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**Professional standards for accomplished teaching of  
languages and cultures**

**Language specific annotations: Chinese**

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## Standards and annotations

In 2005 the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations (AFMLTA) developed a set of professional standards which were published as *Professional standards for accomplished teaching of languages and cultures*. These *Standards* were designed to reflect the high levels of achievement of accomplished teachers of languages.

The development of the *Standards* was part of a project funded by the then Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST). As a part of this project annotations of the *Standards* were developed for Indonesian as part of a collaborative process with Indonesian teachers. The original project did not envisage the development of annotations for other languages; however, the experience of the Indonesian teachers in this project indicated that the annotations were very useful in supporting their work with the *Standards* in reflecting on their own practice.

In a second project on professional standards, which began in 2007, the AFMLTA decided that it was important to extend the number of languages for which annotations were available. This project, which was funded by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) developed annotations for a further six languages: Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese and Spanish.

The annotations were developed through a collaborative process in which accomplished teachers from around Australia considered how the AFMLTA *Standards* applied to the teaching of these languages. The resulting annotations have many similarities and differences across languages. In developing these annotations it was felt that it was important to remain as faithful as possible to the issues and ideas raised by the participating teachers for each language rather than attempting to “level out” the annotations and develop greater consistency across languages. This means that the annotations can be seen as a particular understanding of the *Standards* as they apply to teaching a particular language at a particular moment in time. This is an especially important feature for annotations as they are not themselves standards, but rather a working through of the implications of standards. The annotations should therefore not be thought of as definitive statements about language teaching and learning, but rather as guides and starting points for teachers of particular languages in working with the *Standards*. It is expected that each teacher or group of teachers working with these annotations will develop their own personal versions of these annotations as they apply in their own teaching context.

# Teacher standards: Chinese Annotations

## Preface to the Chinese language annotations

These annotations were prepared in consultation with accomplished teachers of Chinese. They have been developed with reference to the levels of knowledge expected of an experienced and capable language teacher. This means that they do not represent a base level of knowledge or dispositions but rather are intended to guide teachers' professional learning over the course of their career. They are therefore aspirational statements of what accomplished teachers of Chinese understand to be indicative of an exemplary teacher of Chinese.

While the AFMLTA *Standards* apply equally to all teachers, these annotations should not be read as implying that all teachers of Chinese will use their knowledge in the same ways. It must be recognised that the opportunities that individual teachers have to use and develop their professional capability as a teacher of Chinese will be different.

The AFMLTA *Standards* are designed to be generic across languages and for many of the individual standards there are no specific annotations which apply only to Chinese. It is the standards listed under the heading **Language and culture** which are the most relevant for the Chinese-specific annotations. In those parts of the annotations which deal with knowledge of language and culture, we have used as a baseline, the knowledge that non-native speaker teachers should be expected to have to be effective teachers of Chinese, recognising that native speakers and non-native speakers acquire their knowledge of the language and culture in different ways. However, it is emphasised that the annotations regarding specific knowledge of language and culture apply to all teachers independently of their language background.

In some cases, the teachers of Chinese working to develop the annotations felt that there were some issues which were not strictly specific to Chinese, but which they wished to highlight as important considerations for the teaching and learning of Chinese. This is indicated in the text of the annotations. These annotations should not be considered to be unique to Chinese or to be the only ways that the *Standards* themselves apply to Chinese. In the teaching and learning of Chinese the script represents a particular challenge and aspects of the teaching of writing in particular are specific to the teaching and learning of Chinese.

In reading the annotations for Chinese, it is important to remember that Chinese is spoken in many societies. This means that teachers of Chinese must engage with this diversity. It is not possible for any teacher of Chinese to know either through experience or education about all of these societies; however, teachers need to be aware of the diverse nature of the Chinese-speaking communities in various countries.

For Chinese it is important also to consider the place the language and its cultures has in Australian society as the result of immigration. In particular for Chinese it is necessary to consider the nature of teachers' and learners' connections with the language and culture. Some teachers and students may speak Chinese as a first language, others may be background speakers with more limited experiences of the language and culture, others may speak a regional variety of Chinese but not the standard language (Putonghua), still others may have no prior attachment to Chinese prior to learning the language through the education system. This means that the teaching and learning of Chinese in Australia is complex and that teachers need to consider and respond to the diversity of learners and what they bring to their learning. The diversity of teachers is also an important feature of the teaching of Chinese in Australia and it is important to recognise and value the different capabilities and experiences which this diversity of teachers brings to the profession.

## Teacher standards which have Chinese-specific annotations

### Language and culture

<p>Accomplished languages and cultures teachers are both users and teachers of linguistic and cultural knowledge.</p> <p>They have knowledge of the language(s) and culture(s) they teach which enables them to participate readily in interactions in the language in and out of the classroom. In addition, they have a developed intercultural awareness and know how to communicate across languages and cultures.</p> <p>They are actively involved in maintaining and developing their knowledge of the language and culture they teach and seek out opportunities to use their knowledge and to keep up to date with how the language and culture are used in target language communities.</p>	<p>Accomplished teachers of Chinese are able to use Chinese in a range of classroom-related functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ using Putonghua in a principled way for regular classroom management/organisation, instruction and discussing and creating a classroom environment appropriate to the needs of students</li> <li>○ knowing the language and culture of some pedagogically relevant topics for the age group they are teaching</li> <li>○ using sustained Putonghua in relevant classroom genres and demonstrating the ability to model these for students</li> <li>○ using appropriate written texts in relevant classroom genres and demonstrating the ability to model these for students</li> <li>○ recognising and using instances of Chinese language and culture to raise awareness of more general issues of language, culture and diversity</li> <li>○ teaching through Putonghua using vocabulary, syntax and discourse structures relevant to the age and level of their learners</li> </ul> <p>Accomplished teachers of Chinese have the ability to use Chinese outside classroom contexts, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ managing the transactional needs of basic living and travelling in Chinese-speaking communities</li> <li>○ engaging in casual conversation in Putonghua with speakers of Putonghua including non-native speakers including making telephone calls</li> <li>○ participating in some formal language contexts (such as visiting a school or meeting local community members)</li> <li>○ watching television broadcasts and listening to radio programs with a general understanding of the gist. (However, in news broadcasts and current affairs, aspects such as assumed knowledge, speed of delivery, specialised vocabulary, acronyms, etc require a greater linguistic and cultural repertoire than is needed for teaching)</li> <li>○ using contemporary media (e.g. magazines, internet, television, films, etc.) for enjoyment</li> <li>○ reading and writing informal e-mails and/or letters</li> <li>○ understanding the gist of newspaper and magazine articles for own purposes</li> <li>○ identifying, analysing and reproducing characters and words including using a bilingual dictionary</li> </ul>
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<p>They have explicit knowledge and a working understanding of the linguistic and cultural systems of the language and how these systems work in the social lives of people.</p>	<p>They have explicit knowledge of the linguistic system of Putonghua and demonstrate this in their teaching, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ principles of word formation (e.g. compound words)</li> <li>○ principles of sentence structure (word order, conjunctions, connectives, etc.)</li> <li>○ placement and use of particles, aspect/tense markers, prepositions and complements</li> <li>○ the sound system of Putonghua (sounds, tones, syllables)</li> <li>○ knowledge of and accurate use of pinyin to represent spoken language</li> <li>○ the orthographic system of Modern Standard Chinese language</li> <li>○ the principles of character formation (strokes, components, radicals)</li> <li>○ recognising the characteristics of simplified and traditional character systems</li> <li>○ knowledge of characters found in school contexts and the ability to write them accurately</li> </ul> <p>They have explicit knowledge of aspects of Chinese language use e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ recognising the effect of context on language use and linguistic meaning</li> <li>○ understanding of common Chinese politeness conventions and how they may vary according to regions</li> <li>○ understanding the relevance and use of idiomatic expressions (e.g. four character expressions)</li> <li>○ understanding the features of common Chinese text types</li> </ul>
<p>They understand the relationship between language and culture and have an awareness and understanding of the role of language and culture in human interaction and identity. They use this knowledge to enhance their teaching.</p>	<p>They have awareness of some fundamental aspects of Chinese values, attitudes and linguistic and cultural practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ awareness of the role of belief systems and their contribution to/impact on contemporary life.</li> <li>○ awareness of Chinese society in transition between traditional and modern perspectives and how this affects Chinese identities, practices and language.</li> <li>○ awareness of the impact of history, demography, and geography on Chinese ways of life.</li> <li>○ awareness of the relationship between traditional and simplified character systems, and the regions where these are used.</li> <li>○ awareness and appreciation of the presence of non-Chinese groups/communities in Chinese-speaking societies.</li> <li>○ awareness of Chinese views and attitudes towards other cultures and the ways in which these influence interactions with them</li> </ul>



## Teacher standards which are generic but which have special considerations for Chinese teaching and learning

### *Language pedagogy*

<p>Accomplished teachers have a developed understanding of the language learning process. Their understanding comes from their formal and informal learning about teaching and learning and also from their own experiences of being a language learner and user, either of the language they teach or of another language.</p> <p>They have knowledge of current developments in language learning and teaching research and develop their knowledge further by engaging in professional learning, professional reading and/or research.</p> <p>They use their knowledge of language and culture in order to promote learning in ways which are appropriate for learners in context and which cater for the diversity of abilities among their students, using authentic language and resources.</p> <p>They create a culture of learning in their classrooms which fosters interest in languages and cultures and encourages learners to accept responsibility for their own learning.</p> <p>They have at their disposal a range of methodologies for languages and cultures teaching and in their practice select from these in a principled way, taking into consideration the learners, the learning context, curriculum goals, and the aspect of language being taught. These choices are made at both the overall level of planning and in teaching in the classroom.</p> <p>They have a view of curriculum in which planning, teaching, resourcing, assessing, evaluating and renewing are done coherently according to a principled approach to languages and cultures teaching. Accomplished teaching is reflected by an ability to explain the choices being made in planning and teaching.</p> <p>Their approach to assessment examines understanding, learning, and performance, and uses assessment to foster learning as well as to evaluate learning. They know and use a range of assessment approaches and select assessment tasks which are appropriate to the purposes of the assessment and use the assessment for effective feedback and reporting.</p> <p>They are informed and critical users of technology in language teaching and use technology both to support learning and as a basis for learning to communicate using technologies.</p>	<p>These standards are generic to all languages; however, there appear to be some issues particularly relevant to Chinese.</p> <p>Accomplished teachers of Chinese:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ construct rich language and culture learning environment using a wide range of media and text types</li><li>○ expose learners to a diverse range of authentic language in written texts</li><li>○ construct and reflect on links between languages and cultures recognising that students are physically removed from the Chinese language and cultural context</li><li>○ reflect the differences between written and spoken language in Chinese</li><li>○ provide a balance between written and spoken language use</li><li>○ model relevant strategies of learning and using Chinese (for example, analysing compound words for word stems and using a dictionary to find character and word meanings)</li><li>○ model relevant strategies of learning and using characters, including analysing the structural and functional properties of components in characters, and attention to stroke number, order and direction in character writing</li><li>○ recognise what is missing in the ways textbooks present Chinese and provide material to enrich students exposure to and familiarity with a range of usages of Chinese</li><li>○ provide access to a range of genres, at least for receptive purposes</li><li>○ develop autonomy in and strategies for language learning</li><li>○ recognise and are responsive to the culture of learning and teaching found in Australian schools</li></ul>
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### ***Ethics and responsibility***

<p>Accomplished languages and cultures teachers take responsibility for the teaching and learning relationship and for social and cultural relationships in their teaching.</p> <p>They have a developed knowledge of their current groups of students, and strategies at their disposal to get to know new groups each term.</p> <p>They establish trust between teacher and learners which fosters an empathetic view of self and others.</p> <p>They know and reflect on their own values and ideological positions and demonstrate respect for the different values of learners, communities and cultures.</p> <p>They seek to enable students to understand issues from multiple perspectives so that they can make their own choices and judgments.</p>	<p>These standards are generic to all languages. However, there appear to be some issues particularly relevant to Chinese:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ commitment to explore the implications of Australia's geographical location in the Asian region and of its social and economic relationships with Chinese-speaking communities</li><li>○ commitment to dealing with aspects of ethnicity when introducing students to Chinese cultures</li><li>○ commitment to challenging stereotypes</li><li>○ commitment to managing conflicts which may occur in Australian classrooms where Chinese language and culture are presented, particularly conflicts relating to stereotypes presented through media and political discourse</li><li>○ mediation between Chinese language and culture and the language and culture of learners and school communities</li></ul>
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### ***Professional relationships***

<p>Accomplished languages and cultures teachers are part of a professional educational community and they establish professional relationships with other languages and cultures teachers, with teachers in other disciplines, with students, with parents and with school communities.</p> <p>They contribute to the profession in a range of ways which work to develop a culture of professionalism.</p> <p>Professional relationships are manifested by links to and collaboration with other teachers in their schools and in the wider educational community and accomplished teachers actively network with other languages and cultures teachers informally and through professional associations.</p> <p>They actively participate in mentoring more junior teachers.</p> <p>They undertake leadership in language-related areas locally, regionally, nationally or internationally.</p>	<p>These standards are generic and have no language specific applications in Chinese teaching and learning. However, there is a need in professional relationships to develop inclusivity, cohesiveness and collaboration between teachers of Chinese, valuing the contributions that all teachers bring to the field from both second/foreign language and native speaker perspectives.</p>
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### ***Advocacy***

<p>Accomplished languages and cultures teachers are advocates for language learning, intercultural communication and intercultural sensitivity, linguistic and cultural diversity.</p> <p>They are advocates for languages both with and for students, schools and communities and engage with wider community to promote languages.</p>	<p>These standards are generic. However, in the context of Chinese there may be particular need to counter the community perception of Chinese as a difficult language and to encourage second language learners to continue their language study to higher levels.</p>
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## **Teacher standards which are generic and have no language specific annotations for Chinese teaching and learning**

### ***Educational theory and practice***

Accomplished languages and cultures teachers have knowledge of child/learner development appropriate to the level at which they teach and apply this knowledge in all aspects of their teaching.

They engage with current theories of education, general principles of teaching and learning, and classroom management. They keep up to date with developments in the field of education through professional learning and professional reading.

They are aware of the culture of schooling in the contexts in which they teach. They actively engage with education policies, and curriculum frameworks. They are able to locate languages within a wider educational context, creating connections with other curriculum areas and with extracurricular activities.

### ***Active engagement with wider context***

Languages and cultures teaching is fundamentally about relationships to wider contexts and the ability to connect the local to the global.

Accomplished languages and cultures teachers actively engage with the social, political, economic, and technological climate of the times.

They are able to connect with a wider sphere of understanding of how languages and language learning relate to wider global realities.

They are aware of the impact of languages and cultures on the local and global context and on how people understand their place in the world.

They foster learners' active engagement with such broader issues and prepare their students to become knowledgeable and responsible adult participants in the global community.

### ***Personal characteristics***

Accomplished languages and cultures teachers are passionate about languages and cultures and about teaching.

They have a commitment to their own continuing professional and personal learning.

They connect and engage with their learners and inspire students and others.

They have a belief in their students as emerging bilinguals/multilinguals developing the knowledge and awareness they need to become effective intercultural communicators.

They adopt a critical stance on their own work and to themselves as mediators of languages and cultures, which they demonstrate through reflection, questioning, inquiry and/or research into their practices, values and beliefs.



## Program standards

Effective languages and cultures programs rely on the availability of effective teachers. However, while teachers are central to promoting students' learning, the work of teachers is affected by the conditions in which they work and these conditions in turn affect the quality of teaching possible in a particular setting. The AFMLTA believes that quality teaching results from a collective responsibility for quality languages and cultures programs from teachers, administrators and school communities. Program standards are therefore central to a description of teaching standards.

Effective languages and cultures programs are actively valued within the school culture. Languages and cultures teaching and learning are valued explicitly in schools' statements and implicitly in the schools' planning, timetabling and resourcing for languages. Schools actively acknowledge and foster connections between languages and other curriculum areas.

Effective languages and cultures programs focus on progression in language learning both during the year and across years. They acknowledge learners' movement through the program and ensure that prior knowledge is maintained and developed. They recognise that language learning is a life-long process and needs sustained learning during schooling.

Effective languages and cultures programs have timetabling for languages and cultures which allocates adequate time to languages to enable effective and sustained language learning, recognising that achievement in language learning is dependent on time on task. Effective timetabling also gives attention to the frequency and regularity of language lessons.

Effective languages and cultures programs are adequately staffed to ensure that language learning can be allocated adequate curriculum time and language class sizes can be limited. Ideally there should more than one teacher of a language in a school. Staffing models using itinerant teachers have a direct impact on program quality as they prevent teachers from forming effective professional relations with students, other teachers and the wider school community, and prevent teachers from teaching as effectively as they could in more stable and better supported work environments.

Effective languages and cultures programs are characterised by the allocation of dedicated space which is suitable for languages and cultures teaching and learning.

Effective languages and cultures programs have budgets which ensure appropriate access to resources for languages and cultures teaching and learning, including print-based and multimedia materials, reference books such as dictionaries, and information technology and library resources.

Effective languages and cultures programs recognise the practical and performance-based nature of language learning and the need for class sizes which are appropriate for facilitating language learning as a practical and intensive form of learning. The creation of language class groups should also take into consideration the learning histories of students, their previous experiences of language learning and their background.

Effective languages and cultures programs recognise that students transferring between schools and schooling systems arrive with differing levels of knowledge of and exposure to the languages and cultures taught in the school and have strategies to facilitate transitions and enhance learning.

These standards are generic. However, in Chinese teaching and learning it is necessary for schools to clearly distinguish the program requirements for foreign/ second language learners from those pertaining to background/native speaker learners. This is likely to have an impact on course design and content, methods, pedagogy, assessment and resources.

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