



# Sheldon College



## *Academic Talent Development Program*



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Founder and Principal/CEO

# Academic Talent Development Program

At Sheldon College, we understand that we are the environmental catalyst to allow all students to realise their potential and achieve personal academic excellence.

Our Framework is founded on evidence-based learning theories of gifted education and the Framework for Gifted Education (Education Qld, 2009).

We define:

**Giftedness** as the possession and use of outstanding natural abilities, called aptitudes, in at least one ability domain, to a degree that places an individual at least among the top 10% of age peers.

**Talent** as the outstanding mastery of systematically developed abilities, called competencies (knowledge and skills), in at least one field of human activity to a degree that places an individual at least among the top 10 % of age peers who are, or have been, active in that field.

These definitions reflect the distinction between ability and performance by acknowledging the importance of innate ability whilst also recognising the important influence of the environment and other factors in the development of a person's giftedness and talent.

Source: Gagné, François. (2008). *Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent*.

This document outlines the Academic Talent Development Framework which focuses on the development of students' natural abilities in the Intellectual, Creative, Social and Perceptual domains.

We value the importance of catering for these high achieving and gifted students by investing in the appointment of a Co-ordinator for the Academic Talent Development Program.

The roles and responsibilities of this key support person include:

- Providing professional development opportunities for teachers
- Supporting parents in the identification of their child's/children's gifts and in catering for the emotional needs of these children
- Supporting teachers and parents in recommending psychological assessments of students
- Unpacking psychological assessment reports and developing Action Plans or Individual Educational Plans
- Participating in meetings with parents and teachers in deciding the best ways of catering for their academically talented child's/children's special needs
- Overseeing targeted extension programs within the College and externally

The strategic components of the Academic Talent Development Program include:

- Targeted extension programs
- Flexible groupings
- Differentiation of student learning

For further information, please contact the Co-ordinator for Academic Talent Development at Sheldon College on 3206 5555.



# Strategic Component 1

## Targeted Extension Programs

The purpose of extension programs is to provide the appropriate level of academic challenge for the intellectual, social and emotional needs of students. Academically talented students are best served by a curriculum that incorporates both accelerated and enriched learning. (Van Tassel Baska, 2003).

Targeted Extension programs include:

- Classroom programs
- Co-curricular and extra-curricular programs
- Accessing external programs

The College philosophy for extension is based purely on understanding the different needs of individual children. It is an evidence-based approach that is relevant and important for all students within our classes.

It is expected that teachers carefully plan extension opportunities for students after students demonstrate consolidation of core content and skills. **Extension opportunities are developed using Gagne's Four D's:**

- Greater **depth** of curriculum expectations and coverage
- More **density** (compacting of curriculum or moving through the curriculum at a faster pace)
- Greater **diversity** or range of curriculum
- A higher level of **difficulty** including increasing complexity and abstract thinking

It is clear to see that this multi-layered approach, shared among parents, teachers and paraprofessionals, ensures we are addressing the individual needs of our children to ensure they reach their academic potential.



# Strategic Component 2

## Flexible Groupings

The benefits of grouping children with like abilities have been well documented by Gifted Education experts such as Professor Miraca Gross, Emeritus Professor of Gifted Education in UNSW's School of Education as well as Director of GERRIC, among others. The pace, depth and rigour at which these students can work is much greater and consequently more powerful in terms of student success, challenge and motivation. Movement between classes should therefore be seen as an integral part of catering for the individual needs of our children.

At Sheldon College, we believe students are not gifted for just 70 mins a week. Rather than withdrawing students for one lesson a week, Sheldon College extends students in the classroom on a daily basis.

A range of flexible groupings is formulated across all areas of the College based on students' academic and personal learning needs:

- Ability groupings within classes
- General Academic Extension classes for Years 3 to 6
- Subject Specific Extension Classes for Year 7 and beyond
- Subject acceleration
- Year level acceleration



## Strategic Component 3

### Differentiation of Student Learning

Students in all classes are challenged according to their specific needs with all teachers endorsing our commitment to individual excellence. At Sheldon College, we use the Maker Model of Differentiation (1982) to differentiate the curriculum in the following ways:

- **Content** - The knowledge and skills taught to students. These may differ in abstraction, complexity, translation or application.
- **Process** - The way in which students learn the new content and skills. Students will use higher order thinking and inquiry approaches to learning.
- **Product** - The task or outcomes expected of the student to demonstrate the student's learning. These include student selected formats, real world applications or activities directed towards a real world audience.
- **Learning Environment** - The physical setting and emotional climate in which the learning takes place. It may include flexible groupings, student-centred learning, independent or collaborative learning, online learning (synchronous or asynchronous).

Students in all classes are also challenged according to their specific needs with all teachers endorsing our commitment to individual excellence.



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