Frequently Asked Questions - Language Exchange Program

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Q. What is the Language Exchange Program?
A. The Language Exchange Program has been established to enhance the English conversational skills for our international students as well as to enable authentic speaking opportunities for students who may be enrolled in language courses or going on exchange at UQ.

The Language Exchange Program purpose is to improve the conversational skills for participants and not for academic purposes. Students who need assistance with English or another language for academic purposes should contact ICTE or the School/ Faculty they are based in.

Participants are strongly encouraged to meet for approximately one hour per week.

Q. How does the program work?
A. Students need to register their interest by filling in an online form, please click here to complete the form. The staff at Mates@UQ will then find you a suitable match, this will depend on the language you have requested, faculty/school you are based in and availability.

At the beginning of semester Mates@UQ will host an event to meet your language exchange partner. If you apply during semester we will send you the details of your match.

Q. What are the most popular languages for language exchange?
A. Our most popular languages are Mandarin, Japanese, Korean and Indonesian. There are some limited opportunities to exchange European languages.

Q. Will I definitely be matched with a Language Exchange partner?
A. We can't guarantee you will be matched with a partner. In some instances we may match up several students to one partner.

Q. I'm not a student or staff member of UQ. Can I join the program?
A. Unfortunately, the program is only open to students and staff. There are many community based language exchange programs available. You may be able to find some of these on the internet.

Q. How much time would I spend speaking English/speaking my second language?
A. We suggest that you spend 50% of the time speaking each language during your weekly one-hour session. We find that beginners tend to spend more time speaking English. As time goes on your conversational skills and confidence will begin to improve. Try to speak in your second language as much as you can and eventually you will reach the 50% mark.
Q. What sort of things do Language Exchange Partners usually talk about?
A. There are many different conversation topics. The most popular ones are travel, culture, shopping, careers, hobbies, interests, family, music, books, and expressions.

Q. What if there is a week that I cannot meet my partner?
A. You should let your partner know and make alternative arrangements. Some students use Facebook etc to get in contact with their partner when they cannot meet in person.

Q. What if I am unhappy with my partner, they don’t return my phone calls or they are too busy to meet me?
A. Please contact the mates coordinator and alternative arrangements can be made.