acceleration is one of a number of strategies available to schools for meeting the needs of gifted students. It is designed to provide a more appropriate match between a gifted student's capabilities and the level of challenge in the curriculum.

2 Overview

Acceleration is a placement strategy designed to meet the needs of highly gifted students who are not being fully engaged and/or extended by differentiated curriculum offerings at their year level. It is for students who have been formally assessed as being among the top 2 per cent of their age peers in at least one area of the curriculum. Research shows that for carefully selected gifted students there are no adverse social or emotional consequences associated with acceleration. However, it is not an appropriate strategy for all gifted students, so each case is to be considered individually¹. Acceleration needs to be approached systematically and on the basis of best evidence. The Acceleration of Gifted Students Procedure and the Extended Learning for Gifted Students Procedure describe processes required in schools to implement acceleration for gifted students.

3 Roles and Responsibilities

Acceleration is a significant intervention for a gifted student and it is crucial that school staff, parents/carers and the student work collaboratively to support its ongoing success. All students who are accelerated must have a Learning Plan (LP) developed and stored in the Student Support System (SSS).

3.1 Manager Gifted and Highly Able, Department of Education

- Provides schools with advice and resources to support the implementation of the Acceleration of Gifted Students Procedure and the Extended Learning for Gifted Students Procedure.
- Provides professional learning for supervising and classroom teachers who have accelerated students in their class.
- Provides mechanisms for tracking the progress of students who are accelerated.

3.2 Principals

- Oversee the collection of evidence about students referred for possible acceleration.
- Liaise with parents/carers, teachers and students about acceleration processes and support.
- Refer nominated students to the school psychologist for assessment as required.
- Convene a school-based group to evaluate referrals for acceleration.
- Appoint a supervising teacher to oversee the accelerated program of eligible students.
- Ensure a LP is developed for all accelerated students.

¹ Neihart, M. (2007). The Socioaffective Impact of Acceleration and Ability Grouping: Recommendations for Best Practice. *Gifted Child Quarterly*. 51 (4), 330-341.

- Explore flexible grouping options to meet the needs of accelerated students.
- Ensure relevant information about the student is entered into SSS.

3.3 Teachers

- Identify students who are not being engaged and extended at their year level and consider acceleration as a possible strategy.
- Be aware of behaviours and performance on differentiated learning tasks that may indicate gifted students who are underachieving.
- Complete checklist observations and provide samples of student work as required for evaluation for acceleration.
- Participate in school-based evaluation teams for acceleration as required.
- Implement LPs for accelerated students and liaise with their supervising teacher/s as required.

3.4 Supervising Teacher

- Work with the student to prepare them for acceleration so they know what to expect and how to access support processes that are available.
- Oversee and provide ongoing monitoring and review of the student's LP as described in DoE's [Learning Plan Procedure](#).
- Liaise with other teachers, parents/carers, mentors, and other people as needed to implement the student's LP.
- Engage with the online professional learning community to develop their understanding of the learning, social and emotional needs of accelerated students.

3.5 School Psychologists

- Assist the school principal and teachers with the identification, LP planning and support for accelerated students as required.
- Engage with the online professional learning opportunities as needed to develop their understanding of the learning, social and emotional needs of accelerated students.

3.6 Parents/carers

- Work collaboratively with their child's teacher/s and the school principal to ensure appropriate provision is made.

4 Process

4.1 Identify the need for possible acceleration

A student who is not being fully engaged and/or extended at their year level through quality differentiated teaching practice that extends the level of challenge, depth and breadth of their learning may be referred to the school principal for consideration for acceleration.

This referral can be done by educators in the school or other people who understand the student's capabilities, including school psychologists, parents/carers, students or external tutors/mentors.

4.2 Collect evidence of the current level of achievement

Before considering a student for acceleration, a range of evidence is to be collected to demonstrate the student's current level of thinking and performance and the areas in which they have strengths. This evidence must include, but not be limited to:

- standardised achievement tests (such as ACER Progressive Achievement Tests)
- external competitions (such as the Australian Mathematics Competition)
- samples of the students' work produced in the context of extended curriculum-based tasks.

Having the student complete tests designed for older students can also provide insight into the level at which they are operating. The student's current and past teacher/s must be consulted for their observations of the student, using checklists supplied where appropriate.

If a referred student has not already had a psychological assessment the principal may, with the parent/carer's permission, arrange a comprehensive, culturally sensitive, psychological assessment of the student's intellectual functioning, academic skill levels and social-emotional adjustment by a school psychologist.

4.3 Discuss acceleration with parents/carers and the student

If the evidence collected indicates that the student is placed among the top 2 per cent of their age peers in at least one area of the curriculum, the principal may discuss the possibility of being accelerated with the student and their parent/s or carer/s. The discussion is to address the nature and purpose of acceleration as well as the process, implications and support that will be provided.

If the student and/or their parents/carers do not wish to proceed with acceleration at this time, the principal is to ensure that a learning program that engages and extends the student is implemented, and relevant professional learning is offered to teaching staff.

4.4 Convene an evaluation team

If the student and their parents/carers wish to proceed, the principal is to convene a school-based team to review the evidence collated to evaluate the student's suitability for acceleration. The team is to include, but not be limited to, the student's current teacher/s, receiving teacher/s, school psychologist and a person with expertise in gifted education.

4.5 Evaluate the student's suitability for acceleration

If the information collected indicates the student is among the top 2 per cent of their age peers in one or two areas of learning and not in others, the evaluation team may consider them for learning area (subject) acceleration only in subjects related to those areas of strength.

If the information collected indicates the student is among the top 2 per cent of their age peers across all learning areas, the evaluation team may consider the student for year level acceleration.

4.6 Notify parents/carers and the student

The principal is to notify the student and parents/carers of the decision made by the evaluation team concerning acceleration and provide details of the program and support that is to be put in place.

The timing for the acceleration to occur must be decided in such a way that it minimises disruption for the student and maximises their chances of success.

4.7 Appoint a supervising teacher

If learning area (subject) or year level acceleration is approved by the evaluation team, the principal is to appoint a staff member to oversee the acceleration. This staff member must be someone who can positively support, monitor, review and oversee the student's Learning Plan.

A LP is to be prepared with the student and their parents/carers according to the principles and processes detailed in DoE's [Learning Plan Procedure](#).

4.8 Professional learning for teacher/s

The principal is to ensure that the supervising and receiving teacher/s and any other relevant staff members, engage with professional learning to develop their understanding of the learning, social and emotional needs of gifted students who have been accelerated.

4.9 Transition and tracking

The LP and the information collected for evaluating the student for acceleration is to be entered into SSS to provide access to the information for current and future teachers, principals and school psychologists.

4.10 Assessment and reporting

Reporting for learning area (subject) acceleration

Students who have been taught the curriculum for a higher year level in just some learning areas/subjects, may be exempt from assessment at their year level for those subjects. In this case, the report is to be made against the outcomes identified for the subject/s in the student's LP.

Reporting for year level acceleration

The reporting process for year level accelerated students is the same as for other students in the year level to which they have been accelerated, with reference being made to the student's LP as appropriate.

5 Related policies

- Nil

6 Related procedures

- [Enrolment Procedure](#)
- [Extended Learning for Gifted Students Procedures](#)
- [Learning Plan Procedure](#)
- [Learning Plan IEP Template](#)

7 Supporting information/tools

- Further information about Acceleration is available on the DoE website at [Gifted Support](#).

8 Definitions

Gifted Students

Students who are gifted have the capacity for advanced development relative to their age peers in at least one ability domain (cognitive, physical, creative, or social), to a degree that that places them at least among the top 10 per cent of their age peers.

Acceleration

Acceleration allows a student to move through educational programs and structures (such as the year-based Australian Curriculum) at a more rapid pace than usual, based on their readiness and motivation. It acknowledges that the student has the potential to achieve at a higher year level and that further instruction in what has already been mastered is not beneficial. Acceleration is for students who have been formally assessed as being among the top 2 per cent of their age peers.

Learning area (subject) acceleration

Provides access to higher year level curriculum in a student's area/s of strength, while working at year level for the rest of the time.

Year level acceleration

Also known as grade-skipping, involves full-time placement with a higher year group, so that all curriculum offerings are studied at the higher year level with older peers.

Early entry to kindergarten

Early entry to kindergarten is a form of year level acceleration for gifted young children entering kindergarten. Early entry procedures for schools are addressed in the [Enrolment Procedure](#) section 12.

Learning Plan (LP)

Acceleration is a significant adjustment to a gifted student's education program and a Learning Plan (LP) must be collaboratively developed with the accelerated student and their family. The LP will describe, document, monitor, review and report on the educational adjustments and learning outcomes in place.

9 Legislation

- [Ministerial Instruction No. 15 Early Entry to School](#)

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