



ASPIRE CHINESE
PROGRAM HANDBOOK

History and Rationale

The ASPIRE Chinese Program (offered to students since 2016; previously our Chinese Immersion program started in 2005) presents students the unique opportunity to deepen and extend the complexity of their acquisition of Chinese language through the middle years of their schooling. With Chinese/Australian relations continually strengthening, both in terms of trade and tourism, a knowledge of the Chinese language will open a world of opportunity, culturally and professionally, for students lucky enough to be a part of this exciting program.

Learning languages contributes to and enriches students' intellectual, educational, literacy, personal, social and cultural development. Because students need to change the way they think to learn a second language, they develop cognitive flexibility and problem-solving ability. Language study gives insights into the nature, purposes and styles of language and promotes a greater sensitivity to and understanding of languages in general, including English.

Linguistics studies and research has shown that:

- Children who begin learning a second language before adolescence exhibit more nativelike pronunciation and are more likely to become fluent speakers.
- Foreign language study, especially when introduced in the school years, is associated with benefits of increased cognitive skills and higher achievement in other academic areas
- Learning a second language leaves children with a mental flexibility, superiority in concept formation, and a more diversified set of mental abilities.

Command of two or more languages bolsters the ability of students to focus in the face of distraction, decide between competing alternatives, and disregard irrelevant information.

Why Chinese?

Chinese is the world's most widely spoken language. Having a comprehensive knowledge of this language, and a deep appreciation of its unique culture, provides a range of short- and long-term opportunities for the students involved in the Varsity College ASPIRE Chinese Program.

- Chinese is the world's most widely spoken language and is one of the few official languages of the United Nations
- China forms a significant part of Australasia
- The Chinese community has been a significant part of Australian society since the 19th century
- China is Australia's biggest trade partner;

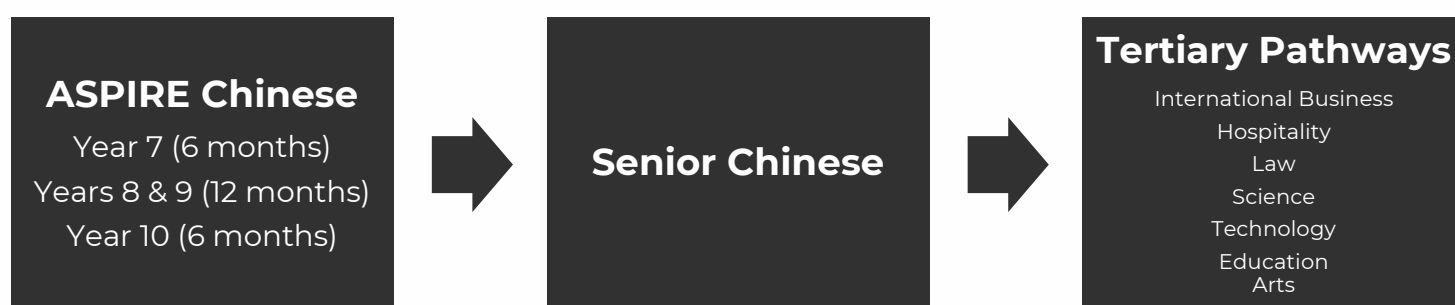
Proficiency in Chinese can lead to:

- A wide range of career opportunities both nationally and internationally, including interpreting, diplomatic work, foreign embassy work
- Confidence and competence when interacting with Chinese people in Australia and overseas
- Creates an opportunity and desire to learn other foreign languages and experience other cultures

Goals and Purpose

The purpose of ASPIRE Chinese is to offer an extended program of language study that will accelerate students' language acquisition and provide them with a relevant and meaningful level of Chinese for their future career paths. In addition to a deeper and richer curriculum, ASPIRE Chinese will provide extra-curricular experiences and authentic learning environments in our Griffith University Confucius Classrooms that will enrich students' language learning and develop their cultural and linguistic experience far beyond that of a mainstream program.

A course of study in Chinese can establish a basis for further education and employment in many professions and industries, particularly those where the knowledge of an additional language and the intercultural understanding it encompasses, could be of value, such as business, hospitality, law, science, technology, sociology, and education.



Key Personnel

ASPIRE Chinese Coordinator and Teacher

Selina Zhao – szhao16@eq.edu.au

Selina is an experienced Senior Chinese teacher who coordinates our ASPIRE Chinese program. Selina has fantastic relationships with the students, and delivers language instruction of the highest quality.

ASPIRE Chinese Teacher and Confucius Classroom Coordinator

Debbie Li - fli4@eq.edu.au

Debbie is a Foundation Teacher of the ASPIRE Chinese Program. Debbie teaches in our Junior and Senior Chinese and ASPIRE Chinese subjects, and coordinates our activities and partnership with the Tourism Confucius Institute of Griffith University.

Program Overview

The ASPIRE Chinese Program offers an deeper program of language study for students that integrates advanced language study with comprehensive, authentic extra-curricular opportunities:

- A faster paced introduction and progression through language structures
- Full year language program with double the time allocation to that of mainstream Chinese
- Full access to Confucius Classroom resources, workshops and programs
- A more rigorous and real world assessment program that strengthens students' language abilities

Extra-curricular opportunities exclusive to ASPIRE Chinese Students:

- Participation in the Education Perfect Program where students can practice their language skills through online, interactive platform used by more than 1000 schools from around the world. Varsity were named World Champions for this competition in 2014.
- Language Speaking Competitions through CLTAQ, MLTAQ, QUT and Griffith University
- Language Workshops and Camps through affiliated universities (Griffith, UQ, QUT)
- Participation in cultural activities
- Peer teaching and mentoring with Friendship Schools in China, and our Primary Campus Chinese program
- Experiences such as Buddha's Birthday Celebration, Chinese Food Experience.

Partnerships and Industry Links

The ASPIRE Chinese Program is strongly affiliated with the Griffith University Tourism Confucius Institute. This partnership allows for a tertiary experience for students including workshops, summer language programs, and scholarships for China Study Tours and of course the development and maintenance of our Confucius Classrooms. Varsity College is one of six schools across Australia that was selected to develop these classrooms which provide authentic learning environments, innovative language resources and staff professional development. More information about the Tourism Confucius Institute can be found at <https://www.griffith.edu.au/tourism-confucius-institute>.



Varsity has also recently joined the QUT Confucius Program as a partner school, providing students with further extra-curricular learning opportunities.

Student Selection Criteria

Successful applicants for the ASPIRE Chinese Program will need to demonstrate (and provide supporting documentation for):

- Complete and submit ASPIRE Chinese Application Form
- A or B across 4 core areas (English, Mathematics, Science and Social Science)
- A or B in study of Language (not necessarily Chinese)
- Very high standard of behaviour and effort across all subject areas

Upon completion of the selection process, staff and specialist teachers will decide on the suitability of each applicant. Successful applicants will be notified by the school and the school's decision will be final.

Expectations and Commitment to Program Requirements

The ASPIRE Programs are committed to providing and maintaining a high performing and supportive learning environment for all their students. Being a part of the ASPIRE Programs is a privilege, and students involved in the programs must value and respect their placement. To this end, ASPIRE students will endeavour to perform at the highest level across the global ASPIRE performance areas:

Academic (classroom and extra-curricular)

- Maintain high academic standards. This is considered a 'B' grade across all relevant ASPIRE subjects.
- Maintain no lower than a 'C' grade in all other subjects.
- Submit all assessment, completed and by the due date.

Behavior and Effort

- Maintain a very high standard of behaviour and effort across all subject areas.
- Respect teachers and fellow students at all times.
- Be punctual and prepared for all lessons.
- Display high levels of appropriate behaviour at all times, not only during ASPIRE lessons, but with all Varsity College staff (teaching and corporate services), contract and supply teachers.

Culture

- Students understand they bear responsibility as an ambassador of the ASPIRE Programs to be seen as a positive role model to others within the local community.
- Maintain a high level of school attendance in order to maintain learning standards.
- Active participation in competitions, events, activities and excursions related to the ASPIRE Programs.
- Maintain high uniform standards in line with the Varsity College Appearance Policy.
- Be accepting and tolerant of all students.
- Show modesty and humility when interacting with students.

Upon acceptance of a position in an ASPIRE Program, students and parents will demonstrate a commitment to the Expectations and Commitment to Program Requirements by signing and returning the Student / Parent Agreement (Appendix 1).

Maintenance of Position in Program

Successful applicants for the ASPIRE Chinese Program will need to demonstrate (and provide supporting documentation for):

- Consistent lateness.
- Truancy, repeated detentions, after school detentions, suspension.
- Failure to submit assessment on a regular basis (monitoring and due dates).
- Failure to meet academic, behaviour and effort standards as outlined in the Expectations and Commitment to Program Requirements.
- Failure to meet the financial commitment of ASPIRE Program.

The ASPIRE Review Process for students consistently not meeting expectations is completed at the end of the term. The following procedures are then implemented:

- These students and their parents contacted by either the ASPIRE AMS Coordinator or the Head of Department where expectations of the program will be discussed. Specific targets will be identified, and it is the student's responsibility to meet these.
- The student will be placed on probation for the following term. If students fail to meet their targets throughout this period, their enrolment in the program will be cancelled, and they will be placed in a mainstream class for the remainder of the year.

Application Process

The Varsity College ASPIRE Program applicants are required to:

- Complete the online ASPIRE Program Application which can be found on the Varsity College website.
- Upload all required documentation as required and submit by the closing date.

Please note that incomplete applications will not be accepted.

- All Applications must be received no later than **27th March 2023**.
- You will receive further correspondence about testing dates and times once your application has been received and processed.

Upon completion of the application process, staff and specialist teachers will decide on the suitability of each applicant. Successful applicants will be notified by the school and the **school's decision will be final**.

APPENDIX 1: Student Parent Agreement

Student Agreement

I understand the purpose of the ASPIRE Program is to select and retain the most highly motivated and knowledgeable students who will maintain the level of commitment, dedication and interest necessary to successfully achieve quality learning outcomes in their program of study.

The ASPIRE Program will create and maintain a learning environment of like-minded students that will support me in achieving my personal and academic goals in my program of study.

1. In all areas of college life, I understand that I bear responsibility as an ambassador of the ASPIRE Program to be seen as a positive role model to others within the local community.
2. I will endeavour to perform at the highest level across the Global ASPIRE Performance Areas.
3. I will demonstrate grit and determination as I strive towards my goals with the support of my parents.
4. If I do not adhere to the standards of the ASPIRE Program I understand that I may be removed from the program and forfeit my entrance fees.

I would like to accept my position to be a part of the Varsity College ASPIRE Program in 2024. I am aware that by accepting a place, I will agree to adhere to the ASPIRE Expectations and Commitment to Program Requirements and uphold the values and expectations therein.

Parent Agreement

I understand that the purpose of the ASPIRE Program is to provide my child with a learning environment that supports and facilitates quality learning outcomes in their program of study. I also understand an aim of the ASPIRE Program is to ensure that I, as a parent, am supportive of both my child in the program and of Varsity College.

I will, as much as possible, assist my child in maintaining a high level of commitment in order to successfully achieve quality learning outcomes in their program of study.

I will commit to the following:

- Assist my child in maintaining a high level of attendance in order to maintain learning standards.
- Actively encourage my child to maintain high standards in all subject areas.
- Provide support to my child and the college in adhering to Varsity College policies and procedures.
- Monitor the completion of homework set.
- Where possible and convenient attend Parent Teacher Interview Evenings
- Maintain open lines of communication with the college to ensure success for my child.
- Meet all financial commitments as outlined during the application process (please note all ASPIRE fees are non-refundable)

Signed: _____
(Parent)

(Student)