

FOUNDATIONS FOR INDEPENDENCE



DICKSON COLLEGE

excellence opportunity community

The Foundations for Independence Program focuses on building the capacity of each of our students for greater independence in their adult lives. The amount of independence each student achieves is based on their particular abilities and future goals and ambitions. At Dickson College we work from a positive platform focusing on what can be achieved in their time here. We work closely with parents and carers to provide an optimal learning environment for a broad range of students with special needs. Having a history of special education programs at Dickson College students and staff embrace the inclusive model and often our students choose to select some mainstream units to include in their Year 12 certificate.

Our curriculum is scaffolded to challenge students with differing abilities and reflects high expectations so that students are able to enhance their skills and experiences and transfer them into work placements and the wider community. Throughout their time at the college, students are monitored and their progress tracked as this helps staff support them in their progress as well as make changes if necessary. Positive links are built with parents and carers and we have an open door policy in the Foundations program. Foundations at Dickson College provides a unique opportunity for students with special needs to complete a package of study related to their future options. Students have the option of participating in mainstream courses if they wish. Foundations students have previously enrolled in Automotive Technology, Physical Education and Media. These are undertaken as accredited courses.

A range of courses may be undertaken in the Foundations program. They include:

- **Personal Development (A)** In Personal Development students focus on the changes that are happening to them both physically and emotionally. It includes units such as: Health and Hygiene, Relationships and Sexuality, The Law and Individuals and Social Skills in College and the Community.
- **Work Education (A)** Work Education includes units on Vocational skills, Leisure and Recreation, and Student Pathways planning.
- **Food and People (A)** Units studied in Food and People includes, A Taste For Life, Food and Socialising, Food and Culture in Australia and Independent Living
- **English (R)** The Foundations English program caters for a range of individual communication needs. We work with students to increase their reading, writing, signing and language skills. Like all Foundations subjects English is scaffolded to optimise student learning.
- **Work Education WEX (R)** The Foundations for Independence Program has 100 percent success rate in placing our students in work education placements. We work with students to develop their skills for different work situations and then support them during their placements. Students are encouraged to undertake work experience each semester.
- **PE and Recreation Skills (R)** this unit combines physical activity with social skill practice. The

Foundations students often combine PE with other programs such as the Secondary Introductory English Centre and mainstream Physical Education classes.

- **Maths (R)** Maths focuses on functional maths for living as well as more complex problem solving tasks aligned with independent living skills and the workforce. Maths is regularly practised in the classroom and Canberra community.
- **Independent Living (R)** Independent Living runs for 2 hours a week and was developed to help students develop their lifestyle skills. Students will begin to learn how to Sew, fill out forms, apply for jobs, Wash and iron clothes and many more important life skills.

An important part of assisting students prepare for the transition from College is to make links with community facilities and services which may be of use to them in the future. This is achieved through a wide range of community visits and guest speakers. Students can be supported in the mainstream College to participate successfully in their chosen courses.

Students enrolling in the Foundations for Independence Program must have completed Year 10 studies in a special education setting or be assessed by a special needs counsellor as meeting the criteria for access to a place in the program. Information is easily available to parents by phoning the College.

Successful completion of the two year program leads to the awarding of an ACT Year 12 Certificate.

For full unit descriptions and information about gaining a major or minor in subject areas see www.dicksonc.act.edu.au/handbook.pdf

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