

TEACHING AND LEARNING AUDIT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY –

QUEENSLAND ACADEMY FOR HEALTH SCIENCES

DATE OF AUDIT: 15-16 MAY 2013



Background:

The Queensland Academy for Health Sciences (QAHS) was established in 2008 and is located in Southport, on the Gold Coast, adjacent to Griffith University. QAHS caters for high performing students in Years 10 - 12 who wish to accelerate their academic studies particularly in areas including the sciences, humanities, business and health.

Commendations:

- Since the previous Teaching and Learning Audit there has been significant improvement particularly in the domains of Analysis and Discussion of Data, An Expert Teaching Team, and Differentiated Classroom Learning.
- The Target 40+ database provides a wealth of information about student achievement and targets. Data is systematically analysed and reviewed and is used to track individual student and class progress. It is also used by teachers to inform the starting points for their teaching.
- The focus upon collegial engagement and the development of an expert teaching team through the use of professional learning Quads to provide quality observation and written feedback from line managers, colleagues and 360 degree feedback from students, the Student Voice.
- The school ethos that is built around high expectations and a commitment to academic excellence.
- The extensive partnerships that have been developed, including with Griffith University (and other universities), local primary and secondary schools, SMART WATER, and a range of community groups engaged through the subject creativity action service (CAS), in addition to the Young Scholars' program.
- The teacher designed schools' focus, involving full staff participation in order to develop a vision and core values for the Academy as a basis for all decision making, policies, procedures and practices.
- The student leadership program, Leadership Learning @ QAHS, with a focus upon the development of students as tomorrow's leaders,
- The extent of staff participation in the cube conversations to enhance the development of teacher pedagogy and to develop teachers as instructional leaders.
- The extensive differentiation that is evident in teaching practices, reflecting a commitment and focus to cater for the needs of all students.

Affirmations:

- The articulation of learning goals by teachers to clarify the learning intentions for each lesson.
- The completion of the 'It's all about me' templates by students to review academic progress and to identify specific learning goals for each subject, as well as to identify strategies for continuous improvement. These plans are also reviewed by parents and monitored through the Mentor Learning Communities.
- The extensive commitment by teachers to enhancing the learning experiences of students through the provision of after school and weekend tutorials.
- The introduction of certificate courses – Certificate III in Volunteering and Cert III in Laboratory Skills to enhance student outcomes.
- The development and the implementation of the Gifted and Talented Action Plan to cater for the needs of gifted students.

Recommendations:

- Expand the existing system of classroom observation and feedback to include a model of coaching and mentoring that aligns with the pedagogical framework and will continue to develop and improve teacher pedagogical practice.
- Continue to use the data provided in the Target 40+ database as a starting point for teaching and expand its use to monitor the effectiveness of teaching strategies and as evidence of successful teaching.
- Develop individual learning plans for students with special needs, including students whose learning has been accelerated, and locate these documents centrally for ease of access by all teachers.
- Continue to market QAHS as a school of excellence for Queensland's bright minds to ensure a continued growth in student enrolments.
- Continue to develop and implement strategies for differentiation and share the exemplary practice and expertise that exists within the teaching staff members.