

The Advanced Learning Programme (ALP) at Hamilton Boys' High School:

1. Purpose and principles

1.1: Overview

The purpose of the Advanced Learning Programme (ALP) is to provide gifted and talented students with differentiated learning experiences in a responsive and supportive educational environment. The programme offers gifted and talented students significant opportunities to develop and fulfil their potential across multiple domains.

1.2: Guiding principles

Excellence and equity are the two main principles that underpin all decision-making regarding the identification of students and programme provision.

1.3: Giftedness and talent

“Giftedness” refers to natural abilities while “talent” refers to systematically developed skills.

1.4: Defining gifted and talented learners

At HBHS gifted and talented learners are defined as those who have outstanding abilities, have potential for high performance, or who have demonstrated high performance in any domain. These include general intellectual ability, specific academic aptitude, creative ability, social and leadership qualities, physical ability, or emotional and spiritual qualities.

1.5: Programme aims

While the school's definition of gifted and talented learners embraces a wide range of abilities and skills, the primary purpose of the ALP is to provide appropriate challenge for learners in traditional academic subjects.

It is intended that ALP students will:

- develop a life-long love of learning
- extend and develop their thinking skills
- become leading scholars in their fields of expertise
- become autonomous learners, skilled in self management, while also recognising and valuing the interdependence of all learners
- become confident young men who achieve highly and contribute in positive ways to New Zealand society

2. ALP curriculum and pedagogy

2.1: Overview

The ALP is viewed as a five-year programme that culminates in success in the New Zealand Scholarship examinations, the highest academic award in secondary education in New Zealand. The ALP is:

- designed with carefully-planned progression throughout the five years of secondary schooling, both within and across faculties.
- centred on the delivery of a knowledge-based curriculum, driven by learning, not assessment. Each faculty plans its programmes of learning both vertically and horizontally, building the rich academic knowledge and skills of their discipline in a cumulative manner from Year 9 to Year 13.

2.2: Ability grouping

Gifted students benefit from learning alongside peers of similar academic ability. ALP teachers encourage a culture in which students listen critically to one another, respond constructively, and appreciate the different strengths, experiences, world views, and skill sets among their peers. Ability grouping also means that teachers are able to more effectively provide differentiated learning programmes for gifted students.

2.3: The role of Cambridge International Examinations (CIE)

In Year 11, ALP classes sit International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) examinations in place of NCEA Level One, having begun preparation for these examinations in Year 10. In Year 12, ALP classes sit Advanced Subsidiary (AS) examinations in addition to completing NCEA Level Two. Cambridge International Examinations provide ALP students with extension, enrichment, and exposure to a knowledge-based international curriculum and examination system. It offers ALP students the opportunity to challenge themselves and benchmark their success against peers from all over the world.

2.4: Differentiation and the ALP curriculum

Differentiation means being responsive to students' individual strengths and needs as identified through careful and ongoing assessment. Teachers who differentiate begin by recognising the uniqueness of each student, including their interests, expectations, motivations, abilities, resources, skills, culture, and home and family life. Differentiation is an

approach to teaching and learning that focuses on the learning skills and potential of the individual student.

ALP teachers differentiate in the following ways:

1. Content (In what ways is the content more advanced than what is taught to typical students of a particular age?)
2. Process (In what ways are teaching methods different from those used with typical students of a particular age?)
3. Product (In what ways are the products of student learning more sophisticated than what is typical of students of a particular age?)

Differentiated programmes for gifted learners require increased speed, depth, and complexity.

2.5: Acceleration and enrichment

Gifted and talented students need both acceleration and enrichment.

- Acceleration enables them to cover content and develop skills at a more advanced level than is typical of students of their age.
- Enrichment enables them to broaden their knowledge and skills.

Curriculum design in ALP classes incorporates both variety and opportunities for choice in process and product. The ALP curriculum in each subject is designed to stimulate student curiosity, the pursuit of knowledge, and the enjoyment of learning.

There is an expectation that ALP students will, when appropriate, enter regional, national, and international academic competitions as these often provide excellent opportunities for both acceleration and enrichment. Subject-related competitions will be coordinated by a staff member from within the relevant faculty and students supported in their preparation.

2.6: Option Subjects

Option subjects provide gifted and talented students an opportunity to excel based on their strengths, abilities and passion. Specialist teacher knowledge and instruction allows students to explore a subject in depth. To meet a student's specific needs and skill levels, the development of individual learning plans may be necessary. Such plans assist students with their knowledge building and skill development in their chosen discipline.

In the senior school, gifted students often choose option subjects that complement each other. For example, in order to develop both gross and fine motor skills, as well as their purely academic skills, our most gifted students in Information Technology and Graphics often combine study in these subjects with more vocational practical skills in Hard Materials. This also occurs within other creative pathways such as Painting, Photography, Film and Television, Drama, and Music. For the gifted students in option subjects, entry in the New Zealand Scholarship examinations is strongly encouraged.

2.7: Curriculum compacting

ALP classes are taught at a faster pace with less repetition and, if appropriate, begin from a more advanced starting point. Curriculum compacting is underpinned by pre-assessment, which involves identifying previously mastered knowledge and skills in order to avoid unnecessary repetition which leads to boredom and demotivation. In general terms, curriculum compacting creates opportunities for acceleration and enrichment and for learners to “buy out” time to pursue their individual strengths and interests.

ALP classes present gifted students with “desirable difficulties” and require them to do more complex and critical thinking. ALP students are encouraged to take responsible risks in their learning in order to foster the development of persistence and resilience when confronted with different challenges.

3. Student Well-Being and Learning Support

3.1: Overview

Educationally appropriate challenges and programming can help gifted learners develop positive social and emotional well-being. The ALP recognises and responds to the specific needs and qualities of gifted students, which may be social, emotional, cultural, creative, cognitive, physical, and/or spiritual. For a variety of reasons, some ALP students may require extra support. These reasons include:

3.2: Sensitivity: A heightened awareness of the needs of others, a strong sense of ethical and moral purpose, or a sensitivity to social injustice.

3.3: Asynchronous development: Intellectual, emotional, and physical development of gifted students is often uneven.

3.4: Perfectionism: Among other things, this involves the compulsive need to achieve highly and be the very best, being overly critical, a fear of inadequacy and avoiding experiences that pose a risk of failure.

3.5: Twice-gifted/multi-exceptional students: Special abilities may be masked by learning, behavioural, or physical disabilities. Recognising and nurturing the gifts and talents of these students may require the involvement of HBHS Learning Support, other education specialists, and/or parents and whānau.

3.6: Underachievement: For gifted and talented students, this is a very complex situation with many possible interwoven causes. A responsive and student-centred learning environment, in which there are varied opportunities to achieve and it is safe to achieve, makes it more likely that true academic ability will be demonstrated. Teachers of ALP classes are proactive in recognising students they believe are underachieving. They initiate timely guidance support, remediation, and interventions.

3.7: Workload and balance: HBHS provides a vast range of co-curricular programmes, designed to give every boy an outlet and opportunity to pursue his passions, discover his interests, develop new skills, have fun, and form friendships. HBHS has the broad educational aim of developing well-rounded and balanced young men. ALP students are supported to maintain balance through participation in co-curricular activities, while at the same time pursuing academic excellence. Classroom teachers will be cognisant of student workload and the time commitments of their co-curricular and outside-of-school pursuits. As in all programmes of learning offered at HBHS, homework in the ALP focuses on quality not quantity and is always purposeful and meaningful.

3.8: Metacognition: Subject teachers help students better understand how they learn, remember and process information, and identify what they should be working on to progress their learning.