



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Education**

**REVIEW OF THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM**

Professor Barry McGaw AO  
Chair  
Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority  
Level 10  
255 Pitt Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Professor McGaw

As you are aware we are currently undertaking a Review of the Australian Curriculum (the Review) on behalf of the Australian Government. The Review will consider, among other things, the process used in the development of the curriculum as well as the actual content of the curriculum.

We are writing to request the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) provide us with a paper outlining the approach it used when developing the Australian Curriculum. We are particularly interested in the principles that were identified that underpin the Australian Curriculum and what ACARA's initial concept of a national curriculum was. Please note that we are not simply seeking an outline of the mechanics of the development process but rather a description of the foundations and philosophy that drove the exercise.

Given the timeframe for reporting to the Minister for Education, we would appreciate you providing us with the paper no later than 21 February 2014.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us through the Review Secretariat at the Department of Education at [AustralianCurriculumReview@education.gov.au](mailto:AustralianCurriculumReview@education.gov.au).

We appreciate your cooperation in this matter, and expect that we will be in touch during the remaining of the Review with requests for further documentation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'pp Tim Landi'. The signature is written in a cursive style.

ON BEHALF OF

Professor Ken Wiltshire AO

Dr Kevin Donnelly

22 JANUARY 2014

Professor Ken Wiltshire AO  
Dr Kevin Donnelly  
Australian Curriculum Review Panel  
C/O Department of Education  
GPO Box 9880, Canberra ACT 2601

4 February 2014

Our ref: D14/1189

Dear Professor Wiltshire and Dr Donnelly

**Re: Development of the Australian Curriculum**

I write in response to your letter dated 22 January 2014 requesting information on the approach used by ACARA in developing the Australian Curriculum.

When the interim National Curriculum Board (NCB) commenced work in April 2008, collaborative work among the education authorities was well advanced on the development of what became, in December 2008, the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs' *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*. The NCB was very keen to avoid duplicating that effort and that was facilitated by an invitation for the Chair and Deputy Chair of the NCB to join the group drafting the Ministerial statement.

On its own behalf, the NCB prepared a statement on the kind of curriculum it proposed to develop. It provided a draft for public discussion and revised it in the light of advice received. The final version, published in May 2009 as *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum*, is provided as Attachment 1. A summary of the consultation process and the timeline is provided as Attachment 2 with the full consultation report available on ACARA's website at [www.acara.edu.au/curriculum/consultation.html](http://www.acara.edu.au/curriculum/consultation.html).

You will see that *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum* draws on the *Melbourne Declaration* for statements on the context of the work (p.5) and the educational goals for young Australians (p.7). In addition, the NCB set down ten 'principles and guidelines' for its curriculum development (pp.8-9).

The initial remit to the NCB was to develop curriculum for K-12 in English, mathematics, science and history. For each of these subjects, the NCB followed a similar process in developing a brief *Shape* paper for public consultation on the broad structure and sequence of the subject before work and consultation on were undertaken on the proposed detail. Each sets out the foundation for development.

The *Shape* papers for English, mathematics, science and history were approved by the NCB in May 2009 and published together with the final version of the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum*.

Legislation to establish the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority was passed through both Houses of the Australian Parliament and assented to by December 2008 but its Board was not appointed until 30 May 2009. At that point, it replaced the NCB and, as the legislation provided, the work came under the formal

direction of the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA). The ACARA Board sought and received MCEECDYA approval for the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum* in September 2009.

In 2010-2011 the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum* was revised to reflect Ministerial Council decisions as well as advice and input received from the Australian Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs Senior Officials Committee. Version 2.0 was endorsed by MCEECDYA and published at the end of 2010 as a wiki, providing opportunities for the broader community to suggest ways in which the document could be further improved.

Subsequent revisions to the paper have been informed by comments and proposed amendments recorded on the wiki, Ministerial Council directives and direct consultation with representatives from each state and territory education department, the Independent Schools Council of Australia, the National Catholic Education Commission and other key stakeholder groups. The current version, 4.0, is provided as Attachment 3.

For additional information, you may wish to review ACARA's *Curriculum Design Paper* (Attachment 4) and its *Curriculum Development Process* (Attachment 5).

A range of other information can be provided to assist your understanding of the curriculum development process. You will also find links to shape papers for separate learning areas and related consultation reports on ACARA's website (<http://www.acara.edu.au>).

ACARA's Chief Executive Officer, Mr Robert Randall, and I would be pleased to discuss any matters relating to the development of the Australian Curriculum if you would like to meet with us. Dr Phil Lambert, General Manager, Curriculum, would be able to provide any further documentation that you might want. He can be contacted by email at [phil.lambert@acara.edu.au](mailto:phil.lambert@acara.edu.au) or by phone on (02) 8098 3113.

Yours sincerely



Professor Barry McGaw AO  
Chair

**Encl:** Attachment 1: *Shape of the Australian Curriculum* (May 2009)  
Attachment 2: Summary of the initial consultation process for the shape paper  
Attachment 3: *Shape of the Australian Curriculum* v4  
Attachment 4: *Curriculum Design Paper* v3.1  
Attachment 5: *Curriculum Development Process* v6.0

National Curriculum Board

# The Shape of the Australian Curriculum

**May 2009**

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## 1. Preamble: National Curriculum Board processes

### Determining the form of the national curriculum

The National Curriculum Board (the Board) is committed to substantial, open consultation with the profession and the public in the development of curriculum. The Board began its consultation with the publication on its website ([www.ncb.org.au](http://www.ncb.org.au)) of the National Curriculum Development Paper. This discussion paper described the context of the Board's work and set down key initial questions that needed to be answered in the development of the national curriculum. That paper was discussed at a national forum on 27 June 2008, attended by 200 people, and in subsequent state and territory forums.

In the light of these discussions, the Board set down answers to its key questions in the document *The Shape of the National Curriculum: A proposal for discussion*. That paper was posted on the Board's website, along with an open invitation to comment and provide advice, during Term 4, 2008. It was discussed at state, territory and national forums that were conducted following its release and was the subject of written submissions provided to the Board through to the end of January 2009.

This document, *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum*, takes account of consultation, feedback and decisions made by the Board in early 2009. It provides a broad outline of the shape of the national curriculum and will be used to guide the writing of the national curriculum in specific learning areas which, in accord with the Board's remit, will start with English, mathematics, the sciences and history.

### Developing the scope and content of each national curriculum

In August 2008, as it was working on this paper, the Board commenced work on a national curriculum in English, mathematics, the sciences and history. For each learning area the Board recruited a writer who worked with a small advisory group to draft a brief initial advice paper. The purposes of those papers were to provide a rationale for the study of the curriculum areas and to outline a broad scope and sequence of material to be covered over the years Kindergarten to Year 12 (K–12).

This approach was aimed at stimulating discussion of the key issues in each curriculum area before any detailed curriculum development commenced. Initial discussions were held at a series of national forums held in October 2008.

More detailed 'framing papers' were posted on the Board's website with a public invitation to comment and provide advice in the period up to 28 February 2009. Final recommendations to guide curriculum development were posted on the Board's website following its April meeting.



## 2. Building Australia's future

### Changed context

Education plays an important part in forming the young people who will take responsibility for Australia in the future. If it is to play this part effectively, education must address the intellectual, personal, social and economic development of young Australians, and it must do so at a time when ideas about the goals of education are changing and will continue to change.

Twenty years ago, the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs produced a collaborative statement on goals for schooling: the *Hobart Declaration* of 1989. In 2008 ministers nominated five major changes that, over that twenty-year period, have changed the ways in which people have come to interact with each other, and the consequences of those changes for schooling. These changes have been described in the *National Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (see Box 1).

#### Box 1: Changes over the past 20 years with implications for education

- Global integration and international mobility have increased rapidly in the past decade. As a consequence, new and exciting opportunities for Australians are emerging. This heightens the need to nurture an appreciation of and respect for social, cultural and religious diversity, and a sense of global citizenship.
- India, China and other Asian nations are growing and their influence on the world is increasing. Australians need to become 'Asia literate' by building strong relationships with Asia.
- Globalisation and technological change are placing greater demands on education and skill development in Australia and the nature of jobs available to young Australians is changing faster than ever. Skilled jobs now dominate jobs growth and people with university or vocational education and training qualifications fare much better in the employment market than early school-leavers. To maximise their opportunities for healthy, productive and rewarding futures, Australia's young people must be encouraged not only to complete secondary education, but also to proceed into further training or education.
- Complex environmental, social and economic pressures such as climate change that extend beyond national borders pose unprecedented challenges, requiring countries to work together in new ways. To meet these challenges, Australians must be able to comprehend and use scientific concepts and principles, and approach problem-solving in new and creative ways.
- Rapid and continuing advances in information and communication technologies (ICT) are changing the ways people share, use, develop and process information and technology, and young people need to be highly skilled in ICT. While schools already employ these technologies in learning, there is a need to increase their effectiveness significantly over the next decade.

Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, *National Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, December 2008, p.4.

Schooling must not only deal with these remarkable changes but also, as far as possible, anticipate the kinds of conditions in which young Australians will need to function as individuals, citizens and workers. These future conditions are distant and difficult to predict. We expect almost all young Australians who begin primary school in 2011 will continue their initial education until 2022. Many will go on to post-secondary education and not complete their initial education until the mid-2020s and later. However dimly the demands of societies in the mid-2020s can now be seen, some serious attempt must be made to envisage those demands and to ensure they are taken into account in present-day curriculum development.



A curriculum for the 21st century will reflect an understanding and acknowledgment of the changing nature of young people as learners and the challenges and demands that will continue to shape their learning in the future. Young people will need a wide and adaptive set of knowledge, skills and understandings to meet the changing expectations of society and to contribute to the creation of a more productive, sustainable and just society.

Curriculum will be only one element that influences how well young Australians are prepared for their futures by their education, but it will be important because it sets the level of expectation of their learning. High-performing countries set high expectations. They support the fulfilment of those expectations with high-quality teaching, school and system leadership, and commitment and support from families, communities, business and industry. Providing high-quality education is valuable to the community at large and justifies people's investments in time, effort and resources.

The commitment to develop a national curriculum reflects a willingness of Australians to work together, across geographical and school-sector boundaries, to develop a world-class curriculum for all young Australians. It will enable us to work collectively in defining what all young Australians should learn and in creating and sustaining a world-class education system. It involves national acceptance of responsibility for high-quality, high-equity education across the country. Working nationally offers the prospect of harnessing expertise and effort in the pursuit of common national goals. This national effort offers economies of scale and a substantial reduction in duplication of curriculum development and support, for the benefit of students in our schools.

The advent of a national curriculum also offers a unique opportunity to ensure that all young Australians learn about the history and cultural background of the nation's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, of the contribution that has been made to Australia, and of the impact that colonial settlement has had on Indigenous communities, past and present. For Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders, a national curriculum provides the opportunity to establish and pursue excellence within education settings that respect and promote their cultural identity.

National collaboration in education in Australia is not new. The 1989 *Hobart Declaration* and the 1999 *Adelaide Declaration* both authorised and stimulated national effort. The 2008 *National Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* provides a framework for the Board's development of a national, K–12 curriculum in English, mathematics, the sciences and history, and later in geography and languages.

### **Goals of education for young Australians**

The Board's work overall is guided by the National Declaration on *Educational Goals for Young Australians*, adopted by ministers in December 2008. The National Declaration commits 'to supporting all young Australians to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens' (see Box 2) and to promoting equity and excellence in education.

## Box 2: Educational goals for young Australians

### *Successful learners...*

- develop their capacity to learn and play an active role in their own learning
- have the essential skills in literacy and numeracy and are creative and productive users of technology, especially ICT, as a foundation for success in all learning areas
- are able to think deeply and logically, and obtain and evaluate evidence in a disciplined way as the result of studying fundamental disciplines
- are creative, innovative and resourceful, and are able to solve problems in ways that draw upon a range of learning areas and disciplines
- are able to plan activities independently, collaborate, work in teams and communicate ideas
- are able to make sense of their world and think about how things have become the way they are
- are on a pathway towards continued success in further education, training or employment, and acquire the skills to make informed learning and employment decisions throughout their lives
- are motivated to reach their full potential.

### *Confident individuals...*

- have a sense of self-worth, self-awareness and personal identity that enables them to manage their emotional, mental, spiritual and physical wellbeing
- have a sense of optimism about their lives and the future — are enterprising, show initiative and use their creative abilities
- develop personal values and attributes such as honesty, resilience, empathy and respect for others
- have the knowledge, skills, understanding and values to establish and maintain healthy, satisfying lives
- have the confidence and capability to pursue university or post-secondary vocational qualifications leading to rewarding and productive employment
- relate well to others and form and maintain healthy relationships
- are well prepared for their potential life roles as family, community and workforce members
- embrace opportunities, make rational and informed decisions about their own lives and accept responsibility for their own actions.

### *Active and informed citizens...*

- act with moral and ethical integrity
- appreciate Australia's social, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity, and have an understanding of Australia's system of government, history and culture
- understand and acknowledge the value of Indigenous cultures and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians
- are committed to national values of democracy, equity and justice, and participate in Australia's civic life
- are able to relate to and communicate across cultures, especially the cultures and countries of Asia
- work for the common good, in particular sustaining and improving natural and social environments
- are responsible global and local citizens.

Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, *National Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, December 2008, pp. 8–9.

The national curriculum will address the goals for young Australians, but success will also depend on substantial action through the continued support of schools by education authorities.

One important lesson learned from past efforts to overcome inequity is that an alternative curriculum for students who are regarded as disadvantaged does not treat them equitably. It is better to set the same high expectations for all students and to provide differentiated levels of support to ensure that all students have a fair chance to achieve those expectations. This is a view put by, for example, many leaders in the Indigenous community on behalf of their young people.

Within its remit to develop curriculum for particular learning areas, the Board will work to ensure that its curriculum connects with curriculum developed by the states and territories.

### 3. The national curriculum

#### Principles and guidelines for development

The development of the national curriculum is shaped by the following principles and guidelines for development.

- a) The curriculum should make clear to teachers what is to be taught, and to students what they should learn and what achievement standards are expected of them. This means that curriculum documents will be explicit about knowledge, understanding and skills, and that they will provide a clear foundation for the development of a teaching program.
- b) The curriculum should be based on the assumptions that all students can learn and that every student matters. It should set high standards and ensure that they apply to all young Australians while acknowledging the different rates at which students develop.
- c) The curriculum should connect with and build on the *Early Years Learning Framework* being developed for the pre-K phase.
- d) The curriculum should help prepare all young Australians to become fulfilled and competent citizens and workers. It should build firm and meaningful foundational skills as well as provide the basis for developing expertise for those who move on to specialised advanced studies in academic disciplines, professions and technical trades. It should anticipate an increase in both the proportion of students who remain in education and training to complete Year 12 or equivalent vocational education and training, and the proportion who continue to further study.
- e) The curriculum should provide students with an understanding of the past that has shaped the society, culture and environment in which they are growing and developing, and with knowledge, understandings and skills that will help them in their futures.
- f) The curriculum should be feasible, taking account of the time and resources available to teachers and students, and the time it typically takes to learn complex concepts and ideas. In particular, the national curriculum should recognise and appreciate that in the primary years teachers are responsible for several learning areas.
- g) The primary audience for national curriculum documents should be classroom teachers. Documents should be concise and expressed in plain language which nevertheless preserves a complexity in ideas appropriate for professional practitioners. Documents should be recognisably similar across learning areas in language, structure and length.
- h) Time demands on students must leave room for learning beyond the scope of the national curriculum.
- i) The curriculum should allow jurisdictions, systems and schools to implement it in a way that values teachers' professional knowledge and that reflects the needs and interests evident in local contexts, as it will be teachers who decide how best to organise learning for students. Organisation of learning should take account of individual family, cultural and community backgrounds; acknowledge and build on prior learning experiences; and fill gaps in those experiences.

- j) The curriculum should be established on a strong evidence base related to learning, pedagogy and what works in professional practice, and it should encourage teachers to analyse and evaluate their practices systematically.

### **Curriculum content: Knowledge, understanding and skills**

The Board recognises the entitlement of students to a core of knowledge, skills, understandings and values that will provide a foundation for their future contribution to Australia's society. This learning will provide the basis for success at and beyond school, and help young people continue their learning after they have left school.

The national curriculum will detail what teachers are expected to teach and students are expected to learn for each year of schooling. The curriculum will describe the knowledge, understandings, skills and dispositions that students will be expected to develop, in sequence, for each learning area across the years of schooling. Each curriculum sequence will represent what is known about the progression of learning in that area, recognising that there will need to be some variability in, for example, the order of topics in some areas.

The *National Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* identifies three broad categories of outcomes that the curriculum should deliver for students (see Box 3). The national curriculum will be developed in light of these categories.

#### **Box 3: Intended educational outcomes for young Australians**

*A solid foundation in knowledge, understanding, skills and values on which further learning and adult life can be built*

- The curriculum will include a strong focus on literacy and numeracy skills. It will also enable students to build social and emotional intelligence, and nurture student wellbeing through health and physical education in particular. The curriculum will support students to relate well to others and foster an understanding of Australian society, citizenship and national values, including through the study of civics and citizenship. As a foundation for further learning and adult life the curriculum will include practical knowledge and skills development in areas such as ICT and design and technology, which are central to Australia's skilled economy and provide crucial pathways to post-school success.

*Deep knowledge, understanding, skills and values that will enable advanced learning and an ability to create new ideas and translate them into practical applications*

- The curriculum will enable students to develop knowledge in the disciplines of English, mathematics, science, languages, humanities and the arts; to understand the spiritual, moral and aesthetic dimensions of life; and open up new ways of thinking. It will also support the development of deep knowledge within a discipline, which provides the foundation for inter-disciplinary approaches to innovation and complex problem-solving.

*General capabilities that underpin flexible and analytical thinking, a capacity to work with others and an ability to move across subject disciplines to develop new expertise*

- The curriculum will support young people to develop a range of generic and employability skills that have particular application to the world of work and further education and training, such as planning and organising, the ability to think flexibly, to communicate well and to work in teams. Young people also need to develop the capacity to think creatively, innovate, solve problems and engage with new disciplines.

Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, *National Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, December 2008, p.13.

Teachers understand the developmental diversity in the students they teach and are responsible for organising learning opportunities to meet individual learning needs. Organising the curriculum by year level will help teachers do this and will reduce the risk of repetition of content from year to year as students change teachers or schools.

Some of the variation among students in their level of development and progress can become the basis for inequities in their educational experiences. The Board will not accommodate these disparities by setting different expectations for different groups, since that reinforces differences and creates inequitable outcomes. The primary role in dealing with these differences lies with school systems, schools and teachers.

The national curriculum will try to maximise the opportunities for all students to realise their potential. This will be enhanced through material and professional learning support provided to teachers to help them recognise and build on the learning that each child brings to school. For students for whom English is not their first language, for example, this support should include material and advice that best helps them to master the language demands of school subjects.

### ***Solid foundation in literacy and numeracy for further learning***

Because literacy and numeracy are the foundations on which much further learning depends, it is important that literacy and numeracy capabilities are developed early. The foundation for literacy will be built primarily in English and the foundation for numeracy primarily in mathematics, but both literacy and numeracy must be reinforced and strengthened through teaching of other learning areas.

The Board's remit also requires it to develop 'a continuum of learning in literacy and numeracy skills, ranging from basic competence in the early years through to the advancement and extension of these skills in the middle and later years of schooling'. The development of these continuums means that these foundation skills are not regarded only as initial or minimal competences. Literacy and numeracy need to keep developing across the school years as the curriculum areas put them to work in increasingly distinct and complex ways. The nature and functions of literacy and numeracy become more differentiated as the school subjects become more recognisably different, based more and more on their informing disciplines.

Recent international comparisons of the performances of school students in reading and mathematics show clearly that the demonstrated capabilities of both higher- and lower-performing students can fluctuate significantly. That is, it is important to conceptualise literacy and numeracy over the full range, from the acquisition of initial skills to the development of sophisticated skills, put to work in different ways in different knowledge domains and social contexts. The national curriculum documents will deal explicitly with this issue.

### ***Deep knowledge and skills***

The K–12 national curriculum will provide the settings in which students can develop increasingly deep knowledge and skills. In the selection of content for particular learning areas, the Board will take account of the rapid expansion in bodies of knowledge and of the challenges this presents to curriculum development.

The national curriculum will emphasise the fundamental knowledge, skills and understandings that are the core of a learning area. It will also specify some contexts and related knowledge as essential for all students, where these are based on age, grade or stage considerations. In other cases, teachers will be able to choose how best to introduce and develop increasingly deep understandings of concepts and processes, maximising the engagement and learning of every student they work with, every day.

The Board will develop a national curriculum that provides for rigorous, in-depth study, preferring depth to breadth wherever a choice needs to be made, with consideration also being given to the teaching and learning time available.

The national curriculum will always try to deliver a balance between knowledge and process that reflects what is known about the development of expertise in a learning area. Experts solve problems more effectively, quickly and efficiently than novices do, not only because they can call on automated, learned responses, but because they consider problems in ways that make good solutions easier to find. The way in which experts think about problems reflects their deep knowledge and understanding of the discipline from which the problems are drawn.

The K–12 national curriculum will help students begin to develop the knowledge and understandings on which the major disciplines are based. This is partly because some students will go on to develop specialised levels of expertise in their further studies. But it is also because, as active citizens, all young Australians will need knowledge and understandings that allow them to make informed decisions about complex issues, as they weigh up options that may have personal and social consequences. Rich and systematic engagement with a discipline-based curriculum in school can form the bases not only of specialised vocational success, but also of confident and knowledgeable civic activity.

Each discipline offers a distinctive lens through which we interpret experience, determine what counts as evidence and as a good argument for action, scrutinise knowledge and argument, make judgments about value, and add to knowledge. Rather than being self-contained or fixed, disciplines are interconnected, dynamic and growing, and a discipline-based curriculum allows for cross-disciplinary learning that broadens and enriches each student’s learning.

In each learning area the national curriculum will provide a rationale for the choice of curriculum content. This rationale will make clear to teachers and students why the content chosen is important for students, and will outline the broad scope and sequence of learning to be expected through the K–12 years. The rationale will make clear how certain choices were made — whether they were based on ‘big ideas’ that are essential to deep understanding of a domain of knowledge; learning that is essential for particular further learning; or other important considerations such as the students’ developing sense of personal identity, an ‘Australian identity’ or Australia’s geographical and historical context.

The scope and sequence for each learning area will ensure that learning is appropriately ordered and that unnecessary repetition is avoided. It will help schools and teachers coordinate curriculum across a number of years of schooling.

International comparisons of educational performance and engagement suggest that Australians are high performers, but that they do not particularly like the learning in which they perform well. Students’ attitudes to the knowledge, understandings and skills they are developing will be influenced perhaps more by teaching than by curriculum, but the curriculum can help if its content is sufficiently coherent over time, if students can understand their progress in learning, and if the curriculum is relevantly connected to their lives and futures.

The national curriculum will describe a learning entitlement for each Australian student, clearly explaining what is to be taught and learned in each area. Implementing the national curriculum, as in the case of state and territory curriculums, will rely on teachers’ professional judgments about how best to organise learning for students, how to reflect local and regional circumstances, and how best to take advantage of their own specialised professional knowledge and their students’ interests.

### **General capabilities**

Not all learning is contained in the learning areas into which the school curriculum has traditionally been divided. Reflections on the nature of work in the 21st century typically identify important general capabilities, and many people argue that schools should help students develop them. As shown in Box 3, the *National Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* sees these as including ‘planning and organising, the ability to think flexibly, to communicate well and to work in teams ... the capacity to think creatively, innovate, solve problems and engage with new disciplines’.

The Board will deal explicitly with general capabilities within the national curriculum to avoid any risk that they will receive inadequate or unsystematic attention because they are supposed to be addressed 'across the curriculum'. Curriculum documents will indicate how learning in a particular area will contribute to the goals in the national declaration, how connections can be made between the discipline areas and how particular general capabilities will be explicitly dealt with in each area.

Each capability will be represented in each learning area in ways appropriate to that area. Some will be included because they need to be developed and applied in the particular learning area. Others can be taught and learned by students in any learning area; their development will depend on teachers' choices of classroom activities. The curriculum documents will be explicit on how the general capabilities are to be handled in each learning area and how links can be made between learning areas.

The national curriculum will specifically cover the following general capabilities.

- **Literacy** knowledge, skills and understanding need to be used and developed in all learning areas. Initial and major continuing development will be in English but the national curriculum will ensure that this competency is used and developed in all learning areas.
- **Numeracy** knowledge, skills and understanding need to be used and developed in all learning areas. Initial and major continuing development of numeracy will be in mathematics but the national curriculum will ensure that this competency is used and developed in all learning areas.
- **Information and communications technology (ICT)** skills and understanding are required for all learning areas. Some aspects of ICT competence are as much about information management as about the use of technology, so an important aspect of the competence is the ability to evaluate the source, reliability, accuracy and validity of information that abounds in cyberspace. New digital technologies are used in creative and artistic pursuits, and in civic and political activities. These opportunities for private and public expression, unimagined half a generation ago, will make up important elements of the national curriculum.
- **Thinking skills** refers to a range of kinds of applied intellectual activities that are involved in using information to achieve outcomes. They include elements such as solving problems, making decisions, thinking critically, developing an argument and using evidence in support of that argument. Thinking skills constitute the core of most intellectual activity.
- **Creativity** enables the development of new ideas and their application in specific contexts. It includes generating an idea which is new to the individual, seeing existing situations in a new way, identifying alternative explanations, seeing links, and finding new ways to apply ideas to generate a positive outcome. Creativity is closely linked to innovation and enterprise, and requires characteristics such as intellectual flexibility, open-mindedness, adaptability and a readiness to try new ways of doing things.
- **Self-management** enables a student to take responsibility for their own work and learning. It includes managing one's learning; monitoring, reflecting on and evaluating one's learning; identifying personal characteristics which contribute to or limit effectiveness; planning and undertaking work independently; taking responsibility for one's behaviour and performance; and learning from successes and failures.
- **Teamwork** enables a student to work effectively and productively with others. It includes working in harmony with others, contributing towards common purposes, defining and accepting individual and group roles and responsibilities, respecting individual and group differences, identifying the strengths of team members, and building social relationships.
- **Intercultural understanding** enables students to respect and appreciate their own and others'



cultures, and to work and communicate with those from different cultures and backgrounds. It includes appreciation of the special place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; respect for Australia's multicultural composition; communicating and working in harmony with others within and across cultures, especially in relation to cultures and countries of the Asia-Pacific; and appreciation of difference and diversity.

- **Ethical behaviour** involves students understanding and acting in accordance with moral and ethical principles. Ethical behaviour includes the willingness, determination and capacity to think, make judgments and behave independently. It includes identifying right and wrong and having the willingness, determination and capacity to argue the case for change; understanding the place of ethics and values in human life; acting with moral and ethical integrity; acting with regard for others; and having a desire and capacity to work for the common good.
- **Social competence** will enable students to interact effectively with others by assessing and successfully operating within a range of changing, often ambiguous human situations. It includes initiating and managing personal relationships; being self-aware and able to interpret one's own and others' emotional states, needs and perspectives; the ability to manage or resolve conflicts and to foster inclusive and respectful interactions; and participating successfully in a range of social and communal activities.

### ***Cross-curriculum perspectives***

There are other cross-curriculum matters that can be thought of as perspectives rather than capabilities. These are:

- Indigenous perspectives, which will be written into the national curriculum to ensure that all young Australians have the opportunity to learn about, acknowledge and respect the culture of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders
- a commitment to sustainable patterns of living which will be reflected, where appropriate, in national curriculum documents
- skills, knowledge and understandings related to Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia.

Each of these perspectives will be represented in learning areas in ways appropriate to that area. The curriculum documents will be explicit on how the perspectives are to be dealt with in each learning area and how links can be made between learning areas.

### **Achievement standards**

Curriculum content identifies what teachers are expected to teach and students are expected to learn. Curriculum content typically includes areas of knowledge, concepts, skills and processes that students are expected to learn and will be described for a particular learning area at a particular year level (e.g. Mathematics, Year 5).

Achievement standards will provide an expectation of the quality of learning that students should typically demonstrate by a particular point in their schooling (i.e. the depth of their understanding, the extent of their knowledge and the sophistication of their skills).

Across K–10, achievement standards will be described for each year of schooling, providing a description of the quality of learning (drawing together knowledge, skill, understanding etc.) that most students might be expected to achieve and which represents a standard deemed adequate to enable the student to make further progress in the learning area. This achievement standard will be linked to a C grade when reporting to parents.

The sequence of achievement levels across K–10 will describe and illustrate progress in the learning area.

This sequence will provide teachers with a framework of growth and development in each of the learning areas.

Work samples will play a key role in establishing and communicating achievement. The examples of student work will include the task and a student's response, with an assessment and annotations setting out the basis for the judgement.

The development of the achievement standards will take account of what is known from research about how to improve students' learning. If teachers are to understand individuals' current levels of attainment so that they can target teaching on needs, they must have a grasp of the growth and development of students' thinking about fundamental concepts in an area of learning. A sequence of achievement levels provides teachers with an articulated framework of growth and development that will assist them to do this.

Year-by-year achievement standards will help teachers to know where students are at any given point. Teachers will, however, continue to use formative assessment information to diagnose learning difficulties, or to decide how to teach the next lesson. They will continue to use formative assessment, conducted on a regular basis, to make adjustments to their instruction and to generate feedback to enable students to adjust their learning.

The curriculum content and achievement standards will also be used to inform the development of national assessment programs. It will be possible to 'calibrate' results of assessment programs against the sequence of achievement levels, providing finer-grained detail about students' levels of achievement and progress that can be useful for monitoring purposes at the system and whole-school levels.

For Years 11–12, subject-specific achievement standards will be developed. These will describe a range of levels of achievement expected of students studying the particular course. They will be designed to support reporting to students and parents, to ensure consistency of assessment and reporting across states and territories, and to contribute to the discrimination in assessments required for post-school pathway selection. The Years 11–12 achievement standards will be designed to be applicable in jurisdictions with external examinations and with school-based assessment.

The achievement standards will not assume how students will be asked about or might be able to demonstrate their learning. While they will guide and inform assessment, particular assessment methods used will be determined by teachers, schools and school authorities.

### **Reporting to parents**

A–E grades, or equivalent, are used to report to parents. These grades are designed to help parents and guardians to interpret their child's performance in a simple and direct way. Is their child achieving at the level expected of students in the Year level? Is there cause for concern? Is their child falling behind and in need of additional assistance to be able to succeed in school? Is their child moving ahead faster than other students in the same Year level and in need of extension studies?

In conjunction with the development of curriculum content and achievement standards, the national curriculum will provide a consistent nomenclature to describe the quality of achievement associated with each A–E grade. The use of A–E grades will aid the articulation of the extent to which a student has met the achievement standard for a particular year of school. For example, students would be awarded a grade of C or above only if they have met the achievement standard for that year/stage. A C grade might indicate a satisfactory level of achievement and an A grade an outstanding level of achievement. A D or E grade would suggest that follow-up is required as these levels of achievement would present a cause for concern to teachers, student and parents.

Annotated student work samples will be used to illustrate the differences in quality of student work and would be developed for, at least, the A/B and C/D cut-off points. The collection of these work samples will build on work that is already in place in states and territories. The collection will provide a common and national reference point for greater consistency in teacher judgment within and between classrooms, schools, states and territories.

## 4. Curriculum development

The National Curriculum Board's curriculum development process has been designed to generate broad discussion and consultation on the shape and design of the national curriculum.

To guide curriculum development for particular learning areas the Board has adopted a process that involves four interrelated phases: curriculum framing, curriculum writing, implementation and curriculum evaluation and review.

The activities that occur within each of these phases, and the timelines for each curriculum development project, are outlined in the document National Curriculum Board: Curriculum development process. This publication can be found at [www.ncb.org.au](http://www.ncb.org.au) (under 'Publications').

## 5. Pedagogy

It is clear that pedagogy and curriculum content and processes cannot be treated entirely discretely, and that best current pedagogy and practice must be used when constructing curriculum documents. Even so, while the national curriculum will make clear to teachers what has to be taught and to students what they should learn and what achievement standards are expected of them, classroom teachers are the people who will decide how best to organise learning for students. They will make decisions about the pedagogical approach that will give the best learning outcomes.

## 6. Implementation

The Board is to develop a national K–12 curriculum in English, mathematics, the sciences and history by the end of 2010. Timelines for each of these curriculum development activities can be found at [www.ncb.org.au](http://www.ncb.org.au).

Implementation will follow, commencing in 2011. National curriculum implementation issues will be significant considerations for the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), working with the states and territories through the Australian Education Systems Officials' Committee (AESOC) and their curriculum authorities. Consideration will be given to the sequencing of implementation from 2011.

As part of its work to develop the national curriculum, the Board has discussed factors that will influence implementation strategies. They include:

- the extent of difference between existing curriculum requirements, in terms of what is to be taught and assessed, in any particular year or over a sequence of years
- the extent of change in how the curriculum is organised, in terms of organisation of the curriculum content (such as by years of schooling) and how achievement standards are presented
- the extent to which state and territory credentialing or other arrangements require additional material to be developed and made available to teachers (such as assessment requirements, examination specifications and sample papers for senior years)
- the extent, and place in the cycle, of curriculum change, such as primary teachers dealing with multiple new curriculums, or education systems part-way through an existing curriculum change.

The national curriculum development process provides for briefing sessions with state and territory authorities, professional associations, publishers and so on, beyond the consultation processes built into the curriculum development process.



A brief summary of the consultation process around the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum* undertaken by the National Curriculum Board.

June 2008	<b>Release of the <i>National Curriculum Development Paper</i></b> (a discussion paper in which the Board describes the context of its work and set down a set of questions that needed to be answered to determine the kind of curriculum it would produce)
27 June 2008	<b>National Forum (Melbourne)</b> to discuss and consult on the National Curriculum Development Paper
12 October 2008	<b>Release of <i>The Shape of the National Curriculum: A proposal for Discussion</i></b> (The paper outlines the broad scope and structure proposed for the national curriculum and is designed to be read in conjunction with papers for English, mathematics, the sciences, and history. Feedback was open to the end of the 2008 school year)
	<b>Release of the initial advice papers for English, mathematics, the sciences and history for four national forums</b>
	<b>Feedback on the initial advice papers was open until the beginning of November 2008</b>
July – Mid Nov 2008	<b>Eight state and territory forums to discuss the Board's publications</b>
20 November 2008	<b>Release of the framing papers for English, mathematics, the sciences and history</b> (The framing papers present broad directions for what teachers should teach and young people should learn in the national curriculum from Kindergarten to Year 12. The papers have been developed from the feedback and consultation received from the initial advice papers)
	Feedback on the framing papers is open until 28 February 2009
Late February 2009	<b>National forums (Melbourne):</b> Stages of schooling; 21st century learning; equity and diversity
First week of March	<b>Literacy, numeracy and ICT workshop; Achievement standards workshop</b>
18 March	<b>Learning area consultation forum</b>
20 March	<b>Curriculum Directors' workshop</b>
25 March	<b>Sustainability forum and business/industry focus group</b>
26 March	<b>Indigenous education focus group</b>
End of April 2009	<b>Finalise English, mathematics, the sciences, and history framing papers to guide curriculum development</b>
May 2009	<b>Publication of revised Shape of the Australian Curriculum papers</b>





# The Shape of the Australian Curriculum

Version 4.0



October 2012



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## Amendment history

Date	Version	Comment
May 2009	1.0	Approved by the Interim National Curriculum Board in May 2009 to guide the development of the first phase of the Australian Curriculum (English, mathematics, science and history).
October 2010	2.0	Updated to support implementation of the Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum for English, mathematics, science and history, to provide the context for the next stage of development of the Foundation to Year 12 curriculum and to promote ongoing discussion about the shape of the Australian Curriculum as a whole.  Approved by the ACARA Board 26 October 2010.
October 2011	3.0	The F–10 Curriculum Position paper on the whole curriculum, achievement standards and support for students with disability was endorsed by the Ministerial Council in July 2011 and informed the revision of The Shape of the Australian Curriculum v2.0.
October 2012	4.0	Updated to include information about the shape of the senior secondary curriculum and additional advice on how the Australian Curriculum meets the needs of the diverse range of students in Australian schools.



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## Purpose

1. The Shape of the Australian Curriculum v4.0 provides background to the development of and for the implementation of the Australian Curriculum.
2. The first Shape of the Australian Curriculum (May 2009) was written to guide the development of the first phase of the Australian Curriculum (English, mathematics, science and history). It was approved by the Ministerial Council in September 2009. Subsequent versions were approved by Ministers in December 2010 (Version 2.0) and October 2011 (Version 3.0).

## Preamble

3. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is responsible for:
  - a national curriculum from Foundation to Year 12 in specified learning areas
  - a national assessment program aligned to the national curriculum that measures students' progress
  - a national data collection and reporting program that supports:
    - analysis, evaluation, research and resource allocation
    - accountability and reporting on schools
    - broader national achievement.
4. As part of its initial charter, ACARA was asked to commence curriculum development for English, mathematics, science and history. A second phase of work was authorised involving the development of an Australian Curriculum in geography, languages and the Arts. Subsequently, Australian education ministers agreed that a third phase of curriculum development will focus on health and physical education, information and communication technology, design and technology, economics and business, and civics and citizenship.
5. The establishment of ACARA can be seen as an outcome of many years of national collaboration in education. Twenty years ago, the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs produced a collaborative statement on goals for schooling: the Hobart Declaration of 1989. Both the Hobart Declaration and the 1999 Adelaide Declaration authorised and stimulated the national effort.
6. The curriculum development work of ACARA is guided by the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians, adopted by the Ministerial Council in December 2008. The Melbourne Declaration emphasises the importance of knowledge, understanding and skills of learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities as the basis for a curriculum designed to support 21st century learning.

# An Australian Curriculum

## Rationale

7. All Australian governments have committed to the goals of the Melbourne Declaration, which are that Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence; and that all young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens. Promoting world-class curriculum and assessment is one of eight interrelated areas for action designed to achieve the Melbourne Declaration goals.
8. The rationale for introducing an Australian Curriculum centres on improving the quality, equity and transparency of Australia's education system.
  - Quality — an Australian Curriculum will contribute to the provision of a world-class education in Australia by setting out the knowledge, understanding and skills needed for life and work in the 21st century and by setting common high standards of achievement across the country.
  - Equity — an Australian Curriculum will provide a clear, shared understanding of what young people should be taught and the quality of learning expected of them, regardless of their circumstances, the type of school that they attend or the location of their school.
9. Education plays a critical role in shaping the lives of the nation's future citizens. To play this role effectively, the intellectual, personal, social and educational needs of young Australians must be addressed at a time when ideas about the goals of education are changing and will continue to evolve.
10. At the 60th Australian Education Council meeting held in Hobart in April 1989, education ministers produced a collaborative statement on goals for schooling: the Hobart Declaration. This statement was updated in 1999 as the Adelaide Declaration. In 2008, ministers nominated five major developments that, over the 20-year period, had changed the ways in which people interacted with each other and thought about the purposes of schooling. These changes were set out in the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (see Box 1).

# An Australian Curriculum

## **Box 1: Changes over the period 1989-2008 with implications for education**

- Global integration and international mobility have increased rapidly in the past decade. As a consequence, new and exciting opportunities for Australians are emerging. This heightens the need to nurture an appreciation of, and respect for, social, cultural and religious diversity, and a sense of global citizenship.
- India, China and other Asian nations are growing and their influence on the world is increasing. Australians need to become 'Asia literate' by building strong relationships with Asia.
- Globalisation and technological change are placing greater demands on education and skill development in Australia, and the nature of jobs available to young Australians is changing faster than ever. Skilled jobs now dominate jobs growth, and people with university or vocational education and training qualifications fare much better in the employment market than early school-leavers. To maximise their opportunities for healthy, productive and rewarding futures, Australia's young people must be encouraged not only to complete secondary education, but also to proceed into further training or education.
- Complex environmental, social and economic pressures, such as climate change, that extend beyond national borders pose unprecedented challenges, requiring countries to work together in new ways. To meet these challenges, Australians must be able to comprehend and use scientific concepts and principles, and approach problem solving in new and creative ways.
- Rapid and continuing advances in information and communication technologies (ICT) are changing the ways people share, use, develop and process information and technology, and young people need to be highly skilled in ICT. While schools already employ these technologies in learning, there is a need to increase their effectiveness significantly over the next decade.

*Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians, December 2008, p.4*



## An Australian Curriculum

11. Education must not only respond to these remarkable changes but also, as far as possible, anticipate the conditions in which young Australians will need to function as individuals, citizens and workers when they complete their schooling. These future conditions are distant and difficult to predict. It is expected that almost all young Australians who begin primary school in 2011 will continue their initial education until 2022. Many will go on to further education or training through to the mid-2020s and later. Young people will need a wide and adaptive set of knowledge, understanding and skills and to meet the changing expectations of society and to contribute to the creation of a more productive, sustainable and just society.
12. An Australian Curriculum in the 21st century needs to acknowledge the changing ways in which young people will learn and the challenges that will continue to shape their learning in the future. The curriculum is important in setting out what will be taught, what students need to learn and the expected quality of that learning.
13. The commitment to develop a national curriculum reflects a willingness to work together, across geographical and school-sector boundaries, to provide a world-class education for all young Australians. Working nationally makes it possible to harness collective expertise and effort in the pursuit of this common goal. It also offers the potential of economies of scale and a substantial reduction in the duplication of time, effort and resources.
14. The Australian Curriculum also means that all young Australians can learn about the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, of their contribution to Australia, and of the consequences of colonial settlement for Indigenous communities, past and present. For Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders, the Australian Curriculum promotes the importance of pursuing excellence within education settings that respect and promote their cultural identity.

# An Australian Curriculum

## Goals of Education

15. The Melbourne Declaration commits 'to supporting all young Australians to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens' (see Box 2), and to promoting equity and excellence in education.

### Box 2: Educational goals for young Australians

Successful learners:

- develop their capacity to learn and play an active role in their own learning
- have the essential skills in literacy and numeracy, and are creative and productive users of technology, especially ICT, as a foundation for success in all learning areas
- are able to think deeply and logically, and obtain and evaluate evidence in a disciplined way as the result of studying fundamental disciplines
- are creative, innovative and resourceful, and are able to solve problems in ways that draw upon a range of learning areas and disciplines
- are able to plan activities independently, collaborate, work in teams and communicate ideas
- are able to make sense of their world and think about how things have become the way they are
- are on a pathway towards continued success in further education, training or employment, and acquire the skills to make informed learning and employment decisions throughout their lives
- are motivated to reach their full potential.

Confident and creative individuals:

- have a sense of self-worth, self-awareness and personal identity that enables them to manage their emotional, mental, spiritual and physical wellbeing
- have a sense of optimism about their lives and the future—are enterprising, show initiative and use their creative abilities
- develop personal values and attributes such as honesty, resilience, empathy and respect for others
- have the knowledge, skills, understandings and values to establish and maintain healthy, satisfying lives
- have the confidence and capability to pursue university or post-secondary vocational qualifications leading to rewarding and productive employment
- relate well to others and form and maintain healthy relationships
- are well prepared for their potential life roles as family, community and workforce members

## An Australian Curriculum

- embrace opportunities, make rational and informed decisions about their own lives and accept responsibility for their own actions.

Active and informed citizens:

- act with moral and ethical integrity
- appreciate Australia's social, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity, and have an understanding of Australia's system of government, history and culture
- understand and acknowledge the value of Indigenous cultures, and possess the knowledge, skills and understandings to contribute to, and benefit from, reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians
- are committed to national values of democracy, equity and justice, and participate in Australia's civic life
- are able to relate to and communicate across cultures, especially the cultures and countries of Asia
- work for the common good, in particular sustaining and improving natural and social environments
- are responsible global and local citizens.

*Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians, December 2008, pp. 8–9.*

# Development of the Australian Curriculum

## Propositions shaping the Australian Curriculum

16. The development of the Australian Curriculum is shaped by the following propositions.
- a) The Australian Curriculum recognises the entitlement of each student to knowledge, understanding and skills that provide a foundation for successful and lifelong learning and participation in the Australian community.
  - b) The Australian Curriculum is presented as a continuum of learning that makes clear to teachers what is to be taught across the years of schooling. It makes clear what students should learn and the quality of learning expected of them as they progress through school.
  - c) The Australian Curriculum is based on the assumptions that each student can learn and the needs of every student are important. It enables high expectations to be set for each student as teachers account for the current levels of learning of individual students and the different rates at which students develop.
  - d) The Australian Curriculum is aligned with the Early Years Learning Framework and builds on its key learning outcomes, namely: children have a strong sense of identity; children are connected with, and contribute to, their world; children have a strong sense of wellbeing; children are confident and involved learners; and children are effective communicators.
  - e) The Australian Curriculum helps prepare all young Australians to become competent and contributing members of the community. It builds firm and meaningful foundation skills as well as providing the basis for developing expertise for the increasing number of students who move on to specialised advanced studies in academic disciplines, professions and technical trades.
  - f) The Australian Curriculum specifies what all young Australians should learn as they progress through schooling and is designed to be taught within the overall teaching time and with the resources available to teachers and students. School authorities make decisions about the allocation of time and other resources.
  - g) The Australian Curriculum provides for rigorous, in-depth study, preferring depth to breadth wherever a choice needs to be made, with consideration also being given to the overall teaching and learning time available.
  - h) For some learning areas, the Australian Curriculum will be written with the expectation that they will be taught in each year of schooling from Foundation to Year 10. For other areas, the Australian Curriculum will describe an entitlement that students will have the opportunity to learn across Foundation to Year 8, as well as additional learning they may choose and/or schools may choose to provide in Years 9–10.

## Development of the Australian Curriculum

- i) The primary audience for the Australian Curriculum is teachers. The curriculum is concise and expressed in plain language while preserving a complexity appropriate for professional practitioners. Consistency in terms of language and broad structure supports teachers in planning within and across learning areas.
- j) Jurisdictions, systems and schools will be able to implement the Australian Curriculum in ways that value teachers' professional knowledge, reflect local contexts and take into account individual students' family, cultural and community backgrounds. Schools and teachers determine pedagogical and other delivery considerations.
- k) The Australian Curriculum is established on a strong evidence base, which is related to learning, pedagogy and what works in professional practice, and has been benchmarked against international curricula.

### Curriculum development process

17. The process for developing the Australian Curriculum has been designed to generate broad engagement with, and discussion and feedback about, the shape and content of the Australian Curriculum.
18. It involves four interrelated phases: curriculum shaping, curriculum writing, implementation, and curriculum evaluation and review.
19. Curriculum shaping involves the development of a paper for each learning area setting out a broad outline of the proposed curriculum. Expert advice is sought in the development of an initial draft shape paper released for wide public consultation. Following modification of the draft in light of consultation and feedback, a final shape paper is published on ACARA's website at [www.acara.edu.au](http://www.acara.edu.au).
20. Curriculum writing involves teams of writers, supported by expert advisory groups and ACARA curriculum staff, who draft content descriptions and achievement standards for Foundation to Year 12. The draft Australian Curriculum for each learning area is released for public consultation and is subsequently revised in light of the feedback. The writing stage culminates in publication of the Australian Curriculum for the learning area.
21. Preparation for implementation sees the Australian Curriculum delivered in an online environment for school authorities, schools and teachers to use. ACARA works with state and territory curriculum and school authorities to support their ongoing implementation planning.
22. Curriculum monitoring, evaluation and review processes are put in place to monitor and review the Australian Curriculum based on implementation feedback. The evaluation process may result in minor changes to, or a revision of, the curriculum.

## Development of the Australian Curriculum

23. Major features, processes and broad timeframes for these phases are elaborated in the Curriculum Development Process paper, which can be found at <http://www.acara.edu.au>.

## Scope of the Australian Curriculum

24. The Australian Curriculum has been written to take account of the growth and development of young people across the years of schooling, the diverse needs of the student population in Australian schools, and the knowledge, understanding and skills that all young Australians are entitled to learn in terms of learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities.
25. The Australian Curriculum makes clear to teachers what is to be taught. It also makes clear to students what they should learn and the quality of learning expected of them. Schools are able to decide how best to deliver the curriculum, drawing on integrated approaches where appropriate and using pedagogical approaches that account for students' needs, interests and the school and community context. School authorities will be able to offer curriculum beyond that specified in the Australian Curriculum.
26. The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians identifies three broad categories of outcomes that the curriculum should deliver for students (see Box 3). Thus the Australian Curriculum is developed in terms of learning area knowledge, skills and understandings and general capabilities.



## Scope of the Australian Curriculum

### Box 3: Intended educational outcomes for young Australians

*A solid foundation in knowledge, skills and understandings, and values on which further learning and adult life can be built:*

- The curriculum will include a strong focus on literacy and numeracy skills. It will also enable students to build social and emotional intelligence, and nurture student wellbeing through health and physical education in particular. The curriculum will support students to relate well to others and foster an understanding of Australian society, citizenship and national values through the study of civics and citizenship. As a foundation for further learning and adult life, the curriculum will include practical knowledge and skills development in areas such as ICT and design and technology, which are central to Australia's skilled economy and provide crucial pathways to post-school success.

*Deep knowledge, understanding, skills and values that will enable advanced learning and an ability to create new ideas and translate them into practical applications:*

- The curriculum will enable students to develop knowledge in the disciplines of English, mathematics, science, languages, humanities and the Arts; to understand the spiritual, moral and aesthetic dimensions of life; and open up new ways of thinking. It will also support the development of deep knowledge within a discipline, which provides the foundation for interdisciplinary approaches to innovation and complex problem solving.

*General capabilities that underpin flexible and analytical thinking, a capacity to work with others and an ability to move across subject disciplines to develop new expertise:*

- The curriculum will support young people to develop a range of generic and employability skills that have particular application to the world of work and further education and training, such as planning and organising, the ability to think flexibly, to communicate well and to work in teams. Young people also need to develop the capacity to think creatively, innovate, solve problems and engage with new disciplines.

*Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians, December 2008, p.13*

## Dimensions of the Australian Curriculum

27. The Australian Curriculum describes a learning entitlement for each Australian student. It sets out what young people should be taught (through the specification of curriculum content from learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities) and an expectation of the quality of their learning (depth of understanding and sophistication of skills described through achievement standards).
28. The Australian Curriculum has a three-dimensional design — discipline-based learning areas, general capabilities as essential 21st century skills and contemporary cross-curriculum priorities.
29. The learning areas for which Australian Curriculum will be developed are:
- English
  - Mathematics
  - Science
  - Humanities and Social Science (comprising History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship and Economics and Business)
  - The Arts (comprising Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music and Visual Arts)
  - Languages
  - Health and Physical Education
  - Technologies (comprising Digital Technologies and Design and Technologies)
30. The learning areas and the disciplines from which they are drawn provide a foundation of learning in schools because they reflect the way in which knowledge has, and will continue to be, developed and codified. However, 21st century learning does not fit neatly into a curriculum solely organised by learning areas or subjects that reflect the disciplines. Increasingly, in a world where knowledge itself is constantly growing and evolving, students need to develop a set of knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions, or general capabilities that apply across subject-based content and equip them to be lifelong learners able to operate with confidence in a complex, information-rich, globalised world.
31. The general capabilities define knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that can be developed and applied across the curriculum to help students become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens. The general capabilities to be included in the Australian Curriculum are:
- Literacy

## Dimensions of the Australian Curriculum

- Numeracy
- Information and communication technology (ICT) capability
- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability
- Ethical understanding
- Intercultural understanding.

32. As shown in Box 3, on page 15, the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians sees these general capabilities as including 'planning and organising, the ability to think flexibly, to communicate well and to work in teams, the capacity to think creatively, innovate, solve problems and engage with new disciplines'.

33. The Australian Curriculum specifically covers the following general capabilities:

### **Literacy**

Students become literate as they develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions to interpret and use language confidently for learning and communicating in and out of school and for participating effectively in society. Literacy involves students in listening to, reading, viewing, speaking, writing and creating oral, print, visual and digital texts, and using and modifying language for different purposes in a range of contexts.

### **Numeracy**

Students become numerate as they develop the knowledge and skills to use mathematics confidently across other learning areas at school and in their lives more broadly. Numeracy involves students in recognising and understanding the role of mathematics in the world and having the dispositions and capacities to use mathematical knowledge and skills purposefully.

### **Information communication technology (ICT) capability**

Students develop ICT capability as they learn to use ICT effectively and appropriately to access, create and communicate information and ideas, solve problems and work collaboratively in all learning areas at school, and in their lives beyond school. The capability involves students in learning to make the most of the digital technologies available to them, adapting to new ways of doing things as technologies evolve and limiting the risks to themselves and others in a digital environment.

## Dimensions of the Australian Curriculum

### **Critical and creative thinking**

Students develop capability in critical and creative thinking as they learn to generate and evaluate knowledge, clarify concepts and ideas, seek possibilities, consider alternatives and solve problems. Critical and creative thinking are integral to activities that require students to think broadly and deeply using skills, behaviours and dispositions such as reason, logic, resourcefulness, imagination and innovation in all learning areas at school and in their lives beyond school.

### **Personal and social capability**

Students develop personal and social capability as they learn to understand themselves and others, and manage their relationships, learning, lives and work more effectively. The capability involves students in a range of practices including recognising and regulating emotions, developing empathy for others and understanding relationships, establishing and building positive relationships, making responsible decisions, working effectively in teams, handling challenging situations constructively and developing leadership skills.

### **Ethical understanding**

Students develop ethical understanding as they identify and investigate the nature of ethical concepts, values and character traits, and understand how reasoning can assist ethical judgment. Ethical understanding involves students in building a strong personal and socially oriented ethical outlook that helps them to manage context, conflict and uncertainty, and to develop an awareness of the influence that their values and behaviour have on others.

### **Intercultural understanding**

Students develop intercultural understanding as they learn to value their own cultures, languages and beliefs, and those of others. They come to understand how personal, group and national identities are shaped, and the variable and changing nature of culture. The capability involves students in learning about and engaging with diverse cultures in ways that recognise commonalities and differences, create connections with others and cultivate mutual respect.

## Dimensions of the Australian Curriculum

34. The Australian Curriculum is designed to meet the needs of students by delivering a relevant, contemporary and engaging curriculum that build on the educational goals of the Melbourne Declaration. The Melbourne Declaration identifies three key areas that need to be addressed for the benefit of both individuals and Australia as a whole. In the Australian Curriculum these have become priorities that provide students with the tools and language to engage with and better understand their world at a range of levels. The priorities provide dimensions which will enrich the curriculum through development of considered and focused content that fits naturally within learning areas. They enable the delivery of learning area content at the same time as developing knowledge, understanding and skills relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia or Sustainability. Incorporation of the priorities will encourage conversations between learning areas and between students, teachers and the wider community. The cross-curriculum priorities to be included in the Australian Curriculum are:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures
- Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia
- Sustainability.

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures**

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures priority provides opportunities for all learners to deepen their knowledge of Australia by engaging with the world's oldest continuous living cultures. Students will understand that contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are strong, resilient, rich and diverse. The knowledge and understanding gained through this priority will enhance the ability of all young people to participate positively in the ongoing development of Australia.

### **Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia**

The Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia priority will ensure that students learn about and recognise the diversity within and between the countries of the Asia region. They will develop knowledge and understanding of Asian societies, cultures, beliefs and environments, and the connections between the peoples of Asia, Australia, and the rest of the world. Asia literacy provides students with the skills to communicate and engage with the peoples of Asia so they can effectively live, work and learn in the region.

### **Sustainability**

The Sustainability priority will allow young Australians to develop the knowledge, skills, values and world views necessary for them to act in ways that contribute to more sustainable patterns of living. It will enable individuals and communities to reflect on ways of interpreting and engaging with the world. The Sustainability priority is futures-oriented, focusing on protecting environments and creating a more ecologically and socially just world through informed action. Actions that support more sustainable patterns of living require consideration of environmental, social, cultural and economic systems and their interdependence.

# Dimensions of the Australian Curriculum

## The curriculum across the years of schooling

35. For some learning areas, the Australian Curriculum has been written with the intention that it is taught to all students in each year of schooling from Foundation to Year 10, with decisions to be made subsequently about further learning in the senior secondary years. For other learning areas, the Australian Curriculum will be written for Foundation to Year 10, but with the intention that it is taught to all students across Foundation to Year 8, with subsequent decisions to be made about further learning in Years 9, 10, and then for senior secondary schooling.
36. The relative emphasis given to each of the eight learning areas varies across the stages of schooling according to factors such as:
- making literacy and numeracy priority areas in the early years
  - increasing emphasis on all eight learning areas in the upper primary years and in Years 7–8
  - creating greater opportunities for students to choose learning pathways that build individual needs and interests in secondary schooling.
37. In the early years of schooling, priority is given to literacy and numeracy development because these are the foundations on which further learning is built. The foundation for literacy is built primarily in English and the foundation for numeracy primarily in mathematics. However, both literacy and numeracy must be reinforced and strengthened through learning in other contexts, including science, history and geography. Priority is also given to movement skills development, participation in physical activity and the development of safer and healthier personal practices through the teaching of health and physical education. Equally, all students in these early years will have the opportunity to develop their sensory, cognitive and affective appreciation of the world around them through exploratory and creative learning in The Arts and Technologies. The opportunity to learn a language may also be available subject to school and curriculum authority arrangements.
38. In the upper primary years and the first years of lower secondary schooling, the Australian Curriculum continues to prioritise English and literacy and mathematics and numeracy, along with the opportunity for a broad education drawing from each of the eight learning areas outlined in the Melbourne Declaration. The Australian Curriculum across these years of schooling provides core or common learning opportunities, while also providing opportunities for students to deepen their learning in particular areas according to their interests and needs.



## Dimensions of the Australian Curriculum

39. The design of the Australian Curriculum for Years 9 and 10 recognises that many students commence senior secondary pathways and programs, including vocational pathways, in these years. The curriculum is designed to provide increased opportunities for students to make choices about learning pathways and to deepen their understanding in each learning area. It is based on the assumption that school and/or curriculum authorities will provide learning opportunities in English, mathematics, science, history, and health and physical education for all students and will also provide learning opportunities from other learning areas and in vocational and applied learning, including National Trade Cadetships. In Years 9 and 10, there is flexibility for students to undertake more specialised learning pathways that ensure all students are fully engaged and prepared to continue learning into the senior secondary years.
40. The senior secondary curriculum provides students with increased opportunities to make choices about pathways through school and beyond. These choices are informed by previous success and enjoyment, future options for training, learning or employment, and the setting in which the learning is to occur. The senior school curriculum offers more opportunities for specialisation in learning, including within the regular school program and through accredited vocational education and training.

### The diversity of learners

41. ACARA is committed to the development of a high-quality curriculum for all Australian students that promotes excellence and equity in education.
42. All students are entitled to rigorous, relevant and engaging learning programs drawn from a challenging curriculum that addresses their individual learning needs. The Australian Curriculum recognises that the needs of all students encompass cognitive, affective, physical, social, and aesthetic curriculum experiences.
43. The three-dimensional design of the Australian Curriculum, comprising learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities, provides teachers with flexibility to cater for the diverse needs of students across Australia and to personalise their learning.
44. ACARA will publish explicit advice for teachers, along with examples, on using the three-dimensional design of the Australian Curriculum to address the diversity of learning needs, including the needs of students with disability, gifted and talented students, and students for whom English is an additional language or dialect (EAL/D).
45. ACARA acknowledges that many **students with disability** are able to achieve educational standards commensurate with their peers, as long as the necessary adjustments are made to the way in which they are taught and to the means through which they demonstrate their learning.

## Dimensions of the Australian Curriculum

46. In some cases curriculum adjustments are necessary to provide equitable opportunities for students to access age-equivalent learning area content. Teachers can draw from Australian Curriculum content at different levels along the Foundation to Year 10 sequences. In particular, teachers can use the extended general capabilities learning continua in Literacy, Numeracy and Personal and social capability to adjust the focus of learning according to individual student need.
47. Teachers can use the Australian Curriculum flexibly to meet the individual learning needs of **gifted and talented** students.
48. Teachers can enrich student learning by providing students with opportunities to work with learning area content in more depth or breadth; emphasising specific aspects of the general capabilities learning continua (for example, the higher order cognitive skills of the Critical and creative thinking capability); and/or focusing on cross-curriculum priorities. Teachers can also accelerate student learning by drawing on content from later levels in the Australian Curriculum and/or from local state and territory teaching and learning materials.
49. Students for whom **English is another language or dialect (EAL/D)** enter Australian schools at different ages and at different stages of English language learning and have various educational backgrounds in their first languages. Whilst many EAL/D students bring already highly developed literacy (and numeracy) skills in their own language to their learning of Standard Australian English, there is a significant number of students who are not literate in their first language, and have had little or no formal schooling.
50. While the objectives of the Australian Curriculum are the same for all students, EAL/D students must reach these objectives while simultaneously learning a new language and learning content and skills through that new language. These students may require additional time and support, along with teaching that explicitly addresses their individual language learning needs. Students who have had no formal schooling will need additional time and support in order to acquire skills for effective learning in formal settings.
51. A national *English as an Additional Language or Dialect: Teacher Resource* has been developed to support teachers in making the Australian Curriculum: Foundation to Year 10 in each learning area accessible to EAL/D students. This resource is located at [www.acara.edu.au/curriculum/student\\_diversity/eald\\_teacher\\_resource.html](http://www.acara.edu.au/curriculum/student_diversity/eald_teacher_resource.html).



## Curriculum content

### Organisation of the Australian Curriculum F-10

52. The key elements of the F-10 Australian Curriculum in each learning area are the rationale, aims, curriculum content and achievement standards. Year level descriptions or band descriptions provide information about the learning contexts that apply to the content descriptions and achievement standards.
53. The curriculum content, presented as content descriptions, specifies the knowledge, understanding and skills that teachers are to teach and young people are expected to learn across the years of schooling.
54. F–10 content descriptions are accompanied by ‘content elaborations’ which, as support material, provide illustrations and/or examples of the content descriptions.
55. The achievement standards describe what students are typically able to understand and able to do. They describe expected achievement. Across F–10 the set of achievement standards describe a broad sequence of expected learning.
56. The sequence of achievement standards within each learning area or subject emphasises the depth of conceptual understanding, the sophistication of skills and the ability to apply essential knowledge expected of students.
57. Achievement standards will be accompanied by sets of annotated student work samples, as support material, to assist teachers to make judgments about the extent to which each achievement standard has been met.

### Learning area knowledge, understanding and skills

58. The Australian Curriculum describes knowledge, understanding and skills organised by learning areas. The selection of content for particular learning areas takes into account the rapid expansion in bodies of knowledge and the challenges this presents for curriculum development.
59. For each learning area, the Australian Curriculum emphasises the knowledge, understanding and skills that form the entitlement of a learning area. Teachers are able to choose how best to introduce concepts and processes, and how to progressively deepen understanding to maximise the engagement and learning of every student.
60. The Australian Curriculum is designed to ensure that students develop the knowledge and understanding on which the major disciplines are based. Each discipline offers a distinctive lens through which we interpret experience, determine what counts as evidence and a good argument for action, scrutinise knowledge and argument, make judgments about value and add to knowledge.
61. Rather than being self-contained or fixed, disciplines are interconnected, dynamic and growing. A discipline-based curriculum should allow for cross-disciplinary learning that broadens and enriches each student’s learning.

## Curriculum content

62. In each learning area, the Australian Curriculum provides a rationale for the choice of curriculum content. The rationale describes the nature of the subject in general terms and provides an outline of how learning in this course relates to the contemporary world and current practice. It also explains the place and purpose of the subject, how learning in the subject is valuable and how it contributes to meeting the national goals of schooling.
63. The scope and sequence for each learning area ensures that learning is appropriately ordered and unnecessary repetition is avoided.

### General capabilities

64. General capabilities are represented to different degrees in each of the learning areas. Some are best developed within specific learning areas. Others can be developed in any learning area depending on teachers' choices of classroom activities. Curriculum documents make explicit how the general capabilities can be addressed in each learning area and allow flexibility in implementation.
65. For each of the general capabilities, a learning continuum has been developed that describes the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that students can be expected to have developed at particular stages of schooling. The general capabilities have been developed to enhance learning area content and will assist teachers to plan for and to guide student learning of these important areas of the curriculum. Teachers are expected to teach and assess general capabilities to the extent that they are incorporated within each learning area. State and territory curriculum and school authorities will determine whether and how student learning of the general capabilities will be separately assessed and reported.

### Cross-curriculum priorities

66. The cross-curriculum priorities are contemporary issues about which young Australians should learn. The cross-curriculum priorities to be addressed in the Australian Curriculum F-10 are:
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures
  - Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia
  - Sustainability.
67. Each of these priorities is represented in learning areas in ways appropriate to that area. For each of the cross-curriculum priorities, a set of organising ideas has been developed. These are consistent across the curriculum and are reinforced in learning areas.

## Curriculum content

### Development of the F-10 curriculum on a year-by-year or bands-of-school-years basis

68. In English and Mathematics, much is known about sequences of learning, and there is empirical evidence to guide the writing of curriculum on a year-by-year basis. For science, history and geography the curriculum has also been developed on a year-by-year basis although the descriptions of skills in these areas, for example, are by bands of years.
69. Decisions about the structure of the curriculum for the remaining learning areas will be the subject of consultation during the development process and will take into account:
- a) the evidence base available to guide writers – that is, what is known about the typical sequence of student learning and the development of competence in a given learning area
  - b) the frequency with which a subject is expected to be taught to all students — that is, whether it is expected that all students will learn the subject in each year of schooling
  - c) the extent to which it is desirable to provide flexibility to schools in how they deliver the curriculum — that is, whether writing the curriculum in bands of years provides schools with greater flexibility to decide when to teach particular content, while bearing in mind the increased risk of repetition of content for students who move between schools.

### Organisation of the senior secondary Australian Curriculum

70. The senior secondary Australian Curriculum will be written for subjects as agreed to nationally.
71. The senior secondary Australian Curriculum comprises rationale and aims, learning outcomes, content descriptions and achievement standards.
72. Content descriptions detail the knowledge, understanding and skills to be taught and learned within a given subject, including the Australian Curriculum general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities that naturally align with the subject.
73. Achievement standards refer to the quality of learning (the depth of understanding, extent of knowledge and sophistication of skill) demonstrated by students within a given subject. The senior secondary achievement standards are subject-specific and align with the major dimensions of learning as described in the learning outcomes and detailed in the content for the subject. Typically these dimensions are categorised into knowledge and understanding, and skills and written as five levels of achievement.

## Curriculum content

74. State and territory curriculum, assessment and certification authorities continue to be responsible for the structure and organisation of their senior secondary courses and will determine how they integrate the Australian Curriculum content and achievement standards into their courses. They will determine the assessment and certification specifications for their courses that use the Australian Curriculum content and achievement standards and any additional information, guidelines and rules to satisfy local requirements.

## Quality assurance and review of the Australian Curriculum

75. The development of the Australian Curriculum takes account of the following assumptions:
- a) The teaching and learning programs offered by schools are based on the Australian Curriculum, in conjunction with state or territory curriculum, and other learning opportunities and activities determined by the school.
  - b) The Australian Curriculum for each learning area describes core content that should be taught when that curriculum is offered.
  - c) Where Australian Curriculum exists for a learning area, it should form the basis of what is taught in schools for that learning area.
  - d) For any year of schooling, Foundation to Year 10, the Australian Curriculum is written so that it should not take up more than 80 per cent of the total teaching time available in schools, with this proportion peaking in Years 7 and 8, and reducing significantly in Years 9 and 10 as core expectations are reduced.
  - e) The Australian Curriculum content for any learning area should be ‘teachable’ within an indicative time allocation that ACARA sets for its curriculum writers, to avoid overcrowding and to allow for the inclusion of other content.
  - f) Decisions relating to the organisation and delivery of the Australian Curriculum, including such matters as time allocations, rest with education authorities and schools. School and curriculum authorities can specify more teaching time.
76. Development of the curriculum is based on the assumption that teachers, when planning for teaching and learning, will account for current levels of learning of individual students and the different rates at which students develop.
77. The design of the curriculum assumes that schools are best able to decide how to deliver the curriculum and will, for example, apply integrated approaches where appropriate and use pedagogical approaches that account for students’ needs, interests and the school and community context.
78. The Australian Curriculum leaves scope for education authorities and/or schools to offer additional learning opportunities beyond those provided by the Australian Curriculum.
79. Teachers will use a range of different assessment strategies to ascertain what each student has learnt — actual achievement — and will make judgments about the extent and quality of each student’s achievement in relation to the Australian Curriculum achievement standards.

## Teaching, assessing and reporting

80. Reporting to parents will provide information about a student's actual achievement against the achievement standards.
81. The use of Australian Curriculum achievement standards as a common reference point for reporting to parents will contribute to national consistency in reporting.
82. Current requirements for reporting to parents include the requirement for student achievement to be reported in terms of A–E grades (or an equivalent 5-point scale).
83. Education authorities and individual schools are able to determine, in consultation with parents and communities, the style and format of reporting that best meets local needs and circumstances, including provision of any additional elements of student reports. This might include written comments about the quality of learning demonstrated by the student; indicators of student effort, engagement, behaviour and improvement; student self-assessment; and future learning goals.
84. As the Australian Curriculum is being implemented, ACARA will work with the states and territories and the Australian Government to investigate ways that may strengthen national consistency in reporting of student learning.
85. The Australian Curriculum is a dynamic curriculum. The online publication of the curriculum facilitates ongoing monitoring and review, as well as providing the opportunity to update the curriculum in a well-managed and effectively communicated manner.
86. Any updating will take into account review and evaluation data; new national and international knowledge and practice about learning, teaching, curriculum design and implementation; and contemporary research in discipline and cross-discipline areas.
87. In this way, the Australian Curriculum will be subject to evaluation and validation during implementation and will continue to be benchmarked against the curricula of countries that are leading the world in education excellence and performance.

## Towards a world-class Australian Curriculum

88. The Australian Curriculum provides a world-class curriculum. The Australian Curriculum:
- has been subject to extensive and sustained consultation during its development
  - has been benchmarked against curricula of leading nations during the development process
  - sets challenging standards for each student
  - does not overload the curriculum
  - pursues deep learning.
89. The Australian Curriculum has been written to equip young Australians with the knowledge, understanding and skills that will enable them to engage effectively with, and prosper in, society, to compete in a globalised world and to thrive in the information-rich workplaces of the future.
90. While the traditional structure of scope and sequence within discrete learning areas is retained, the Australian Curriculum gives explicit attention to seven general capabilities and three cross-curriculum priorities. This will ensure that Australian students are able to learn across disciplines, to develop and build new expertise, as well as function effectively in the communities and workplaces of the 21st century.
91. The Australian Curriculum is published online, via the website <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au>, which is accessible to all members of the Australian community. Publishing the Australian Curriculum online provides flexibility in how people use and organise the curriculum. For example, users can view, download and print the curriculum for a particular learning area at one year level or across multiple year levels. They can also view, download and print content with a focus on the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities.



# Curriculum Design Paper

Version 3.1



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[www.acara.edu.au](http://www.acara.edu.au)



**Australian Curriculum, Assessment and  
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# Curriculum design: Foundation to Year 12

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## Amendment History

Date	Version	Comment
18 May 2009	1.0	Approved by the ACARA Board (21–22 May).
5 November 2009	2.0	Amended to include changes approved by the ACARA Board (6–7 October); separation of specifications for F–10 and senior secondary; update on achievement standards.
February 2010	2.1	Amended to include updated nomenclature.
2011	2.2	Amended to align with <i>The Shape of the Australian Curriculum v2.0</i> and the achievement standards F–10.
March 2012	3.0	Amended to align with <i>The Shape of the Australian Curriculum v3.0</i> and the updated design specifications for the senior secondary curriculum.
June 2013	3.1	Amended to include explanatory notes clarifying indicative times.

# Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

This document provides background information and design specifications to guide the writing of the Australian Curriculum. The document has been and will continue to be revised from time to time, taking account of issues that have arisen during the curriculum development process and/or as the scope of the Australian Curriculum changes.

## 1.2 Related documents

This document should be read in conjunction with other key documents, namely:

- Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (2008)
- *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum v4.0*
- *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum* documents for each curriculum area
- The Curriculum Development Process v6.0

## 2. The context for the F - 12 Australian Curriculum

The work of the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (ACARA) in developing the Australian Curriculum is guided by the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (2008). *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum v4.0*, builds on this work and provides detail about the context for and development of the Australian Curriculum.

### **Promoting world-class curriculum and assessment**

*Curriculum will be designed to develop successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens.*

*State, Territory and Commonwealth governments will work together with all school sectors to ensure world-class curriculum in Australia. Together the national curriculum and curriculum specified at the State, Territory and local levels will enable every student to develop:*

- *A solid foundation in knowledge, understanding, skills and values on which further learning and adult life can be built*
- *Deep knowledge, understanding, skills and values that will enable advanced learning and an ability to create new ideas and translate them into practical applications*
- *General capabilities that underpin flexible and analytical thinking, a capacity to work with others and an ability to move across subject disciplines to develop new expertise.*

*Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians December 2008*

### **Building Australia's future**

*Education plays a critical role in shaping the lives of the nation's future citizens. To play this role effectively, the intellectual, personal, social and educational needs of young Australians must be addressed at a time when ideas about the goals of education are changing and will continue to evolve.*

*The Shape of the Australian Curriculum October 2011*

A curriculum for the twenty-first century will need to reflect and acknowledge the changing nature of young people as learners and the challenges and demands that will continue to shape their learning in the future. Young people will need a wide and adaptive set of skills to meet the changing expectations of society and to contribute to the creation of a more productive, sustainable and just society.

Curriculum is only one element of education that influences how well young Australians are prepared for their futures, but it is important because it sets the level of expectation for their learning. High-performing countries set high expectations. They support the fulfilment of those expectations with high-quality teaching, school and system leadership, and commitment and support from families, communities, business and industry. Providing high quality education is valuable to the community at large, and justifies people's investments of time, effort and resources.

## 3. Elements of the Australian Curriculum

The Australian Curriculum F-12 is developed as a web-based publication that is, using web technologies to embed links and enable multiple views and access. The key elements of the Australian Curriculum will be curriculum content (with content elaborations) and achievement standards (with work sample portfolios).

### 3.1. Curriculum content

Curriculum content identifies what teachers are expected to teach and students are expected to learn. Curriculum content includes knowledge, understanding and skills that will be described for a particular learning area/subject at a particular year level (for example, Mathematics, Year 5) or bands of years (for example, the Arts, Years 5-6).

The curriculum content, presented as content descriptions, specifies the knowledge, understanding and skills that young people are expected to learn and that teachers are expected to teach across the years of schooling. The F–10 content descriptions will be accompanied by ‘content elaborations’ which, as support material, will provide illustrations and/or examples of the content descriptions.

### 3.2 Achievement standards

Achievement standards describe what students are typically able to understand and do. Achievement standards will describe the learning (understanding and skills) expected of students at each year level from F-10.

Across F–10 the set of achievement standards describe a broad sequence of expected learning. The sequence of achievement standards provides teachers with a framework of growth and development in a curriculum area. This will assist teachers to plan and monitor learning, and to make judgments about student achievement.

Achievement standards can support formative and summative assessment practices and aid consistency of assessment and reporting across states and territories.

For each learning area the achievement standards will be accompanied by portfolios of annotated work samples that illustrate the expected learning.

### 3.3 Foundation to Year 10

For F-10, the curriculum content and achievement standards will be presented with other information that sets the context for what is to be taught. This information will include:

- Rationale
- Aims
- Organisation of the <learning area/subject> curriculum
- Representation of general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities.

## 3. Elements of the Australian Curriculum

### 3.4 Senior Secondary

ACARA will develop the senior secondary Australian Curriculum, which will specifically include content and achievement standards. State and territory curriculum, assessment and certification authorities will develop courses that contain the 'national' content and achievement standards as well as additional information, guidelines and rules that meet local assessment and certification requirements. Senior secondary courses are approved by the relevant state and territory curriculum, assessment and certification authority.

The specifications developed by ACARA for each subject in the senior secondary Australian Curriculum include:

- a. key elements:
  - subject rationale and aims
  - unit learning outcomes
  - content descriptions
  - achievement standards
- b. information that:
  - outlines the purpose of each unit in relation to the overall rationale and aims
  - explains the structure of, and connection between, the units
  - explains connections between the F-10 Australian Curriculum and the senior secondary curriculum in the learning area
  - identifies any assumptions about prior learning
  - defines key terms and gives any key references.

## 4. Design considerations: F - 12

This section provides key considerations for the process of curriculum writing. In particular, curriculum writers will consider the following matters:

- **The nature of the learner and learning**, including consideration of how the Australian Curriculum will take into account the developmental changes in young people attending school.
- The **whole curriculum** and how Australian Curriculum learning areas relate to it.
- **Structural matters**, including commencement and completion of school and transition points.
- **Inclusivity** and how the Australian Curriculum will provide for the educational needs of every child.
- **General capabilities**, describing how the Australian Curriculum will attend to general capabilities learning.
- **Cross-curriculum priorities**, describing perspectives that should be included in each learning area.

### 4.1 Nature of the learner and learning

The Australian Curriculum will detail what teachers are expected to teach and students are expected to learn for each year of schooling. The curriculum will describe the knowledge, understanding and skills and that students will be expected to develop for each learning area across the years of schooling. This description of curriculum content will result in a curriculum sequence that will represent what is known about the progression of learning in that area.

Teachers understand the developmental diversity of the students they teach and are responsible for organising learning opportunities to meet individual learning needs. While the curriculum will be described by years or bands of years, its organisation and presentation will take account of changing developmental characteristics of students across Foundation to Year 12. There are varied views about the best way to organise the curriculum into phases or stages, but there is general agreement that the curriculum should not predetermine the instructional approach to be taken by teachers and should provide some flexibility for them to accommodate different levels of student development and achievement and approaches to learning.

Writing of the Australian Curriculum will take account of the broad characteristics of the learner and learning within four overlapping age bands. These are documented in *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum v4.0* (pp. 15-18). While written on a year or band-of-year basis, the curriculum will need to acknowledge that, in any one year-group, there will be a significant range of achievement. Curriculum documents will be written in a way that assists teachers to identify and respond to this range of achievement.



## 4. Design considerations: F - 12

### 4.2 The whole curriculum

In developing a national curriculum for particular learning areas, the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* is a key reference point. The Declaration's second goal is that 'All young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens' and the declaration states that curriculum will be designed to develop such learners. The Declaration (p. 13) also proposes that the Australian Curriculum (and state or territory and local curriculum) will develop the following:

- A solid foundation in knowledge, understanding, skills and values on which further learning and adult life can be built.
- Deep knowledge, understanding, skills and values that will enable advanced learning and an ability to create new ideas and translate them into practical applications.
- General capabilities that underpin flexible and analytical thinking, a capacity to work with others and an ability to move across subject disciplines to develop new expertise.

The Australian Curriculum documents will indicate how learning in each area contributes to the national goals and the agreed features of a quality curriculum. This advice will assist teachers to see the whole curriculum, as well as how learning in each national curriculum area contributes to the whole. The whole view of curriculum includes state/territory and school-developed curriculum.

The Australian Curriculum for each learning area or subject describes core content that should be taught to students studying in that learning area/subject. Where Australian Curriculum exists for a learning area or subject, it should be taught in schools for that learning area.

For any year of schooling, Foundation to Year 10, the Australian Curriculum is written so that it should not take up more than 80 per cent of the total teaching time available in schools. This proportion peaks in Years 7 and 8 and reduces significantly in Years 9 and 10 as core expectations are reduced.

The Australian Curriculum content for any learning area should be 'teachable' within the indicative time allocation that ACARA sets for its curriculum writers, to avoid overcrowding and to allow for the inclusion of other content. Such an approach is not designed to establish time allocations for education systems and sectors, schools or teachers. Rather, it is a design assumption about relative emphasis given to curriculum areas and is intended to guide writers on the teaching/learning time that they can assume as they write the curriculum.

Decisions relating to the organisation and delivery of the Australian Curriculum, including such matters as time allocations, rest with education authorities and schools. School and curriculum authorities can specify more teaching time.

Curriculum writers will be guided by the indicative time allocations as shown in Table 1 for Foundation to Year 10. The senior secondary curriculum is written notionally to 50–60 hours per semester unit.

## 4. Design considerations: F - 12

**Table 1: Indicative times for writers**

Learning Area	Subject	Year F	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	
English		27%	27%	27%	22%	22%	20%	20%	12%	12%	12%	12%	
Mathematics		18%	18%	18%	18%	18%	16%	16%	12%	12%	12%	12%	
Science		4%	4%	4%	7%	7%	7%	7%	10%	10%	12%	12%	
Humanities and Social Sciences	History	2%	2%	2%	4%	4%	4%	4%	5%	5%	5%	5%	
	Geography	2%	2%	2%	4%	4%	4%	4%	5%	5%	5%*	5%*	
	Economics and Business		-					2%	2%	2%	2%	5%*	5%*
	Civics and Citizenship				2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%*	2%*	
The Arts		4%	4%	4%	5%	5%	5%	5%	8%	8%	8%*	8%*	
Health and Physical Education		8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	
Languages		equivalent to 5% per year							8%	8%	8%*	8%*	
Technologies	Design and Technologies	2%	2%	2%	4%	4%	6%	6%	8%	8%	4%*	4%*	
	Digital Technologies										4%*	4%*	
PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL TIME ALLOCATED		72%	72%	72%	79%	79%	79%	79%	80%	80%	49%	49%	
PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL TIME UNALLOCATED		28%	28%	28%	21%	21%	21%	21%	20%	20%	51%	51%	

**Notes:**

- The indicative times are provided as percentages of total teaching time and are developed to guide curriculum writers only.
- Decisions about the actual organisation and delivery of curriculum, including opportunities for integration are best taken at the school level.
- The time taken for individual students to learn a body of knowledge, understanding and skill will vary significantly, with some students learning more quickly and others needing more time.
- The estimated percentages assume a total of 1000 hours of teaching time each year (25 hours of teaching time each week; 40 weeks/year).
- 1% equates to approximately 10 hours per year.
- \* indicates that the Australian Curriculum will be developed on the assumption that the curriculum could be taught as an elective.

## 4. Design considerations: F - 12

### 4.3 Structural matters

Decisions about the structure of the curriculum for each learning area will be the subject of consultation during the development process and will take into account:

- the evidence base available to guide writers, that is, what is known about the typical sequence of student learning and the development of competence in a given learning area/subject
- the frequency with which a learning area/subject is expected to be taught to all students, that is, whether it is expected all students will learn the subject in each year of schooling
- the extent to which it is desirable to provide flexibility to schools in how they deliver the curriculum, that is, whether writing the curriculum in bands of years provides schools with greater flexibility to decide when to teach particular content, while bearing in mind the increased risk of repetition of content for students who move between schools.

The Australian states and territories have different structural arrangements for organising and delivering curriculum. These differences and the way in which ACARA will address them are outlined below.

i. School starting age.

While there is variation in the age of and requirement for commencement of schooling between states and territories, the Australian Curriculum will take Foundation Year (known in states and territories variously as Kindergarten, Pre-primary, Preparatory, Reception, Transition) as the first year of schooling and design curriculum for students who are between 5 and 6 years old in this first year.

ii. The placement of Year 7 in primary or secondary schooling.

There is significant variation in the placement of Year 7 within curriculum and school arrangements. While most states and territories have Year 7 as the first year of secondary schooling and the rest have it as the last year of primary schooling, there is considerable variation in the ways that schools are organised, including separate primary and secondary schools, middle years structures and Year 10 to Year 12 school structures. The Australian Curriculum will be designed for Year 7 to be taught in a range of settings and not necessarily requiring specialist teachers and resources.

iii. The use of stages or phases of schooling to organise the curriculum or as organisers of schooling

The Australian Curriculum will be organised by years or bands of years of schooling, with age-related developmental considerations being taken into account within this framework. This approach to curriculum design does not preclude schools and school authorities aggregating curriculum content across years to facilitate a stage of schooling delivery strategy or to facilitate composite or multi-age class arrangements.

## 4. Design considerations: F - 12

### iv. Commencement of senior secondary schooling

Some states and territories allow early commencement of senior school studies, based on curriculum documents designed for Year 11 and Year 12 students. The Australian Curriculum will be designed for Years F–10 and Senior Secondary Years. This does not preclude states and territories continuing to allow early commencement of senior secondary curriculum.

### 4.4 Inclusivity

The Australian Curriculum will contribute to achieving the goals of the Melbourne Declaration, including the promotion of equity and excellence in education. The curriculum must value and build on students' prior learning, experiences and goals. Examples used in the curriculum should reflect the diversity of knowledge, experience and cultural values of students. Particular consideration should be given to visible and positive ways of representing groups that might otherwise be vulnerable to exclusionary pressures.

Some of the variation among students in their level of development and progress can become the basis for inequities in their educational experiences. The Australian Curriculum is developed to ensure that curriculum content and achievement standards establish high expectations for all students. The curriculum provides flexibility for teachers to take into account the different rates at which students develop and a diverse range of learning and assessment needs. In developing curriculum for all Australian students, the Board will not accommodate these differences by setting different expectations for different groups, since that reinforces differences and creates inequitable outcomes.

Teachers understand the diversity in the students they teach and are responsible for organising learning opportunities to meet individual learning needs. Teachers, schools and school authorities have a primary role in dealing with these differences. For example, for students with intellectual disabilities, individual education plans are developed to determine which adjustments should be made to the curriculum to best meet the needs of the individual student.

As per current arrangements, teachers will refer to school authority policies, resources and practices designed to assist particular student cohorts as they plan for and teach the Australian Curriculum. These policies typically address support for:

- students from low socioeconomic backgrounds
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- students learning English as an additional language or dialect
- students of non-English speaking background
- students who live in isolated communities
- students with a physical or intellectual disability.

In addition, issues of gender and levels of academic achievement need to be taken into account to ensure an inclusive curriculum.

## 4. Design considerations: F - 12

The senior secondary Australian Curriculum will be designed with the needs of the full range of students in mind. Consideration will be given to making each senior secondary Australian Curriculum subject accessible to as many students as possible, acknowledging that the full suite of courses and pathways available in states and territories, across and within learning areas, will provide for a range of interests and capabilities. In some cases state/territory-developed courses and pathway options will continue to exist, further extending the opportunities available to students.

The Australian Curriculum promotes excellence and equity in education. The Australian Curriculum is based on the assumptions that each student can learn and that the needs of every student are important. It enables high expectations to be set for each student as teachers account for the current levels of learning of individual students and the different rates at which students develop. Students in Australian classrooms have multiple, diverse, and changing needs that are shaped by individual learning histories and abilities as well as cultural, language backgrounds and socioeconomic factors.

ACARA is working with state and territory education authorities to support the implementation of the Australian Curriculum and will produce advice about using the curriculum to address the diversity of student learning.

Specific guidelines to assist writers address inclusivity will include questions, such as those that follow.

### *Language*

- Does the curriculum acknowledge that students bring a diverse range of language resources and that these need to be recognised, used and extended?
- Has care been taken to ensure that language used is not exclusive and that terms selected are not negative?
- Is the student's language acknowledged as an important learning resource? For example, are students encouraged to explore concepts using their home language when appropriate?

### *Stereotypes*

- Are any groups ascribed characteristics that are more negative or positive than other groups? In what context?
- Are connections made to a variety of skills, knowledge and careers in non-stereotyped ways?

### *Bias*

- Is there evidence of bias in the language being used, such as different language being used to describe the same idea or experience for various groups, with pejorative connotations?
- Is a particular view or situation portrayed as 'natural' rather than one of many?

## 4. Design considerations: F - 12

### *Context for learning*

- Does the curriculum value and use what students bring to the class from their own background and life experiences?
- Does the content/context cater for different levels of ability?
- Does the content/context cater for different socioeconomic situations and/or geographic locations?
- Are examples appropriate to different learning contexts, learners and learning styles?

The curriculum writing process will involve advice and review of documents by advisory group members with expertise on inclusivity to ensure the appropriateness of curriculum content and expectations of achievement.

### 4.5 General capabilities

The *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* identifies essential skills for twenty-first century learners – in literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT), thinking, creativity, teamwork and communication. It describes individuals who can manage their own wellbeing, relate well to others, make informed decisions about their lives, become citizens who behave with ethical integrity, relate to and communicate across cultures, work for the common good and act with responsibility at local, regional and global levels. In the Australian Curriculum these skills are primarily addressed through the general capabilities.

General capabilities comprise an integrated and interconnected set of knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that students develop and use in their learning across the curriculum. They are addressed through the learning areas and are identified wherever they are developed or applied in content descriptions. They are also identified where they offer opportunities to add depth and richness to student learning in content elaborations.

Curriculum documents show how the general capabilities are addressed in each learning area. Each capability will be represented in each learning area in ways appropriate to that area. For some they will be included because they need to be developed and applied in the particular learning area. For others they can be taught and learned by students in any learning area – their development will depend on teachers' choices of classroom activities. .

The Australian Curriculum specifically covers the following general capabilities:

#### *Literacy*

Students become literate as they develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions to interpret and use language confidently for learning and communicating in and out of school and for participating effectively in society. Literacy involves students in listening to, reading, viewing, speaking, writing and creating oral, print, visual and digital texts, and using and modifying language for different purposes in a range of contexts.



## 4. Design considerations: F - 12

### *Numeracy*

Students become numerate as they develop the knowledge and skills to use mathematics confidently across all learning areas at school and in their lives more broadly. Numeracy involves students in recognising and understanding the role of mathematics in the world and having the dispositions and capacities to use mathematical knowledge and skills purposefully.

### *Information and communication technology (ICT) capability*

Students develop ICT capability as they learn to use ICT effectively and appropriately to access, create and communicate information and ideas, solve problems and work collaboratively in all learning areas at school, and in their lives beyond school. The capability involves students in learning to make the most of the digital technologies available to them, adapting to new ways of doing things as technologies evolve and limiting the risks to themselves and others in a digital environment.

### *Critical and creative thinking*

Students develop capability in critical and creative thinking as they learn to generate and evaluate knowledge, clarify concepts and ideas, seek possibilities, consider alternatives and solve problems. Critical and creative thinking are integral to activities that require students to think broadly and deeply using skills, behaviours and dispositions such as reason, logic, resourcefulness, imagination and innovation in all learning areas at school and in the lives beyond school.

### *Personal and social capability*

Students develop personal and social capability as they learn to understand themselves and others, and manage their relationships, lives, work and learning more effectively. The capability involves students in a range of practices including recognising and regulating emotions, developing empathy for and understanding of others, establishing positive relationships, making responsible decisions, working effectively in teams and handling challenging situations constructively.

### *Ethical behaviour*

Students develop capability in learning to behave ethically as they identify and investigate the nature of ethical concepts, values, character traits and principles, and understand how reasoning can assist ethical judgment. Ethical behaviour involves students in building a strong personal and socially oriented ethical outlook that helps them to manage context, conflict and uncertainty, and to develop an awareness of the influence that their values and behaviour have on others.

## 4. Design considerations: F - 12

### *Intercultural understanding*

Students develop intercultural understanding as they learn to value their own cultures, languages and beliefs, and those of others. They come to understand how personal, group and national identities are shaped, and the variable and changing nature of culture. The capability involves students in learning about and engaging with diverse cultures in ways that recognise commonalities and differences, create connections with others and cultivate mutual respect.

### 4.6 Cross-curriculum priorities

There are other cross-curriculum matters that can be thought of as priorities rather than capabilities. The Australian Curriculum, through development of curriculum documents for learning areas/subjects, will address three cross-curriculum priorities.

The Australian Curriculum has been written to equip young Australians with the knowledge, understanding and skills that will enable them to engage effectively with and prosper in a globalised world. Students will gain personal and social benefits, be better equipped to make sense of the world in which they live and make an important contribution to building the social, intellectual and creative capital of our nation.

Accordingly, the Australian Curriculum must be both relevant to the lives of students and address the contemporary issues they face. With these considerations and the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* in mind, the curriculum gives special attention to these three priorities:

- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures**, to ensure that all young Australians will be given the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, their significance for Australia and the impact these have had, and continue to have, on our world
- **Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia**, to reflect the importance of young people knowing about Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia, because as they develop a better understanding of the countries and cultures of the Asia region, they will come to appreciate the economic, political and cultural interconnections that Australia has with the region
- **Sustainability**, to allow young people to develop an appreciation of the need for more sustainable patterns of living, and to build capacities for thinking, valuing and acting necessary to create a more sustainable future.

Cross-curriculum priorities are represented in all learning areas/subjects. They will have a strong but varying presence depending on their relevance to the learning areas. For each of the cross-curriculum priorities, a set of organising ideas has been developed. These are consistent across the curriculum and are reinforced in learning areas. At the commencement of the shaping process, the writers will determine which of the cross-curriculum priorities organising ideas are taken to be inherent to learning in the area and which ones could also be developed with an appropriate choice of activities by the teacher. These are then confirmed at the beginning of the writing process.



## 4. Design considerations: F - 12

The content descriptions that support the knowledge, understanding and skills of the cross-curriculum priorities are tagged with icons. The tagging brings the need and opportunity to address the cross-curriculum priorities to the attention of teachers. Elaborations in the F–10 curriculum will provide further advice on how this can be done, or teachers can select the hyperlink which will provide links to more detailed information on each priority.

### 4.7 Assessment and reporting

Teachers will use a range of different assessment strategies to ascertain what each student has learnt (actual achievement) and will make judgments about the extent and quality of each student's achievement in relation to the Australian Curriculum achievement standards.

Reporting to parents will provide information about a student's actual achievement against the achievement standards. The use of Australian Curriculum achievement standards as a common reference point for reporting to parents will contribute to national consistency in reporting.

Individual school authorities will have specific assessment and reporting requirements that schools and/or teachers will need to meet.

Current Commonwealth requirements for reporting to parents include the requirement for student achievement to be reported in terms of A-E grades (or an equivalent 5-point scale).

Education authorities and individual schools are able to determine, in consultation with parents and communities, the style and format of reporting that best meets local needs and circumstances, including provision of any additional elements of student reports. This might include written comments about the quality of learning demonstrated by the student; indicators of student effort, engagement, behaviour and improvement; student self-assessment; and future learning goals.

As the Australian Curriculum is being implemented, ACARA will work with the states and territories and the Australian Government to investigate ways to strengthen national consistency in reporting.

## 5. Design specifications: F - 10

This section outlines the elements of the F–10 Australian Curriculum and provides guidelines for its development.

### 5.1 Rationale

In each learning area, the Australian Curriculum provides a rationale for the choice of curriculum content. This rationale makes clear to teachers and students why the chosen content is important for students and outlines the broad scope and sequence of learning to be expected from Foundation to Year 10. The rationale makes clear how certain choices were made — whether they were based on ‘big ideas’ essential to a deep understanding of a domain of knowledge; learning that is essential for further learning in a particular area; other important considerations such as the students’ developing sense of personal identity; or Australia’s geographical and historical context.

A rationale:

- will be no more than 200 words
- will be written for F–10.

### 5.2 Aims

The aims of the learning area will identify the major learning that students will be able to demonstrate as a result of being taught the curriculum.

The statement of aims for F–10:

- will comprise a small number (4-6) of statements for the learning area
- will be based on the draft aims in the Shape of the Australian Curriculum: <learning area> documents. Agreement on the broad aims should be one of the first tasks for the writing team in consultation with the learning area advisory group.

### 5.3 Organisation of the <learning area> curriculum

This section will provide an overview of how the curriculum in the learning area will be organised for F–10. The curriculum across F–10 will be developed in a way that supports and coherently presents the continuity of learning, but which also provides for changing emphases across F–10.

The organisation section of the curriculum will include the following elements (acknowledging there may be additional ones for specific learning areas or subjects):

- Content structure: Describes the nature of the strands and their relationship; a summary of the major concepts; year level descriptions; content descriptions and a glossary.
- The nature of learners F–10: Provides advice across different year groupings on the nature of learners and the relevant curriculum.

## 5. Design specifications: F - 10

Achievement standards: Generic description consistent with the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum* paper.

- Diversity of learners: Includes generic text on students with disability and those learning English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D).
- General capabilities: Includes a combination of generic text and specific curriculum area text for each general capability, that is, a brief summary of the general capabilities that have been explicitly included in the content of the curriculum area.
- Cross-curriculum priorities: Includes a combination of generic text and specific curriculum area text for each cross-curriculum priority, that is, a brief summary of where and how each of the three priorities have been explicitly included in the content of the curriculum area.
- Links to other learning areas: Identifies substantive links to other Australian Curriculum learning areas to assist teachers to make connections in their planning for student learning.
- Implications for teaching and assessment: A brief overview of how the Australian Curriculum can accommodate particular approaches to teaching and assessment. Some of the text will be generic.

### 5.4 Curriculum content

Across the years of schooling F–10, curriculum content will be presented in a sequence that guides teaching and learning, designed to build depth of knowledge, skill and understanding. Curriculum content will be presented in the form of ‘content descriptions’.

Curriculum content is primarily for use by schools and individual teachers although it also provides a reference for discussions with students, parents and the broader community.

#### *Content descriptions*

Content descriptions are statements that describe the knowledge, concepts, skills and processes which teachers are expected to teach. They will include the general capabilities, as appropriate, for each learning area. These statements will be linked to present a scope and sequence across years of schooling.

This approach will assist the development of fundamental concepts and skills that need to be revisited across a number of years of schooling. The intention is for students to develop both deeper understanding of concepts and their application in a learning area, and relationships between ideas in a learning area.

Content descriptions are:

- developed in accord with advice in *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum* <learning area> papers
- arranged by curriculum organisers (strands)

## 5. Design specifications: F - 10

- written for each year or bands of years of schooling
- designed so that they can be covered comfortably in the indicative time
- written to facilitate rigorous, in-depth study, with an emphasis on depth rather than breadth
- developed to ensure that learning is appropriately ordered and that unnecessary repetition is avoided
- able to provide the basis for the learning described in the achievement standards
- written to follow an implicit stem 'students will be taught'
- written in plain English.

### *Content elaborations*

The content elaborations may take the form of additional description or examples of contexts or of teaching points. They accompany the content descriptions to assist teachers to develop a common understanding about what is to be taught to students. They are not intended to be indicators of achievement or a set of complete or even comprehensive content points that all students need to be taught. They will be provided as support material only, not part of the Australian Curriculum to be implemented.

Content elaborations:

- provide further detail for teachers who may need this level of support
- illustrate and exemplify content descriptions with a diverse range of examples
- follow an implicit stem 'this may involve students' and commence with a verb in the present continuous tense, for example 'identifying', 'exploring', 'describing'
- are written in plain English.

In the digital version of the curriculum, there will be access to content elaborations and hyperlinks to other learning areas, support information and further exemplification.

### 5.5 Achievement standards

*What are achievement standards?*

- The achievement standards describe what students are typically able to understand and able to do. They describe expected achievement.
- Across F-10 the set of achievement standards describe a broad sequence of expected learning. This sequence provides teachers with a framework of growth and development in each of the learning areas.
- Achievement standards emphasise the depth of conceptual understanding and the sophistication of skills.
- Achievement standards will be accompanied by portfolios of annotated student work samples, as support material to illustrate the achievement standard.

## 5. Design specifications: F - 10

*How should they be viewed?*

- The content descriptions and achievement standards are not independent — they should be read together.
- The achievement standard at each year level should be read as a whole (that is, the understanding and skills elements are read together).
- When viewing the sequence of achievement standards for a learning area, look at the broad development of conceptual understanding and skills (that is, read them holistically, not in an atomised way).

Writers will:

- draft the achievement standard statements concurrently with the writing of curriculum content, although work on achievement standards will be preceded by a draft scope and sequence of curriculum content
- take account of what is known from research about the progression of student learning in the different learning areas; be guided by analysis of state/territory and national student achievement data sets that provide empirical information on the sequence of learning of fundamental concepts, skills and understanding in the learning area and the threshold points at which students typically demonstrate achievement of these concepts, skills and understandings
- identify, as the focus of achievement standards, the key concepts, skills and understanding that describe a sequence of fundamental learning across the years of schooling
- ensure that specific content knowledge is not unnecessarily repeated in achievement standards and that achievement standards clearly state what students are expected to be able to do having been taught the curriculum content
- have access<sup>1</sup> to graded student work samples in key areas to guide and inform their writing of achievement standards and to enable them to identify areas for which further work samples might need to be collected.

Curriculum writers will consider the following when writing achievement standards:

- Year by year content requires year by year standards. For learning areas where the content of some strands is described on a two-year basis (and the rest on a year by year basis), standards should be written accordingly.
- Attention needs to be paid to ensuring that the quality of achievement is appropriately captured in the descriptions. One important test of this will occur when viewing the standards across a number of year levels.
- Achievement standards are to emphasise skills and understandings in two separate paragraphs. In describing understandings include an active component, that is, the 'how' not just the 'what'.

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<sup>1</sup> This access will need to be negotiated with relevant curriculum authorities.

## 5. Design specifications: F - 10

- Content descriptions should not be repeated in the achievement standard — the assumption is that the achievement standard is read in the context and with the knowledge of what is to be taught that year.
- Consider for each description ‘how you would know’, that is, how it can be represented effectively in evidence.
- In writing achievement standards,
  - ✓ begin, ‘By the end of Year ...’
  - ✓ avoid the use of examples
  - ✓ use direct language and remove unnecessary words like ‘is able to’
  - ✓ do not use dot points — this would not be consistent with their summative purpose and intended use
  - ✓ do not use headings/titles — this provides a more holistic sense of the performance.

## 6. Design specifications: Senior Secondary

### 6.1 Background

The design specifications for the senior secondary Australian Curriculum build on:

- a) the *Senior Secondary Years Position Paper* that was subject to national consultation in the last quarter of 2009
- b) discussion on senior secondary curriculum in *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum v4.0*, which included reference to overall characteristics of the senior secondary Australian Curriculum.

### 6.2 Key terms

The senior secondary Australian Curriculum will specify content and achievement standards for a senior secondary subject.

- a) **Learning areas** are broad areas of the curriculum listed in the Melbourne Declaration, including English, Mathematics, Science, Humanities and social sciences, the Arts, Languages, Health and physical education, and Technologies.
- b) A **subject** is a discrete area of study that is part of a learning area. For example, History is a subject within the learning area of Humanities and social sciences. There may be one or more subjects in a single learning area.
- c) The senior secondary Australian Curriculum for each subject will be organised into **units**. A unit is a component of content that can be feasibly taught in about half a 'school year' (50-60 hours).
- d) **Content** refers to the knowledge, understanding and skills to be taught and learned within a given subject.
- e) **Achievement standards** refer to the quality of learning (the depth of understanding, extent of knowledge and sophistication of skill) demonstrated by students within a given subject.
- f) A **course** sets out the requirements for the implementation of a senior secondary Australian Curriculum subject. It will include specifications for content, achievement standards, assessment and certification.
- g) A **program of learning** is what a school provides to implement the course for a subject. It meets requirements for content, scope and sequence set out in the approved course. Students follow programs of learning in schools as part of their senior secondary studies.



## 6. Design specifications: Senior Secondary

### 6.3 Structure

The senior secondary Australian Curriculum for each subject will be organised into **four units**. The last two units will be developmentally more challenging than the first two units.

Each unit will be designed to be taught in about half a 'school year' (approximately 50–60 hours duration including assessment and examinations) of senior secondary studies.

Each unit begins with a short description that outlines the purpose and nature of the unit, that is, provides a brief overview of the broad content or focus of the unit.

Senior secondary curriculum will include assumptions about prior learning. These assumptions will be implicit in the course content. Additional information about assumed prior learning may be provided as appropriate.

Senior secondary units will be designed so that students may study them singly, in pairs (that is, year-long), or study all four units.

The senior secondary Australian Curriculum for each subject will be designed to be accessible to as many students as possible. During development, any limitations on accessibility will be explicitly identified and justified in terms of the nature of the subject as senior secondary curriculum.

State and territory curriculum, assessment and certification authorities will determine permitted entry and exit points and credit for completed study, in line with their certification requirements.

The specifications developed by ACARA for each subject in the senior secondary Australian Curriculum will include the following key elements:

- Rationale and Aims
- Learning outcomes
- Content descriptions
- Achievement standards.

### 6.4 Rationale

The rationale will

- describe the nature of the subject in general terms and provide an outline of how learning in this course relates to the contemporary world and current practice
- explain the place and purpose of the subject, how learning in the subject is valuable and how it contributes to meeting the national goals of schooling
- be consistent with the F–10 learning area rationale
- be approximately 200 words.



## 6. Design specifications: Senior Secondary

### 6.5 Aims

The aims will present high-level statements of the major purpose of the subject and the intended developments in student learning.

The aims will:

- contain a small number of statements for the subject (approximately 4–6)
- apply across the four units of the subject
- be consistent with *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum* paper for the learning area.

### 6.6 Learning outcomes

The learning outcomes will describe in broad terms what a student is expected to have learned as a result of studying the specified content. Learning outcomes will describe the major dimensions of content, namely the knowledge, understanding and skills required by the subject. Four to six learning outcomes will be written for each unit; some will focus on knowledge and understanding and some on skills.

### 6.7 Content descriptions

Content descriptions will state the specific subject-based knowledge, understanding and skills to be taught and learned.

Content descriptions will be written for each unit. Together with learning outcomes and levels of achievement, they will provide sufficient detail for:

- a) teachers and students to know what is expected to be taught and learned
- b) state and territory authorities to set assessment and certification requirements.

Content descriptions will be organised so that it is clear which content is common and which is elective.

Content descriptions will incorporate Australian Curriculum general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities that naturally align with the subject.

Content descriptions:

- consist of a lead statement about conceptual focus, with further detail exemplified by a series of sub-points where necessary to describe the breadth and depth of the knowledge, understanding and skills
- describe knowledge and understanding without the use of active verbs
- describe skills using active verbs
- use examples within the description to elaborate content as necessary.

## 6. Design specifications: Senior Secondary

### 6.8 Achievement standards

Achievement standards will be subject-specific and align with the major dimensions of learning as described in the learning outcomes and detailed in the content for the subject. Typically these dimensions will be categorised into ‘knowledge and understanding’ and ‘skills’.

The achievement standards will be written as five levels of achievement<sup>2</sup> for each pair of units: units 1 and 2, and units 3 and 4. Each will broadly describe what students are able to do, including for the lowest level where achievement will be described positively, albeit as very limited achievement.

The achievement standards will be designed and written:

- a) to provide an ordered sequence of descriptions of the achievement evident within the population of students completing a pair of units
- b) to describe the qualities typical in the knowledge, understanding and skill displayed by students at five levels
- c) to be challenging and reflective of the population of students typically taking that subject.

Achievement standards will not be written to be of direct equivalence across subjects. The highest level of achievement in one subject will describe the characteristics of outstanding achievement in that subject — it will not describe outstanding achievement in another subject.

Noting that state and territory authorities have their own assessment and reporting policies and processes, the primary role of achievement standards will be to exemplify the range of performance for a given subject. The achievement standards will be subject to review and refinement as state and territory authorities work to incorporate the national content and achievement standards into courses for use in their state or territory.

State and territory assessment and certification authorities will determine assessment arrangements and associated processes for assigning students to levels and for generating other assessment information, including subject scores.

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<sup>2</sup> For certification purposes, states and territories may include an additional level to describe unsatisfactory or incomplete performance.

## 6. Design specifications: Senior Secondary

### 6.9 Other information

The specifications developed by ACARA for each subject in the senior secondary Australian Curriculum will also include:

- an **organisation** section which will include:
  - a description of each of the subjects in the learning area
  - an outline of the overall senior secondary curriculum structure and design specifications
  - unit descriptions (about the purpose of each unit in relation to the overall rationale and aims), and the connection between the units
  - an outline of strands or content organisers and the relationships between them
  - the nature and rationale for the achievement standards structure
  - the connections between the F–10 Australian Curriculum and the senior secondary curriculum in the learning area, including any assumptions about prior learning
  - generic text about the general capabilities, with subject-specific text about those capabilities represented strongly
  - generic text about the cross-curriculum priorities, with subject-specific text about those priorities represented strongly;
- a **glossary** of key terms used in the subject; subject specific terms that are considered essential for students to know and be able to use are defined and referenced to acknowledged sources.



# Curriculum Development Process

Version 6



April 2012

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# Curriculum Development Process

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## Amendment history

Date	Version	Comment
19 February 2009	1.0	Approved version following February 2009 interim National Curriculum Board meeting.
8 May 2009	2.0	Updated to take account of ACARA Board decisions and planning for writing.
11 August 2009	3.0	Updated to take account of ACARA Board decisions about development of key issues position paper and meetings of panels to discuss senior years curriculum.
6 May 2010	4.0	Revisions approved by ACARA Board to take account of issues identified during curriculum development for English, Mathematics, Science and History, including greater clarity about the roles and responsibilities of individuals and groups involved in the process, and the establishment of a national panel.
January 2011	5.0	Revised to take account of areas for improvement identified in the development of English, mathematics, science and history; and to incorporate the curriculum evaluation and review phase. (For internal ACARA use only)
February 2012	6.0	Revised to take account of review of curriculum development process.

## Purpose and Context

### Purpose

1. This paper describes the curriculum development process used by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) to develop the Australian Curriculum. It includes:
  - an outline of the structures and the roles and responsibilities of the individuals and groups involved in the curriculum development process
  - the major features of the four phases of the curriculum development process
  - the key criteria for curriculum development
  - the broad timeframe and milestones for curriculum development, which translate into specific curriculum development timelines for particular activities.

### Context

2. *Curriculum Development Process* (v6.0) is to be read in conjunction with other documents including:
  - *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA December 2008)
  - *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum* v3.0 (ACARA 2011)
  - *Curriculum Design* v3.0 (ACARA 2012)
3. ACARA's curriculum development work is guided by the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, adopted by the Ministerial Council in December 2008. The Melbourne Declaration emphasises the importance of knowledge, skills and understanding of learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities as the basis for a curriculum designed to support twenty-first century learning.
4. All Australian governments have committed to the goals of the Melbourne Declaration, which are that Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence, and that all young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens. Promoting world-class curriculum and assessment is one of eight interrelated areas for action designed to achieve the Melbourne Declaration goals
5. ACARA is committed to a process of curriculum development that:
  - is based on agreed curriculum design principles
  - involves high-level curriculum expertise nationwide
  - provides opportunities for national consultation
  - establishes achievable timelines with available resources
  - ensures high-quality curriculum documents.



## Curriculum elements

6. The design elements of the Australian Curriculum are described in detail in ACARA's *Curriculum Design* paper. The curriculum development process will result in a curriculum that includes the following elements for each learning area or subject:
- rationale and aims outlining the place and purpose of the area, how it contributes to meeting the goals in the national declaration, and the major learning that students will be able to demonstrate
  - content descriptions that detail the essential knowledge, skills and understanding that students will be taught and are to learn, including consideration of general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities as appropriate
  - content elaborations (F–10) that provide examples to illustrate the content descriptions
  - achievement standards that describe the learning expected of students at points in their schooling, as a result of being taught the content
  - annotated student work samples that illustrate the achievement standards.

## The four phases of the curriculum development process

7. The process for developing the Australian Curriculum has been designed to generate broad engagement with, and discussion and feedback about, the shape and content of the Australian Curriculum.
8. The curriculum development process involves four interrelated phases:
  - curriculum shaping
  - curriculum writing
  - preparation for implementation
  - curriculum monitoring, evaluation and review.
9. The **curriculum shaping** phase produces a broad outline of the Foundation to Year 12 (F–12) curriculum for a learning area<sup>1</sup>, firstly as an initial advice paper and then as the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: <Learning Area>*. This paper, developed with expert advice, provides broad direction on the purpose, structure and organisation of the learning area. Along with the *Curriculum Design* paper, it is intended to guide writers of the curriculum. It also provides a reference for judging the quality of the final curriculum documents for the learning area. This phase includes key periods of consultation — open public consultation as well as targeted consultation with key stakeholders including teachers and schools, state and territory education authorities, parents and students, professional associations, teacher unions, universities and industry and community groups.
10. The **curriculum writing** phase produces an Australian Curriculum for a particular learning area, that is, specifications of content and achievement standards to be used by education authorities, schools and teachers in all states and territories. This phase involves teams of writers, supported by expert advisory groups, and includes key periods of consultation — open public consultation as well as targeted consultation with key stakeholders including teachers and schools (through intensive engagement activities), state and territory education authorities, parents and students, professional associations, teacher unions, universities and industry and community groups. The writing phase incorporates the process for validation of achievement standards and culminates in publication of the Australian Curriculum for the learning area.
11. The **preparation for implementation** phase involves delivery of the curriculum to school authorities and to schools in an online environment in time for school authorities, schools and teachers to prepare for implementation. Implementation and implementation support are the responsibility of state and territory school and curriculum authorities. ACARA works with state and territory curriculum and school authorities to support their ongoing implementation planning by providing briefings, introductory information materials and national facilitation for planning.

<sup>1</sup> Learning area refers to the learning areas and subjects in the *Melbourne Declaration* (2008).

## The four phases of the curriculum development process

12. The **curriculum monitoring, evaluation and review** of the Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum will be ongoing, with annual reports to the ACARA Board detailing any issues identified. Analysis of the issues and any recommended actions, including any that might include further investigation, will be included. Monitoring will be coordinated by ACARA and, where relevant data gathering is required, will include partnerships with state and territory curriculum and school authorities. This might include data about areas for which teachers require ongoing support in order to teach the curriculum. Specific monitoring mechanisms will be negotiated with state and territory curriculum and school authorities for the provision of relevant local data about the Australian Curriculum. ACARA will provide a monitoring framework, including research questions and associated data gathering, which can be used by state and territory education authorities as part of their own monitoring strategies, to assist in their collection and provision of state and territory data about the Australian Curriculum to ACARA. The evaluation process may result in minor changes to, or a revision of, the curriculum.

## Curriculum development criteria

13. At each phase of curriculum development, the basis for approval or endorsement of curriculum documentation by the ACARA Board involves criteria which focus on the quality of the product and the process.
14. The quality criteria:
  - provide a focus for consultation, with particular attention given to consultation questions asked and the subsequent analysis and reporting of consultation data
  - are supported by the quality assurance process, including a quality assurance checklist
  - are used by the ACARA Board, the F–12 Curriculum Reference Group and advisory groups in their review of draft curriculum materials.
15. Criteria that will be used to judge the quality of the curriculum include:
  - The curriculum is clear about what is to be taught across the years or bands of schooling and the quality of learning expected of students as they progress through school.
  - The curriculum is flexible enough that it:
    - can accommodate the reality of student, teacher and school diversity
    - has high expectations and standards that are challenging yet realistic.
  - The curriculum specifies what all young Australians:
    - should learn as they progress through schooling
    - can be taught well within the overall teaching time and with the resources available to teachers and students.
  - The curriculum is concise and expressed in plain language while preserving a complexity appropriate for professional practitioners and is consistent in terms of language and broad structure.
  - The curriculum is established on a strong evidence base, including the implications of the curriculum for learning, pedagogy and what works in professional practice, and has been benchmarked against international curricula.

## Curriculum development criteria

16. Criteria that will be used to judge the quality of the curriculum development process include:
- ACARA has identified and engaged with key stakeholders (and maintained an accurate record of their engagement, contact and feedback).
  - The range of consultation strategies used to elicit feedback and engage stakeholders in the development, consultation and review of the curriculum is appropriate for the range and diversity of stakeholders.
  - The analysis of quantitative and qualitative data is rigorous and findings from consultation are accurately represented and incorporated in reports.
  - ACARA has responded to, and can account for, the range of stakeholder feedback as part of the revision process.
  - The quality control and assurance measures are rigorous, and achievement of key milestones is timely.

## Roles and responsibilities

17. There are a number of groups involved in ACARA's curriculum development process at both the consultation and decision-making stages of the process. Their composition and respective roles and responsibilities are outlined below.

### ***Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC)***

18. Membership of the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) comprises Australian state and territory, Australian Government and New Zealand ministers with responsibility for school education and early childhood development.
19. The Council aims to ensure all Australian children are fully prepared for learning and life. Consistent with the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, the Council will work to ensure high-quality schooling and early childhood development experiences for all young Australians. The Council provides a forum through which strategic policy on school education and early childhood development can be coordinated at the national level, and through which information can be shared and resources used collaboratively towards the achievement of agreed objectives and priorities.
20. The areas of responsibility covered by the Council are:
- primary and secondary education
  - cross-sectoral matters including transitions and careers
  - early childhood development including early childhood education and care.
21. The ACARA Board reports directly to SCSEEC for information, advice, feedback and final decisions relating to the release of the Australian Curriculum.

### ***Australian Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs Senior Officials Committee (AEEYSOC)***

22. The council is supported by a group of senior officials who meet regularly as the Australian Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs Senior Officials Committee (AEEYSOC). AEEYSOC is directly responsible to the council for the execution of its decisions.
23. The council is also supported by a number of taskforces and working groups, convened as needed for particular tasks. These taskforces have prescribed timeframes and reporting arrangements and are reviewed annually by AEEYSOC.

## Roles and responsibilities

### ACARA Board

24. The ACARA Board comprises 13 members as set out in the *Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority Act 2008*.

In relation to the development of the Australian Curriculum the ACARA Board:

- authorises policy and procedures for the development of curriculum (for example, curriculum development process, curriculum design)
- endorses draft and final documents for release or for submission to the SCSEEC (for example, shape papers, curriculum documents)
- makes decisions about issues having a significant impact on ACARA's operating environment, including strategic directions, political implications and key relationships.

### ACARA Curriculum Group

25. The ACARA Curriculum Group manages the curriculum development projects as they progress through each phase of the curriculum development process.

The Curriculum Group:

- manages the drafting, revision and final quality assurance of curriculum documents
- manages the writing teams and the advisory groups during the shaping and writing processes
- liaises closely with lead writers as they in turn lead, guide and support the writing process
- builds and maintains successful and productive working relationships and communication between the writers and advisory group members and also with key external stakeholders
- communicates key advice from the Board to both the writing teams and the advisory groups and maintains transparent communication and decision-making processes
- provides clear evidence-based advice to the Board and the General Manager, Curriculum about key developments, key issues that require resolution and recommended positions prior to approval
- establishes and maintains consultative networks of key stakeholders
- manages a range of consultation, communication, monitoring, review and evaluation strategies
- ensures that a range of perspectives and views are canvassed and addressed.

## Roles and responsibilities

### *F–12 Curriculum Reference Group*

26. The F–12 Curriculum Reference Group provides the ACARA executive with high level advice to advance strategic priorities in ACARA’s work plan. It provides advice on:
  - F–12 curriculum design and development policies and practices, and reviewing and providing feedback on draft documents
  - strategies to respond to issues raised during curriculum development and consultation
  - curriculum and implementation support strategies and materials.
27. Group members endeavour to represent the high-level views of their jurisdiction/organisation on matters discussed by the group and ensure, as far as practicable, that information relating to the work of the group is communicated to the jurisdiction/organisation.
28. The F–12 Curriculum Reference Group consists of:
  - the General Manager Curriculum at ACARA (chair)
  - one nominee from each state and territory drawn from members of the Curriculum Directors Forum
  - one nominee of the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC)
  - one nominee of the Independent School Council of Australia (ISCA)
  - one nominee of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)
  - members of the ACARA Board as determined by the Board.

### *Lead writer*

29. In the curriculum-shaping phase for a learning area, a lead writer is appointed on a contractual basis by ACARA. Depending on the learning area, other discipline contributors may also be appointed to support the lead writer in the shaping phase.
30. Lead writers and discipline contributors are selected because of the esteem in which they are held in the community, their networks and their expertise in the learning area, that is, their deep knowledge of learning, pedagogy and contemporary professional practice.
31. The lead writer:
  - develops an initial advice paper and a draft *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: <Learning Area>* paper based on advice from ACARA, including the position paper for the learning area
  - supports ACARA in the review of consultation feedback on the draft shape paper and in the writing of the final shape paper



## Roles and responsibilities

- acts in a consultancy role for ACARA during the shaping and curriculum writing phases
- acts as coach or mentor during the writing phase
- may act as a public advocate for ACARA during all phases of curriculum development.

### Curriculum writers

32. For the curriculum-writing phase, a small team of writers is appointed (up to two for each stage of schooling)<sup>2</sup> following a national selection process, with coordination being undertaken by the ACARA curriculum manager and senior project officer. Writers will be engaged by ACARA to undertake the writing task.
33. Additional specialist writers may be appointed to assist in writing for specific discipline areas in some F–10 learning areas and in the senior secondary curriculum.
34. Writers are selected from an expression of interest register and/or may be nominated by ACARA. Selection takes account of learning area/subject expertise, curriculum development expertise and teaching or related experience.
35. The role of writers is to complete the writing task in accordance with the parameters and writing instructions established through the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum* paper, the relevant *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: <learning area>* paper, the *Curriculum Design* paper, and any other directions provided by ACARA.

### Learning area advisory groups

36. The writing team for a learning area or subject is assisted in the curriculum shaping and writing process by a panel of experts, known as a learning area advisory group, which provides advice on draft materials at key stages in the development process.
37. The advisory group is responsible for providing guidance and advice to ACARA on the Australian Curriculum materials as they are drafted.
38. In particular, the advisory group:
  - provides advice to writing teams at prescribed points throughout the project (as defined by the detailed project plan)
  - provides advice on groups or individuals to be consulted
  - reviews documentation prepared during the curriculum development process
  - provides advice to the board and/or the ACARA executive on the suitability and quality of curriculum documents (both for consultation and for final publication).

<sup>2</sup> This may vary by learning area and disciplines therein.

## Roles and responsibilities

39. The chair of each advisory group is a relevant ACARA curriculum manager or ACARA nominee. The relevant senior project officer acts as the executive officer for the group.
40. Each advisory group meets at key stages in the curriculum development process. The meetings include face-to-face meetings and tele/videoconferences. These are negotiated initially as part of the contractual arrangements and reviewed as necessary.
41. Each advisory group comprises 8 – 12 members. Each member has particular expertise in the relevant learning area/subject, with selection of members based on expertise rather than representation. That expertise may be drawn from:
  - established, leading academics in the discipline and the field of education
  - teachers with a range of experience in the learning area from Foundation to Year 12
  - members of peak national bodies in the learning area or subject
  - industry professionals or community members (if applicable)
  - curriculum experts from school and curriculum authorities.
42. Typically, members are appointed for a particular phase of the curriculum development process, that is the curriculum shaping phase, the curriculum drafting phase, or final curriculum writing. Membership is reviewed at the end of each phase and there is a process of closure and re-engagement as necessary.
43. Panel membership is dynamic, in order to reflect the different phases of curriculum development, but some continuity of membership is maintained to assist with continuity of practice and knowledge across phases of the curriculum development process. At particular phases there will be a demand for particular types of expertise and, depending on the learning area, this may require appointing additional specialists.

### *Across learning area advisory groups*

44. ACARA has established advisory groups to provide particular expert guidance and advice on strategic policy directions and on draft curriculum at key stages in the curriculum development process. Three such groups are the Equity and Diversity Advisory Group, the Students with Disability Advisory Group and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group.
45. The Equity and Diversity Advisory Group has been established to provide ACARA with advice on equity and diversity perspectives at key stages in the curriculum development process, including curriculum design and development processes, draft curriculum, and associated information and support materials. Initially the group provides advice about questions to be considered in the curriculum development process to ensure a curriculum that is inclusive of all students. In order to provide final feedback, this group uses these questions to reference its feedback during the consultation process.

## Roles and responsibilities

46. The Students with Disability Advisory Group has been established to provide ACARA with explicit guidance and advice concerning students with disability. The advisory group provides advice to writing teams at defined stages throughout the project; provides advice on the groups or individuals who are to be consulted; reviews documentation prepared during the curriculum development process; and provides advice to the ACARA Executive on the suitability and quality of curriculum documents for students with disability.
47. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group has been established to provide ACARA with explicit guidance and advice concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. The advisory group provides advice to writing teams at defined stages throughout the project; provides advice on the groups or individuals who are to be consulted; reviews documentation prepared during the curriculum development process; and provides advice to the ACARA Executive on the suitability and quality of curriculum documents.
48. The chair of each advisory group is typically the General Manager Curriculum or a delegated ACARA curriculum manager. The relevant senior project officer acts as the executive officer for the group.
49. Advisory groups meet at key stages in the curriculum development process. The meetings include face-to-face meetings and tele/videoconferences. These are negotiated initially as part of their agreements and reviewed as necessary.
50. Each advisory group comprises 8 – 12 members. Each member has particular expertise in the relevant area/s, with selection of members based on expertise and representation. That expertise may be drawn from:
  - established, leading academics in the discipline and the field of education
  - members of peak national bodies in the relevant area/s
  - industry professionals or community members (if applicable)
  - expertise in schools and education authorities.

### *Other advisory or working groups*

51. From time to time ACARA will establish other advisory groups to provide ACARA with particular expert advice or to undertake particular curriculum-related tasks.
52. From time to time ACARA will establish specific purpose working groups to undertake particular curriculum-related tasks, for example, the English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) Working Group.

## Roles and responsibilities

### *National panels*

53. National panels are responsible for providing state, territory, and professional association feedback to ACARA at key points in the shaping and writing phases of the curriculum development process. In particular, identifying from their perspectives the key risks, challenges and opportunities at those critical points.
54. The national panel for each Foundation to Year 12 learning area, subject or senior secondary subject consists of members with relevant curriculum expertise and curriculum development experience and is representative, including:
  - up to two education authority representatives from each state and territory
  - one representative from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)
  - representatives of relevant national professional teacher associations (who may meet separately to the education authority representatives).
55. National panels are convened at critical stages in the development process to review:
  - the draft shape paper prior to national consultation
  - the revised draft shape paper in response to national consultation feedback
  - the draft learning area broad overview and scope and sequence
  - the draft Australian Curriculum for the learning area prior to national consultation
  - the national consultation feedback and proposed ways forward
  - the revised draft Australian Curriculum in response to national consultation.
56. National panel meetings are chaired by the General Manager Curriculum or by delegation to the Senior Manager Curriculum.

### *National forums*

57. National forums of key stakeholders are occasionally constituted to gauge broader stakeholder opinion on the Australian Curriculum materials as they are drafted.
58. A national forum is conducted in the shaping phase to review the initial advice paper.
59. The forums are expert and representational including:
  - Up to five nominees from each state and territory (three teachers — lower primary, upper primary, lower secondary; and two non-school-based — primary and secondary)
  - Up to four representatives of professional teacher associations
  - Up to six tertiary representatives (with discipline and education backgrounds)
  - Other stakeholder experts as nominated by ACARA.
60. In some cases, for example as in Languages or the Arts, there may be a variation to the membership profile to best meet the needs of the area under development.

## Roles and responsibilities

### *Curriculum Directors Forum*

61. The Curriculum Directors Forum provides advice on ACARA's curriculum development program (shaping, writing, preparation for implementation and monitoring, review and evaluation). By keeping informed of work in progress, members of the forum are also able to play a key communication role within their jurisdictions.
62. The Curriculum Directors Forum provides advice to ACARA on:
  - key structural and organisational matters in relation to curriculum, including assessment and reporting
  - key process and engagement matters, including advice on communication and preparation for implementation.
63. The Curriculum Directors Forum comprises a nominee from each curriculum authority and school authority in each state and territory (that is, four from each jurisdiction) with additional representatives from DEEWR. The group meets four times a year, with dates set by ACARA once the year's curriculum development program is set. In between meetings forum members communicate via email and via a dedicated SharePoint site.
64. Forum members are encouraged to play an active role in providing input and feedback as experts in their own right. They can also provide a state/territory perspective on certain topics for discussion.
65. Each state and territory nominates an officer to be a key contact or liaison with ACARA on operational matters related to curriculum development and consultation activity, including any school engagement activity. These officers are responsible for conveying relevant information to and from the relevant system and sectors within their state or territory.

## Roles and responsibilities

### *Intensive engagement schools*

66. As part of the consultation on the draft curriculum, ACARA selects up to 50 schools to participate in a more intensive engagement program with the draft curriculum for each learning area. (Typically one or two teachers in each school are selected/nominated to trial the curriculum, that is, a maximum of 100 teachers in total).
67. The aim of the intensive engagement program is three-fold:
- to gain feedback on the manageability of draft curriculum through short-term intensive classroom activities
  - to collect a range of planning and assessment documents to assist in preparation for implementation of the Australian Curriculum
  - to collect a range of samples of student work to exemplify student achievement of the standards.
68. The final selection of schools will ensure that there is reasonable representation in terms of geographical location (rural, remote, metropolitan), school system (independent, Catholic, government), stage of schooling (F–2, 3–6, 7–10, 11–12), socioeconomic status (low, medium, high), coverage of all subjects within disciplines, states and territories, and representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, learners of English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) and students with disability.

## The curriculum development process — broad timeframe and milestones

69. The following table provides an outline and indicative timeframe for ACARA's curriculum development process.

Deliverables	Activities	Approval steps
<b>CURRICULUM SHAPING PHASE (9 MONTHS)</b>		
<b>Project plan</b>	<p>Project plan including a communications strategy and a risk assessment analysis</p> <p>Project plan aligned with corporate documents including the ACARA Strategic Plan and the Risk Management Plan</p> <p>SharePoint site established</p> <p>Analysis of stakeholders including who the stakeholders are, what their issues are, who will be engaged in the development process and why, when and how</p>	GM, Curriculum approves project plan
<b>Scan and literature review</b>	<p>Environmental scan and desktop mapping of state, territory and international curricula and national and international literature review</p> <p>F–12 Curriculum Reference Group provides feedback on scan, mapping and review</p>	GM, Curriculum approves literature review and mapping
<b>Position paper on key issues</b>	<p>Identification of experts in the field to attend position paper workshop</p> <p>Workshop with experts to identify key issues that will guide development of a position paper.</p> <p>Development of draft position paper</p> <p>Cross-curriculum and inclusivity check to ensure appropriate attention has been given to general capabilities, cross-curriculum priorities, students with disability and equity and diversity<sup>3</sup></p> <p>F–12 Curriculum Reference Group provides feedback on position paper</p>	<p>GM, Curriculum approves position paper</p> <p>Board provides advice on key issues in the position paper</p>

<sup>3</sup> This refers to collaborative work undertaken between learning area officers and those responsible for general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities, to identify opportunities for effective embedding and representation.



## The curriculum development process — broad timeframe and milestones

Deliverables	Activities	Approval steps
<b>Initial advice paper drafted</b>	<p>Lead writer appointed</p> <p>Small advisory group appointed to support the lead writer</p> <p>Lead writer prepares initial advice paper with feedback from ACARA</p> <p>F–12 Reference Group provides strategic advice on the draft paper</p> <p>Cross-curriculum and inclusivity check</p>	<p>Board provides advice on lead writer and advisory group membership</p> <p>GM, Curriculum approves appointment of lead writer and advisory group</p> <p>GM, Curriculum approves initial advice paper for submission to Board</p> <p>Board approves initial advice paper for national forum</p>
<b>National forum consultation on initial advice paper</b>	<p>ACARA officers prepare invitation list and seek nominations</p> <p>National forum conducted</p> <p>Consultation feedback from forum analysed and key directions for redrafting established</p>	<p>GM, Curriculum approves national forum feedback report and key directions for redrafting</p>
<b>Draft shape paper prepared</b>	<p>Lead writer commences drafting shape paper</p> <p>Cross-curriculum and inclusivity check</p> <p>Draft shape paper reviewed and commented on by learning area advisory group</p> <p>National panel meeting to collect feedback</p> <p>F–12 Curriculum Reference Group provides feedback on draft shape paper</p> <p>Draft shape paper finalised</p> <p>Consultation questions and online questionnaire prepared by ACARA</p> <p>Draft shape paper published for online consultation (consultation period — 10 weeks)</p> <p>Promotion of consultation on draft shape paper to stakeholders</p>	<p>GM, Curriculum approves draft shape paper, online questionnaire and consultation plan for submission to Board</p> <p>Board approves draft shape paper for national consultation</p>



## The curriculum development process — broad timeframe and milestones

Deliverables	Activities	Approval steps
<b>Draft shape paper finalised</b>	<p>Consultation feedback analysed and consultation report prepared with proposed actions</p> <p>Draft shape paper revised</p> <p>Shape paper and consultation report published on ACARA website</p>	<p>GM, Curriculum approves consultation report and final shape paper for submission to Board</p> <p>Board approves shape paper and consultation report</p>

## The curriculum development process — broad timeframe and milestones

Deliverables	Activities	Approval steps
<b>CURRICULUM WRITING PHASE (20 MONTHS)</b>		
<b>Broad outline of curriculum drafted (F–10 rationale, aims, scope and sequence; senior secondary overview – rationale, aims, content scope)</b>	<p>Expressions of Interest for writers and advisory group members</p> <p>Selection of writers and advisory group members</p> <p>Writing work plan and templates developed</p> <p>Induction of writers and learning area advisory group</p> <p>Cross-curriculum and inclusivity check</p> <p>Development of broad outline by writers with advisory group led by ACARA officers</p> <p>Broad outline of aims, rationale and scope and sequence developed, reviewed and commented on by learning area advisory group</p> <p>National panel meeting to provide response to broad outline and overview of curriculum</p> <p>Broad outline of curriculum revised</p>	GM, Curriculum approves broad outline
<b>Detailed curriculum materials drafted</b>	<p>Advisory group membership reviewed</p> <p>Drafting of curriculum content descriptions, elaborations and achievement standards</p> <p>Cross-curriculum and inclusivity check</p> <p>Consultation plan prepared</p> <p>Identification and confirmation of trial schools and activity</p>	
<b>Finalisation of draft curriculum materials</b>	<p>Draft curriculum reviewed and commented on by learning area advisory group</p> <p>National panel meeting to provide response to draft curriculum materials</p> <p>Preparation for online consultation including online questionnaire</p> <p>Communication plan developed</p>	<p>GM, Curriculum approves draft curriculum for submission to Board</p> <p>Board approves draft curriculum for consultation</p>

## The curriculum development process — broad timeframe and milestones

Deliverables	Activities	Approval steps
<b>Draft curriculum published and released for online consultation</b>	<p>Publish and promote draft curriculum (consultation period — 10–12 weeks)</p> <p>Trial school activity, collection of work samples and monitoring by ACARA</p> <p>Consultation workshops and/or presentations</p>	
<b>Consultation report, trial school report and proposed responses to key findings published</b>	<p>Consultation feedback analysed</p> <p>Draft consultation report, trial schools report, and directions for revision prepared</p> <p>F–12 Reference Group provides strategic advice on consultation report and directions for revisions</p> <p>Cross-curriculum and inclusivity check</p> <p>Consultation report published on ACARA website and promoted</p>	<p>GM, Curriculum approves consultation reports</p> <p>Board approves consultation reports for publication</p>
<b>Draft curriculum materials revised</b>	<p>Preparation of work samples to be included with final curriculum</p> <p>Revisions to curriculum in response to consultation report</p> <p>Cross-curriculum and inclusivity check</p> <p>Revised draft curriculum reviewed and commented on by learning area advisory group</p> <p>National panel meetings to provide feedback on draft revisions</p> <p>Revised draft curriculum finalised for publication</p>	<p>GM approves revised draft curriculum for placement on the website</p>
<b>Revised drafts available publicly on the Australian Curriculum website for viewing and for comment for up to 6 weeks</b>	<p>Revised draft curriculum uploaded to the website for viewing and comment</p> <p>Consultation with state and territory authorities seeking feedback on revised draft curriculum</p> <p>Work samples finalised</p>	<p>GM, Curriculum approves revised curriculum prior to validation</p>

## The curriculum development process — broad timeframe and milestones

Deliverables	Activities	Approval steps
<b>Curriculum validated</b> (The validation process will focus on the extent to which the achievement standards are coherent, well sequenced and pitched appropriately)	Validation process includes two national meetings of teachers and some online collaboration Achievement standards validated Final validation report prepared	GM, Curriculum approves validation report
<b>Publication of final curriculum</b>	Final revised curriculum (and work sample portfolios) prepared for publication Final revised curriculum prepared for Board approval Information materials prepared Communication plan for launch and implementation prepared Curriculum published on Australian Curriculum website	GM, Curriculum approves final revised curriculum (and work samples) Board endorses final curriculum Standing Council approves final curriculum

### PREPARATION FOR IMPLEMENTATION (12 MONTHS)

Development of stakeholder briefing packages highlighting:

- public information materials on the ACARA website,
- how it will 'impact' stakeholders concerned
- support strategies available.

Review and publication of revised information sheets and multimedia material (for example, video).

Briefing sessions held with state and territory authorities and other key stakeholder groups.

Summaries of implementation strategies of state and territory school and curriculum authorities to be shared on the ACARA website.

Work with Curriculum Directors Forum and the F–12 Curriculum Reference Group to collect feedback on implementation issues and any useful materials such as work samples.

A report on implementation issues to be provided to the ACARA Board.

Collection, collation and analysis of data on use of Australian Curriculum.

National Curriculum Board

# **The Shape of the Australian Curriculum**

**May 2009**

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## 1. Preamble: National Curriculum Board processes

### Determining the form of the national curriculum

The National Curriculum Board (the Board) is committed to substantial, open consultation with the profession and the public in the development of curriculum. The Board began its consultation with the publication on its website ([www.ncb.org.au](http://www.ncb.org.au)) of the National Curriculum Development Paper. This discussion paper described the context of the Board's work and set down key initial questions that needed to be answered in the development of the national curriculum. That paper was discussed at a national forum on 27 June 2008, attended by 200 people, and in subsequent state and territory forums.

In the light of these discussions, the Board set down answers to its key questions in the document *The Shape of the National Curriculum: A proposal for discussion*. That paper was posted on the Board's website, along with an open invitation to comment and provide advice, during Term 4, 2008. It was discussed at state, territory and national forums that were conducted following its release and was the subject of written submissions provided to the Board through to the end of January 2009.

This document, *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum*, takes account of consultation, feedback and decisions made by the Board in early 2009. It provides a broad outline of the shape of the national curriculum and will be used to guide the writing of the national curriculum in specific learning areas which, in accord with the Board's remit, will start with English, mathematics, the sciences and history.

### Developing the scope and content of each national curriculum

In August 2008, as it was working on this paper, the Board commenced work on a national curriculum in English, mathematics, the sciences and history. For each learning area the Board recruited a writer who worked with a small advisory group to draft a brief initial advice paper. The purposes of those papers were to provide a rationale for the study of the curriculum areas and to outline a broad scope and sequence of material to be covered over the years Kindergarten to Year 12 (K–12).

This approach was aimed at stimulating discussion of the key issues in each curriculum area before any detailed curriculum development commenced. Initial discussions were held at a series of national forums held in October 2008.

More detailed 'framing papers' were posted on the Board's website with a public invitation to comment and provide advice in the period up to 28 February 2009. Final recommendations to guide curriculum development were posted on the Board's website following its April meeting.



## 2. Building Australia's future

### Changed context

Education plays an important part in forming the young people who will take responsibility for Australia in the future. If it is to play this part effectively, education must address the intellectual, personal, social and economic development of young Australians, and it must do so at a time when ideas about the goals of education are changing and will continue to change.

Twenty years ago, the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs produced a collaborative statement on goals for schooling: the *Hobart Declaration* of 1989. In 2008 ministers nominated five major changes that, over that twenty-year period, have changed the ways in which people have come to interact with each other, and the consequences of those changes for schooling. These changes have been described in the *National Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (see Box 1).

#### Box 1: Changes over the past 20 years with implications for education

- Global integration and international mobility have increased rapidly in the past decade. As a consequence, new and exciting opportunities for Australians are emerging. This heightens the need to nurture an appreciation of and respect for social, cultural and religious diversity, and a sense of global citizenship.
- India, China and other Asian nations are growing and their influence on the world is increasing. Australians need to become 'Asia literate' by building strong relationships with Asia.
- Globalisation and technological change are placing greater demands on education and skill development in Australia and the nature of jobs available to young Australians is changing faster than ever. Skilled jobs now dominate jobs growth and people with university or vocational education and training qualifications fare much better in the employment market than early school-leavers. To maximise their opportunities for healthy, productive and rewarding futures, Australia's young people must be encouraged not only to complete secondary education, but also to proceed into further training or education.
- Complex environmental, social and economic pressures such as climate change that extend beyond national borders pose unprecedented challenges, requiring countries to work together in new ways. To meet these challenges, Australians must be able to comprehend and use scientific concepts and principles, and approach problem-solving in new and creative ways.
- Rapid and continuing advances in information and communication technologies (ICT) are changing the ways people share, use, develop and process information and technology, and young people need to be highly skilled in ICT. While schools already employ these technologies in learning, there is a need to increase their effectiveness significantly over the next decade.

Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, *National Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, December 2008, p.4.

Schooling must not only deal with these remarkable changes but also, as far as possible, anticipate the kinds of conditions in which young Australians will need to function as individuals, citizens and workers. These future conditions are distant and difficult to predict. We expect almost all young Australians who begin primary school in 2011 will continue their initial education until 2022. Many will go on to post-secondary education and not complete their initial education until the mid-2020s and later. However dimly the demands of societies in the mid-2020s can now be seen, some serious attempt must be made to envisage those demands and to ensure they are taken into account in present-day curriculum development.

A curriculum for the 21st century will reflect an understanding and acknowledgment of the changing nature of young people as learners and the challenges and demands that will continue to shape their learning in the future. Young people will need a wide and adaptive set of knowledge, skills and understandings to meet the changing expectations of society and to contribute to the creation of a more productive, sustainable and just society.

Curriculum will be only one element that influences how well young Australians are prepared for their futures by their education, but it will be important because it sets the level of expectation of their learning. High-performing countries set high expectations. They support the fulfilment of those expectations with high-quality teaching, school and system leadership, and commitment and support from families, communities, business and industry. Providing high-quality education is valuable to the community at large and justifies people's investments in time, effort and resources.

The commitment to develop a national curriculum reflects a willingness of Australians to work together, across geographical and school-sector boundaries, to develop a world-class curriculum for all young Australians. It will enable us to work collectively in defining what all young Australians should learn and in creating and sustaining a world-class education system. It involves national acceptance of responsibility for high-quality, high-equity education across the country. Working nationally offers the prospect of harnessing expertise and effort in the pursuit of common national goals. This national effort offers economies of scale and a substantial reduction in duplication of curriculum development and support, for the benefit of students in our schools.

The advent of a national curriculum also offers a unique opportunity to ensure that all young Australians learn about the history and cultural background of the nation's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, of the contribution that has been made to Australia, and of the impact that colonial settlement has had on Indigenous communities, past and present. For Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders, a national curriculum provides the opportunity to establish and pursue excellence within education settings that respect and promote their cultural identity.

National collaboration in education in Australia is not new. The 1989 *Hobart Declaration* and the 1999 *Adelaide Declaration* both authorised and stimulated national effort. The 2008 *National Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* provides a framework for the Board's development of a national, K–12 curriculum in English, mathematics, the sciences and history, and later in geography and languages.

### **Goals of education for young Australians**

The Board's work overall is guided by the National Declaration on *Educational Goals for Young Australians*, adopted by ministers in December 2008. The National Declaration commits 'to supporting all young Australians to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens' (see Box 2) and to promoting equity and excellence in education.

**Box 2: Educational goals for young Australians***Successful learners...*

- develop their capacity to learn and play an active role in their own learning
- have the essential skills in literacy and numeracy and are creative and productive users of technology, especially ICT, as a foundation for success in all learning areas
- are able to think deeply and logically, and obtain and evaluate evidence in a disciplined way as the result of studying fundamental disciplines
- are creative, innovative and resourceful, and are able to solve problems in ways that draw upon a range of learning areas and disciplines
- are able to plan activities independently, collaborate, work in teams and communicate ideas
- are able to make sense of their world and think about how things have become the way they are
- are on a pathway towards continued success in further education, training or employment, and acquire the skills to make informed learning and employment decisions throughout their lives
- are motivated to reach their full potential.

*Confident individuals...*

- have a sense of self-worth, self-awareness and personal identity that enables them to manage their emotional, mental, spiritual and physical wellbeing
- have a sense of optimism about their lives and the future — are enterprising, show initiative and use their creative abilities
- develop personal values and attributes such as honesty, resilience, empathy and respect for others
- have the knowledge, skills, understanding and values to establish and maintain healthy, satisfying lives
- have the confidence and capability to pursue university or post-secondary vocational qualifications leading to rewarding and productive employment
- relate well to others and form and maintain healthy relationships
- are well prepared for their potential life roles as family, community and workforce members
- embrace opportunities, make rational and informed decisions about their own lives and accept responsibility for their own actions.

*Active and informed citizens...*

- act with moral and ethical integrity
- appreciate Australia's social, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity, and have an understanding of Australia's system of government, history and culture
- understand and acknowledge the value of Indigenous cultures and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians
- are committed to national values of democracy, equity and justice, and participate in Australia's civic life
- are able to relate to and communicate across cultures, especially the cultures and countries of Asia
- work for the common good, in particular sustaining and improving natural and social environments
- are responsible global and local citizens.

Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, *National Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, December 2008, pp. 8–9.

The national curriculum will address the goals for young Australians, but success will also depend on substantial action through the continued support of schools by education authorities.

One important lesson learned from past efforts to overcome inequity is that an alternative curriculum for students who are regarded as disadvantaged does not treat them equitably. It is better to set the same high expectations for all students and to provide differentiated levels of support to ensure that all students have a fair chance to achieve those expectations. This is a view put by, for example, many leaders in the Indigenous community on behalf of their young people.

Within its remit to develop curriculum for particular learning areas, the Board will work to ensure that its curriculum connects with curriculum developed by the states and territories.

### 3. The national curriculum

#### Principles and guidelines for development

The development of the national curriculum is shaped by the following principles and guidelines for development.

- a) The curriculum should make clear to teachers what is to be taught, and to students what they should learn and what achievement standards are expected of them. This means that curriculum documents will be explicit about knowledge, understanding and skills, and that they will provide a clear foundation for the development of a teaching program.
- b) The curriculum should be based on the assumptions that all students can learn and that every student matters. It should set high standards and ensure that they apply to all young Australians while acknowledging the different rates at which students develop.
- c) The curriculum should connect with and build on the *Early Years Learning Framework* being developed for the pre-K phase.
- d) The curriculum should help prepare all young Australians to become fulfilled and competent citizens and workers. It should build firm and meaningful foundational skills as well as provide the basis for developing expertise for those who move on to specialised advanced studies in academic disciplines, professions and technical trades. It should anticipate an increase in both the proportion of students who remain in education and training to complete Year 12 or equivalent vocational education and training, and the proportion who continue to further study.
- e) The curriculum should provide students with an understanding of the past that has shaped the society, culture and environment in which they are growing and developing, and with knowledge, understandings and skills that will help them in their futures.
- f) The curriculum should be feasible, taking account of the time and resources available to teachers and students, and the time it typically takes to learn complex concepts and ideas. In particular, the national curriculum should recognise and appreciate that in the primary years teachers are responsible for several learning areas.
- g) The primary audience for national curriculum documents should be classroom teachers. Documents should be concise and expressed in plain language which nevertheless preserves a complexity in ideas appropriate for professional practitioners. Documents should be recognisably similar across learning areas in language, structure and length.
- h) Time demands on students must leave room for learning beyond the scope of the national curriculum.
- i) The curriculum should allow jurisdictions, systems and schools to implement it in a way that values teachers' professional knowledge and that reflects the needs and interests evident in local contexts, as it will be teachers who decide how best to organise learning for students. Organisation of learning should take account of individual family, cultural and community backgrounds; acknowledge and build on prior learning experiences; and fill gaps in those experiences.

- j) The curriculum should be established on a strong evidence base related to learning, pedagogy and what works in professional practice, and it should encourage teachers to analyse and evaluate their practices systematically.

### **Curriculum content: Knowledge, understanding and skills**

The Board recognises the entitlement of students to a core of knowledge, skills, understandings and values that will provide a foundation for their future contribution to Australia's society. This learning will provide the basis for success at and beyond school, and help young people continue their learning after they have left school.

The national curriculum will detail what teachers are expected to teach and students are expected to learn for each year of schooling. The curriculum will describe the knowledge, understandings, skills and dispositions that students will be expected to develop, in sequence, for each learning area across the years of schooling. Each curriculum sequence will represent what is known about the progression of learning in that area, recognising that there will need to be some variability in, for example, the order of topics in some areas.

The *National Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* identifies three broad categories of outcomes that the curriculum should deliver for students (see Box 3). The national curriculum will be developed in light of these categories.

#### **Box 3: Intended educational outcomes for young Australians**

*A solid foundation in knowledge, understanding, skills and values on which further learning and adult life can be built*

- The curriculum will include a strong focus on literacy and numeracy skills. It will also enable students to build social and emotional intelligence, and nurture student wellbeing through health and physical education in particular. The curriculum will support students to relate well to others and foster an understanding of Australian society, citizenship and national values, including through the study of civics and citizenship. As a foundation for further learning and adult life the curriculum will include practical knowledge and skills development in areas such as ICT and design and technology, which are central to Australia's skilled economy and provide crucial pathways to post-school success.

*Deep knowledge, understanding, skills and values that will enable advanced learning and an ability to create new ideas and translate them into practical applications*

- The curriculum will enable students to develop knowledge in the disciplines of English, mathematics, science, languages, humanities and the arts; to understand the spiritual, moral and aesthetic dimensions of life; and open up new ways of thinking. It will also support the development of deep knowledge within a discipline, which provides the foundation for inter-disciplinary approaches to innovation and complex problem-solving.

*General capabilities that underpin flexible and analytical thinking, a capacity to work with others and an ability to move across subject disciplines to develop new expertise*

- The curriculum will support young people to develop a range of generic and employability skills that have particular application to the world of work and further education and training, such as planning and organising, the ability to think flexibly, to communicate well and to work in teams. Young people also need to develop the capacity to think creatively, innovate, solve problems and engage with new disciplines.

Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, *National Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, December 2008, p.13.

Teachers understand the developmental diversity in the students they teach and are responsible for organising learning opportunities to meet individual learning needs. Organising the curriculum by year level will help teachers do this and will reduce the risk of repetition of content from year to year as students change teachers or schools.

Some of the variation among students in their level of development and progress can become the basis for inequities in their educational experiences. The Board will not accommodate these disparities by setting different expectations for different groups, since that reinforces differences and creates inequitable outcomes. The primary role in dealing with these differences lies with school systems, schools and teachers.

The national curriculum will try to maximise the opportunities for all students to realise their potential. This will be enhanced through material and professional learning support provided to teachers to help them recognise and build on the learning that each child brings to school. For students for whom English is not their first language, for example, this support should include material and advice that best helps them to master the language demands of school subjects.

### ***Solid foundation in literacy and numeracy for further learning***

Because literacy and numeracy are the foundations on which much further learning depends, it is important that literacy and numeracy capabilities are developed early. The foundation for literacy will be built primarily in English and the foundation for numeracy primarily in mathematics, but both literacy and numeracy must be reinforced and strengthened through teaching of other learning areas.

The Board's remit also requires it to develop 'a continuum of learning in literacy and numeracy skills, ranging from basic competence in the early years through to the advancement and extension of these skills in the middle and later years of schooling'. The development of these continuums means that these foundation skills are not regarded only as initial or minimal competences. Literacy and numeracy need to keep developing across the school years as the curriculum areas put them to work in increasingly distinct and complex ways. The nature and functions of literacy and numeracy become more differentiated as the school subjects become more recognisably different, based more and more on their informing disciplines.

Recent international comparisons of the performances of school students in reading and mathematics show clearly that the demonstrated capabilities of both higher- and lower-performing students can fluctuate significantly. That is, it is important to conceptualise literacy and numeracy over the full range, from the acquisition of initial skills to the development of sophisticated skills, put to work in different ways in different knowledge domains and social contexts. The national curriculum documents will deal explicitly with this issue.

### ***Deep knowledge and skills***

The K–12 national curriculum will provide the settings in which students can develop increasingly deep knowledge and skills. In the selection of content for particular learning areas, the Board will take account of the rapid expansion in bodies of knowledge and of the challenges this presents to curriculum development.

The national curriculum will emphasise the fundamental knowledge, skills and understandings that are the core of a learning area. It will also specify some contexts and related knowledge as essential for all students, where these are based on age, grade or stage considerations. In other cases, teachers will be able to choose how best to introduce and develop increasingly deep understandings of concepts and processes, maximising the engagement and learning of every student they work with, every day.

The Board will develop a national curriculum that provides for rigorous, in-depth study, preferring depth to breadth wherever a choice needs to be made, with consideration also being given to the teaching and learning time available.

The national curriculum will always try to deliver a balance between knowledge and process that reflects what is known about the development of expertise in a learning area. Experts solve problems more effectively, quickly and efficiently than novices do, not only because they can call on automated, learned responses, but because they consider problems in ways that make good solutions easier to find. The way in which experts think about problems reflects their deep knowledge and understanding of the discipline from which the problems are drawn.

The K–12 national curriculum will help students begin to develop the knowledge and understandings on which the major disciplines are based. This is partly because some students will go on to develop specialised levels of expertise in their further studies. But it is also because, as active citizens, all young Australians will need knowledge and understandings that allow them to make informed decisions about complex issues, as they weigh up options that may have personal and social consequences. Rich and systematic engagement with a discipline-based curriculum in school can form the bases not only of specialised vocational success, but also of confident and knowledgeable civic activity.

Each discipline offers a distinctive lens through which we interpret experience, determine what counts as evidence and as a good argument for action, scrutinise knowledge and argument, make judgments about value, and add to knowledge. Rather than being self-contained or fixed, disciplines are interconnected, dynamic and growing, and a discipline-based curriculum allows for cross-disciplinary learning that broadens and enriches each student’s learning.

In each learning area the national curriculum will provide a rationale for the choice of curriculum content. This rationale will make clear to teachers and students why the content chosen is important for students, and will outline the broad scope and sequence of learning to be expected through the K–12 years. The rationale will make clear how certain choices were made — whether they were based on ‘big ideas’ that are essential to deep understanding of a domain of knowledge; learning that is essential for particular further learning; or other important considerations such as the students’ developing sense of personal identity, an ‘Australian identity’ or Australia’s geographical and historical context.

The scope and sequence for each learning area will ensure that learning is appropriately ordered and that unnecessary repetition is avoided. It will help schools and teachers coordinate curriculum across a number of years of schooling.

International comparisons of educational performance and engagement suggest that Australians are high performers, but that they do not particularly like the learning in which they perform well. Students’ attitudes to the knowledge, understandings and skills they are developing will be influenced perhaps more by teaching than by curriculum, but the curriculum can help if its content is sufficiently coherent over time, if students can understand their progress in learning, and if the curriculum is relevantly connected to their lives and futures.

The national curriculum will describe a learning entitlement for each Australian student, clearly explaining what is to be taught and learned in each area. Implementing the national curriculum, as in the case of state and territory curriculums, will rely on teachers’ professional judgments about how best to organise learning for students, how to reflect local and regional circumstances, and how best to take advantage of their own specialised professional knowledge and their students’ interests.

### **General capabilities**

Not all learning is contained in the learning areas into which the school curriculum has traditionally been divided. Reflections on the nature of work in the 21st century typically identify important general capabilities, and many people argue that schools should help students develop them. As shown in Box 3, the *National Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* sees these as including ‘planning and organising, the ability to think flexibly, to communicate well and to work in teams ... the capacity to think creatively, innovate, solve problems and engage with new disciplines’.



The Board will deal explicitly with general capabilities within the national curriculum to avoid any risk that they will receive inadequate or unsystematic attention because they are supposed to be addressed 'across the curriculum'. Curriculum documents will indicate how learning in a particular area will contribute to the goals in the national declaration, how connections can be made between the discipline areas and how particular general capabilities will be explicitly dealt with in each area.

Each capability will be represented in each learning area in ways appropriate to that area. Some will be included because they need to be developed and applied in the particular learning area. Others can be taught and learned by students in any learning area; their development will depend on teachers' choices of classroom activities. The curriculum documents will be explicit on how the general capabilities are to be handled in each learning area and how links can be made between learning areas.

The national curriculum will specifically cover the following general capabilities.

- **Literacy** knowledge, skills and understanding need to be used and developed in all learning areas. Initial and major continuing development will be in English but the national curriculum will ensure that this competency is used and developed in all learning areas.
- **Numeracy** knowledge, skills and understanding need to be used and developed in all learning areas. Initial and major continuing development of numeracy will be in mathematics but the national curriculum will ensure that this competency is used and developed in all learning areas.
- **Information and communications technology (ICT)** skills and understanding are required for all learning areas. Some aspects of ICT competence are as much about information management as about the use of technology, so an important aspect of the competence is the ability to evaluate the source, reliability, accuracy and validity of information that abounds in cyberspace. New digital technologies are used in creative and artistic pursuits, and in civic and political activities. These opportunities for private and public expression, unimagined half a generation ago, will make up important elements of the national curriculum.
- **Thinking skills** refers to a range of kinds of applied intellectual activities that are involved in using information to achieve outcomes. They include elements such as solving problems, making decisions, thinking critically, developing an argument and using evidence in support of that argument. Thinking skills constitute the core of most intellectual activity.
- **Creativity** enables the development of new ideas and their application in specific contexts. It includes generating an idea which is new to the individual, seeing existing situations in a new way, identifying alternative explanations, seeing links, and finding new ways to apply ideas to generate a positive outcome. Creativity is closely linked to innovation and enterprise, and requires characteristics such as intellectual flexibility, open-mindedness, adaptability and a readiness to try new ways of doing things.
- **Self-management** enables a student to take responsibility for their own work and learning. It includes managing one's learning; monitoring, reflecting on and evaluating one's learning; identifying personal characteristics which contribute to or limit effectiveness; planning and undertaking work independently; taking responsibility for one's behaviour and performance; and learning from successes and failures.
- **Teamwork** enables a student to work effectively and productively with others. It includes working in harmony with others, contributing towards common purposes, defining and accepting individual and group roles and responsibilities, respecting individual and group differences, identifying the strengths of team members, and building social relationships.
- **Intercultural understanding** enables students to respect and appreciate their own and others'



cultures, and to work and communicate with those from different cultures and backgrounds. It includes appreciation of the special place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; respect for Australia's multicultural composition; communicating and working in harmony with others within and across cultures, especially in relation to cultures and countries of the Asia-Pacific; and appreciation of difference and diversity.

- **Ethical behaviour** involves students understanding and acting in accordance with moral and ethical principles. Ethical behaviour includes the willingness, determination and capacity to think, make judgments and behave independently. It includes identifying right and wrong and having the willingness, determination and capacity to argue the case for change; understanding the place of ethics and values in human life; acting with moral and ethical integrity; acting with regard for others; and having a desire and capacity to work for the common good.
- **Social competence** will enable students to interact effectively with others by assessing and successfully operating within a range of changing, often ambiguous human situations. It includes initiating and managing personal relationships; being self-aware and able to interpret one's own and others' emotional states, needs and perspectives; the ability to manage or resolve conflicts and to foster inclusive and respectful interactions; and participating successfully in a range of social and communal activities.

### ***Cross-curriculum perspectives***

There are other cross-curriculum matters that can be thought of as perspectives rather than capabilities. These are:

- Indigenous perspectives, which will be written into the national curriculum to ensure that all young Australians have the opportunity to learn about, acknowledge and respect the culture of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders
- a commitment to sustainable patterns of living which will be reflected, where appropriate, in national curriculum documents
- skills, knowledge and understandings related to Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia.

Each of these perspectives will be represented in learning areas in ways appropriate to that area. The curriculum documents will be explicit on how the perspectives are to be dealt with in each learning area and how links can be made between learning areas.

### **Achievement standards**

Curriculum content identifies what teachers are expected to teach and students are expected to learn. Curriculum content typically includes areas of knowledge, concepts, skills and processes that students are expected to learn and will be described for a particular learning area at a particular year level (e.g. Mathematics, Year 5).

Achievement standards will provide an expectation of the quality of learning that students should typically demonstrate by a particular point in their schooling (i.e. the depth of their understanding, the extent of their knowledge and the sophistication of their skills).

Across K–10, achievement standards will be described for each year of schooling, providing a description of the quality of learning (drawing together knowledge, skill, understanding etc.) that most students might be expected to achieve and which represents a standard deemed adequate to enable the student to make further progress in the learning area. This achievement standard will be linked to a C grade when reporting to parents.

The sequence of achievement levels across K–10 will describe and illustrate progress in the learning area.

This sequence will provide teachers with a framework of growth and development in each of the learning areas.

Work samples will play a key role in establishing and communicating achievement. The examples of student work will include the task and a student's response, with an assessment and annotations setting out the basis for the judgement.

The development of the achievement standards will take account of what is known from research about how to improve students' learning. If teachers are to understand individuals' current levels of attainment so that they can target teaching on needs, they must have a grasp of the growth and development of students' thinking about fundamental concepts in an area of learning. A sequence of achievement levels provides teachers with an articulated framework of growth and development that will assist them to do this.

Year-by-year achievement standards will help teachers to know where students are at any given point. Teachers will, however, continue to use formative assessment information to diagnose learning difficulties, or to decide how to teach the next lesson. They will continue to use formative assessment, conducted on a regular basis, to make adjustments to their instruction and to generate feedback to enable students to adjust their learning.

The curriculum content and achievement standards will also be used to inform the development of national assessment programs. It will be possible to 'calibrate' results of assessment programs against the sequence of achievement levels, providing finer-grained detail about students' levels of achievement and progress that can be useful for monitoring purposes at the system and whole-school levels.

For Years 11–12, subject-specific achievement standards will be developed. These will describe a range of levels of achievement expected of students studying the particular course. They will be designed to support reporting to students and parents, to ensure consistency of assessment and reporting across states and territories, and to contribute to the discrimination in assessments required for post-school pathway selection. The Years 11–12 achievement standards will be designed to be applicable in jurisdictions with external examinations and with school-based assessment.

The achievement standards will not assume how students will be asked about or might be able to demonstrate their learning. While they will guide and inform assessment, particular assessment methods used will be determined by teachers, schools and school authorities.

### **Reporting to parents**

A–E grades, or equivalent, are used to report to parents. These grades are designed to help parents and guardians to interpret their child's performance in a simple and direct way. Is their child achieving at the level expected of students in the Year level? Is there cause for concern? Is their child falling behind and in need of additional assistance to be able to succeed in school? Is their child moving ahead faster than other students in the same Year level and in need of extension studies?

In conjunction with the development of curriculum content and achievement standards, the national curriculum will provide a consistent nomenclature to describe the quality of achievement associated with each A–E grade. The use of A–E grades will aid the articulation of the extent to which a student has met the achievement standard for a particular year of school. For example, students would be awarded a grade of C or above only if they have met the achievement standard for that year/stage. A C grade might indicate a satisfactory level of achievement and an A grade an outstanding level of achievement. A D or E grade would suggest that follow-up is required as these levels of achievement would present a cause for concern to teachers, student and parents.

Annotated student work samples will be used to illustrate the differences in quality of student work and would be developed for, at least, the A/B and C/D cut-off points. The collection of these work samples will build on work that is already in place in states and territories. The collection will provide a common and national reference point for greater consistency in teacher judgment within and between classrooms, schools, states and territories.

## 4. Curriculum development

The National Curriculum Board's curriculum development process has been designed to generate broad discussion and consultation on the shape and design of the national curriculum.

To guide curriculum development for particular learning areas the Board has adopted a process that involves four interrelated phases: curriculum framing, curriculum writing, implementation and curriculum evaluation and review.

The activities that occur within each of these phases, and the timelines for each curriculum development project, are outlined in the document National Curriculum Board: Curriculum development process. This publication can be found at [www.ncb.org.au](http://www.ncb.org.au) (under 'Publications').

## 5. Pedagogy

It is clear that pedagogy and curriculum content and processes cannot be treated entirely discretely, and that best current pedagogy and practice must be used when constructing curriculum documents. Even so, while the national curriculum will make clear to teachers what has to be taught and to students what they should learn and what achievement standards are expected of them, classroom teachers are the people who will decide how best to organise learning for students. They will make decisions about the pedagogical approach that will give the best learning outcomes.

## 6. Implementation

The Board is to develop a national K–12 curriculum in English, mathematics, the sciences and history by the end of 2010. Timelines for each of these curriculum development activities can be found at [www.ncb.org.au](http://www.ncb.org.au).

Implementation will follow, commencing in 2011. National curriculum implementation issues will be significant considerations for the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), working with the states and territories through the Australian Education Systems Officials' Committee (AESOC) and their curriculum authorities. Consideration will be given to the sequencing of implementation from 2011.

As part of its work to develop the national curriculum, the Board has discussed factors that will influence implementation strategies. They include:

- the extent of difference between existing curriculum requirements, in terms of what is to be taught and assessed, in any particular year or over a sequence of years
- the extent of change in how the curriculum is organised, in terms of organisation of the curriculum content (such as by years of schooling) and how achievement standards are presented
- the extent to which state and territory credentialing or other arrangements require additional material to be developed and made available to teachers (such as assessment requirements, examination specifications and sample papers for senior years)
- the extent, and place in the cycle, of curriculum change, such as primary teachers dealing with multiple new curriculums, or education systems part-way through an existing curriculum change.

The national curriculum development process provides for briefing sessions with state and territory authorities, professional associations, publishers and so on, beyond the consultation processes built into the curriculum development process.

A brief summary of the consultation process around the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum* undertaken by the National Curriculum Board.

June 2008	<b>Release of the <i>National Curriculum Development Paper</i></b> (a discussion paper in which the Board describes the context of its work and set down a set of questions that needed to be answered to determine the kind of curriculum it would produce)
27 June 2008	<b>National Forum (Melbourne)</b> to discuss and consult on the National Curriculum Development Paper
12 October 2008	<b>Release of <i>The Shape of the National Curriculum: A proposal for Discussion</i></b> (The paper outlines the broad scope and structure proposed for the national curriculum and is designed to be read in conjunction with papers for English, mathematics, the sciences, and history. Feedback was open to the end of the 2008 school year)
	<b>Release of the initial advice papers for English, mathematics, the sciences and history for four national forums</b>
	<b>Feedback on the initial advice papers was open until the beginning of November 2008</b>
July – Mid Nov 2008	<b>Eight state and territory forums to discuss the Board's publications</b>
20 November 2008	<b>Release of the framing papers for English, mathematics, the sciences and history</b> (The framing papers present broad directions for what teachers should teach and young people should learn in the national curriculum from Kindergarten to Year 12. The papers have been developed from the feedback and consultation received from the initial advice papers)
	Feedback on the framing papers is open until 28 February 2009
Late February 2009	<b>National forums (Melbourne):</b> Stages of schooling; 21st century learning; equity and diversity
First week of March	<b>Literacy, numeracy and ICT workshop; Achievement standards workshop</b>
18 March	<b>Learning area consultation forum</b>
20 March	<b>Curriculum Directors' workshop</b>
25 March	<b>Sustainability forum and business/industry focus group</b>
26 March	<b>Indigenous education focus group</b>
End of April 2009	<b>Finalise English, mathematics, the sciences, and history framing papers to guide curriculum development</b>
May 2009	<b>Publication of revised <i>Shape of the Australian Curriculum</i> papers</b>



# The Shape of the Australian Curriculum

Version 4.0



October 2012

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## Amendment history

Date	Version	Comment
May 2009	1.0	Approved by the Interim National Curriculum Board in May 2009 to guide the development of the first phase of the Australian Curriculum (English, mathematics, science and history).
October 2010	2.0	Updated to support implementation of the Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum for English, mathematics, science and history, to provide the context for the next stage of development of the Foundation to Year 12 curriculum and to promote ongoing discussion about the shape of the Australian Curriculum as a whole.  Approved by the ACARA Board 26 October 2010.
October 2011	3.0	The F–10 Curriculum Position paper on the whole curriculum, achievement standards and support for students with disability was endorsed by the Ministerial Council in July 2011 and informed the revision of The Shape of the Australian Curriculum v2.0.
October 2012	4.0	Updated to include information about the shape of the senior secondary curriculum and additional advice on how the Australian Curriculum meets the needs of the diverse range of students in Australian schools.



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## Purpose

1. The Shape of the Australian Curriculum v4.0 provides background to the development of and for the implementation of the Australian Curriculum.
2. The first Shape of the Australian Curriculum (May 2009) was written to guide the development of the first phase of the Australian Curriculum (English, mathematics, science and history). It was approved by the Ministerial Council in September 2009. Subsequent versions were approved by Ministers in December 2010 (Version 2.0) and October 2011 (Version 3.0).

## Preamble

3. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is responsible for:
  - a national curriculum from Foundation to Year 12 in specified learning areas
  - a national assessment program aligned to the national curriculum that measures students' progress
  - a national data collection and reporting program that supports:
    - analysis, evaluation, research and resource allocation
    - accountability and reporting on schools
    - broader national achievement.
4. As part of its initial charter, ACARA was asked to commence curriculum development for English, mathematics, science and history. A second phase of work was authorised involving the development of an Australian Curriculum in geography, languages and the Arts. Subsequently, Australian education ministers agreed that a third phase of curriculum development will focus on health and physical education, information and communication technology, design and technology, economics and business, and civics and citizenship.
5. The establishment of ACARA can be seen as an outcome of many years of national collaboration in education. Twenty years ago, the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs produced a collaborative statement on goals for schooling: the Hobart Declaration of 1989. Both the Hobart Declaration and the 1999 Adelaide Declaration authorised and stimulated the national effort.
6. The curriculum development work of ACARA is guided by the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians, adopted by the Ministerial Council in December 2008. The Melbourne Declaration emphasises the importance of knowledge, understanding and skills of learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities as the basis for a curriculum designed to support 21st century learning.

# An Australian Curriculum

## Rationale

7. All Australian governments have committed to the goals of the Melbourne Declaration, which are that Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence; and that all young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens. Promoting world-class curriculum and assessment is one of eight interrelated areas for action designed to achieve the Melbourne Declaration goals.
8. The rationale for introducing an Australian Curriculum centres on improving the quality, equity and transparency of Australia's education system.
  - Quality — an Australian Curriculum will contribute to the provision of a world-class education in Australia by setting out the knowledge, understanding and skills needed for life and work in the 21st century and by setting common high standards of achievement across the country.
  - Equity — an Australian Curriculum will provide a clear, shared understanding of what young people should be taught and the quality of learning expected of them, regardless of their circumstances, the type of school that they attend or the location of their school.
9. Education plays a critical role in shaping the lives of the nation's future citizens. To play this role effectively, the intellectual, personal, social and educational needs of young Australians must be addressed at a time when ideas about the goals of education are changing and will continue to evolve.
10. At the 60th Australian Education Council meeting held in Hobart in April 1989, education ministers produced a collaborative statement on goals for schooling: the Hobart Declaration. This statement was updated in 1999 as the Adelaide Declaration. In 2008, ministers nominated five major developments that, over the 20-year period, had changed the ways in which people interacted with each other and thought about the purposes of schooling. These changes were set out in the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (see Box 1).

# An Australian Curriculum

## Box 1: Changes over the period 1989-2008 with implications for education

- Global integration and international mobility have increased rapidly in the past decade. As a consequence, new and exciting opportunities for Australians are emerging. This heightens the need to nurture an appreciation of, and respect for, social, cultural and religious diversity, and a sense of global citizenship.
- India, China and other Asian nations are growing and their influence on the world is increasing. Australians need to become 'Asia literate' by building strong relationships with Asia.
- Globalisation and technological change are placing greater demands on education and skill development in Australia, and the nature of jobs available to young Australians is changing faster than ever. Skilled jobs now dominate jobs growth, and people with university or vocational education and training qualifications fare much better in the employment market than early school-leavers. To maximise their opportunities for healthy, productive and rewarding futures, Australia's young people must be encouraged not only to complete secondary education, but also to proceed into further training or education.
- Complex environmental, social and economic pressures, such as climate change, that extend beyond national borders pose unprecedented challenges, requiring countries to work together in new ways. To meet these challenges, Australians must be able to comprehend and use scientific concepts and principles, and approach problem solving in new and creative ways.
- Rapid and continuing advances in information and communication technologies (ICT) are changing the ways people share, use, develop and process information and technology, and young people need to be highly skilled in ICT. While schools already employ these technologies in learning, there is a need to increase their effectiveness significantly over the next decade.

*Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians, December 2008, p.4*

## An Australian Curriculum

11. Education must not only respond to these remarkable changes but also, as far as possible, anticipate the conditions in which young Australians will need to function as individuals, citizens and workers when they complete their schooling. These future conditions are distant and difficult to predict. It is expected that almost all young Australians who begin primary school in 2011 will continue their initial education until 2022. Many will go on to further education or training through to the mid-2020s and later. Young people will need a wide and adaptive set of knowledge, understanding and skills and to meet the changing expectations of society and to contribute to the creation of a more productive, sustainable and just society.
12. An Australian Curriculum in the 21st century needs to acknowledge the changing ways in which young people will learn and the challenges that will continue to shape their learning in the future. The curriculum is important in setting out what will be taught, what students need to learn and the expected quality of that learning.
13. The commitment to develop a national curriculum reflects a willingness to work together, across geographical and school-sector boundaries, to provide a world-class education for all young Australians. Working nationally makes it possible to harness collective expertise and effort in the pursuit of this common goal. It also offers the potential of economies of scale and a substantial reduction in the duplication of time, effort and resources.
14. The Australian Curriculum also means that all young Australians can learn about the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, of their contribution to Australia, and of the consequences of colonial settlement for Indigenous communities, past and present. For Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders, the Australian Curriculum promotes the importance of pursuing excellence within education settings that respect and promote their cultural identity.

# An Australian Curriculum

## Goals of Education

15. The Melbourne Declaration commits 'to supporting all young Australians to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens' (see Box 2), and to promoting equity and excellence in education.

### Box 2: Educational goals for young Australians

Successful learners:

- develop their capacity to learn and play an active role in their own learning
- have the essential skills in literacy and numeracy, and are creative and productive users of technology, especially ICT, as a foundation for success in all learning areas
- are able to think deeply and logically, and obtain and evaluate evidence in a disciplined way as the result of studying fundamental disciplines
- are creative, innovative and resourceful, and are able to solve problems in ways that draw upon a range of learning areas and disciplines
- are able to plan activities independently, collaborate, work in teams and communicate ideas
- are able to make sense of their world and think about how things have become the way they are
- are on a pathway towards continued success in further education, training or employment, and acquire the skills to make informed learning and employment decisions throughout their lives
- are motivated to reach their full potential.

Confident and creative individuals:

- have a sense of self-worth, self-awareness and personal identity that enables them to manage their emotional, mental, spiritual and physical wellbeing
- have a sense of optimism about their lives and the future—are enterprising, show initiative and use their creative abilities
- develop personal values and attributes such as honesty, resilience, empathy and respect for others
- have the knowledge, skills, understandings and values to establish and maintain healthy, satisfying lives
- have the confidence and capability to pursue university or post-secondary vocational qualifications leading to rewarding and productive employment
- relate well to others and form and maintain healthy relationships
- are well prepared for their potential life roles as family, community and workforce members

## An Australian Curriculum

- embrace opportunities, make rational and informed decisions about their own lives and accept responsibility for their own actions.

Active and informed citizens:

- act with moral and ethical integrity
- appreciate Australia's social, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity, and have an understanding of Australia's system of government, history and culture
- understand and acknowledge the value of Indigenous cultures, and possess the knowledge, skills and understandings to contribute to, and benefit from, reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians
- are committed to national values of democracy, equity and justice, and participate in Australia's civic life
- are able to relate to and communicate across cultures, especially the cultures and countries of Asia
- work for the common good, in particular sustaining and improving natural and social environments
- are responsible global and local citizens.

*Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians, December 2008, pp. 8–9.*

# Development of the Australian Curriculum

## Propositions shaping the Australian Curriculum

16. The development of the Australian Curriculum is shaped by the following propositions.
- a) The Australian Curriculum recognises the entitlement of each student to knowledge, understanding and skills that provide a foundation for successful and lifelong learning and participation in the Australian community.
  - b) The Australian Curriculum is presented as a continuum of learning that makes clear to teachers what is to be taught across the years of schooling. It makes clear what students should learn and the quality of learning expected of them as they progress through school.
  - c) The Australian Curriculum is based on the assumptions that each student can learn and the needs of every student are important. It enables high expectations to be set for each student as teachers account for the current levels of learning of individual students and the different rates at which students develop.
  - d) The Australian Curriculum is aligned with the Early Years Learning Framework and builds on its key learning outcomes, namely: children have a strong sense of identity; children are connected with, and contribute to, their world; children have a strong sense of wellbeing; children are confident and involved learners; and children are effective communicators.
  - e) The Australian Curriculum helps prepare all young Australians to become competent and contributing members of the community. It builds firm and meaningful foundation skills as well as providing the basis for developing expertise for the increasing number of students who move on to specialised advanced studies in academic disciplines, professions and technical trades.
  - f) The Australian Curriculum specifies what all young Australians should learn as they progress through schooling and is designed to be taught within the overall teaching time and with the resources available to teachers and students. School authorities make decisions about the allocation of time and other resources.
  - g) The Australian Curriculum provides for rigorous, in-depth study, preferring depth to breadth wherever a choice needs to be made, with consideration also being given to the overall teaching and learning time available.
  - h) For some learning areas, the Australian Curriculum will be written with the expectation that they will be taught in each year of schooling from Foundation to Year 10. For other areas, the Australian Curriculum will describe an entitlement that students will have the opportunity to learn across Foundation to Year 8, as well as additional learning they may choose and/or schools may choose to provide in Years 9–10.



## Development of the Australian Curriculum

- i) The primary audience for the Australian Curriculum is teachers. The curriculum is concise and expressed in plain language while preserving a complexity appropriate for professional practitioners. Consistency in terms of language and broad structure supports teachers in planning within and across learning areas.
- j) Jurisdictions, systems and schools will be able to implement the Australian Curriculum in ways that value teachers' professional knowledge, reflect local contexts and take into account individual students' family, cultural and community backgrounds. Schools and teachers determine pedagogical and other delivery considerations.
- k) The Australian Curriculum is established on a strong evidence base, which is related to learning, pedagogy and what works in professional practice, and has been benchmarked against international curricula.

### Curriculum development process

17. The process for developing the Australian Curriculum has been designed to generate broad engagement with, and discussion and feedback about, the shape and content of the Australian Curriculum.
18. It involves four interrelated phases: curriculum shaping, curriculum writing, implementation, and curriculum evaluation and review.
19. Curriculum shaping involves the development of a paper for each learning area setting out a broad outline of the proposed curriculum. Expert advice is sought in the development of an initial draft shape paper released for wide public consultation. Following modification of the draft in light of consultation and feedback, a final shape paper is published on ACARA's website at [www.acara.edu.au](http://www.acara.edu.au).
20. Curriculum writing involves teams of writers, supported by expert advisory groups and ACARA curriculum staff, who draft content descriptions and achievement standards for Foundation to Year 12. The draft Australian Curriculum for each learning area is released for public consultation and is subsequently revised in light of the feedback. The writing stage culminates in publication of the Australian Curriculum for the learning area.
21. Preparation for implementation sees the Australian Curriculum delivered in an online environment for school authorities, schools and teachers to use. ACARA works with state and territory curriculum and school authorities to support their ongoing implementation planning.
22. Curriculum monitoring, evaluation and review processes are put in place to monitor and review the Australian Curriculum based on implementation feedback. The evaluation process may result in minor changes to, or a revision of, the curriculum.

## Development of the Australian Curriculum

23. Major features, processes and broad timeframes for these phases are elaborated in the Curriculum Development Process paper, which can be found at <http://www.acara.edu.au>.

## Scope of the Australian Curriculum

24. The Australian Curriculum has been written to take account of the growth and development of young people across the years of schooling, the diverse needs of the student population in Australian schools, and the knowledge, understanding and skills that all young Australians are entitled to learn in terms of learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities.
25. The Australian Curriculum makes clear to teachers what is to be taught. It also makes clear to students what they should learn and the quality of learning expected of them. Schools are able to decide how best to deliver the curriculum, drawing on integrated approaches where appropriate and using pedagogical approaches that account for students' needs, interests and the school and community context. School authorities will be able to offer curriculum beyond that specified in the Australian Curriculum.
26. The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians identifies three broad categories of outcomes that the curriculum should deliver for students (see Box 3). Thus the Australian Curriculum is developed in terms of learning area knowledge, skills and understandings and general capabilities.

## Scope of the Australian Curriculum

### **Box 3: Intended educational outcomes for young Australians**

*A solid foundation in knowledge, skills and understandings, and values on which further learning and adult life can be built:*

- The curriculum will include a strong focus on literacy and numeracy skills. It will also enable students to build social and emotional intelligence, and nurture student wellbeing through health and physical education in particular. The curriculum will support students to relate well to others and foster an understanding of Australian society, citizenship and national values through the study of civics and citizenship. As a foundation for further learning and adult life, the curriculum will include practical knowledge and skills development in areas such as ICT and design and technology, which are central to Australia's skilled economy and provide crucial pathways to post- school success.

*Deep knowledge, understanding, skills and values that will enable advanced learning and an ability to create new ideas and translate them into practical applications:*

- The curriculum will enable students to develop knowledge in the disciplines of English, mathematics, science, languages, humanities and the Arts; to understand the spiritual, moral and aesthetic dimensions of life; and open up new ways of thinking. It will also support the development of deep knowledge within a discipline, which provides the foundation for interdisciplinary approaches to innovation and complex problem solving.

*General capabilities that underpin flexible and analytical thinking, a capacity to work with others and an ability to move across subject disciplines to develop new expertise:*

- The curriculum will support young people to develop a range of generic and employability skills that have particular application to the world of work and further education and training, such as planning and organising, the ability to think flexibly, to communicate well and to work in teams. Young people also need to develop the capacity to think creatively, innovate, solve problems and engage with new disciplines.

*Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians, December 2008, p.13*

## Dimensions of the Australian Curriculum

27. The Australian Curriculum describes a learning entitlement for each Australian student. It sets out what young people should be taught (through the specification of curriculum content from learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities) and an expectation of the quality of their learning (depth of understanding and sophistication of skills described through achievement standards).
28. The Australian Curriculum has a three-dimensional design — discipline-based learning areas, general capabilities as essential 21st century skills and contemporary cross-curriculum priorities.
29. The learning areas for which Australian Curriculum will be developed are:
- English
  - Mathematics
  - Science
  - Humanities and Social Science (comprising History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship and Economics and Business)
  - The Arts (comprising Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music and Visual Arts)
  - Languages
  - Health and Physical Education
  - Technologies (comprising Digital Technologies and Design and Technologies)
30. The learning areas and the disciplines from which they are drawn provide a foundation of learning in schools because they reflect the way in which knowledge has, and will continue to be, developed and codified. However, 21st century learning does not fit neatly into a curriculum solely organised by learning areas or subjects that reflect the disciplines. Increasingly, in a world where knowledge itself is constantly growing and evolving, students need to develop a set of knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions, or general capabilities that apply across subject-based content and equip them to be lifelong learners able to operate with confidence in a complex, information-rich, globalised world.
31. The general capabilities define knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that can be developed and applied across the curriculum to help students become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens. The general capabilities to be included in the Australian Curriculum are:
- Literacy

## Dimensions of the Australian Curriculum

- Numeracy
- Information and communication technology (ICT) capability
- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability
- Ethical understanding
- Intercultural understanding.

32. As shown in Box 3, on page 15, the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians sees these general capabilities as including 'planning and organising, the ability to think flexibly, to communicate well and to work in teams, the capacity to think creatively, innovate, solve problems and engage with new disciplines'.

33. The Australian Curriculum specifically covers the following general capabilities:

### **Literacy**

Students become literate as they develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions to interpret and use language confidently for learning and communicating in and out of school and for participating effectively in society. Literacy involves students in listening to, reading, viewing, speaking, writing and creating oral, print, visual and digital texts, and using and modifying language for different purposes in a range of contexts.

### **Numeracy**

Students become numerate as they develop the knowledge and skills to use mathematics confidently across other learning areas at school and in their lives more broadly. Numeracy involves students in recognising and understanding the role of mathematics in the world and having the dispositions and capacities to use mathematical knowledge and skills purposefully.

### **Information communication technology (ICT) capability**

Students develop ICT capability as they learn to use ICT effectively and appropriately to access, create and communicate information and ideas, solve problems and work collaboratively in all learning areas at school, and in their lives beyond school. The capability involves students in learning to make the most of the digital technologies available to them, adapting to new ways of doing things as technologies evolve and limiting the risks to themselves and others in a digital environment.

## Dimensions of the Australian Curriculum

### **Critical and creative thinking**

Students develop capability in critical and creative thinking as they learn to generate and evaluate knowledge, clarify concepts and ideas, seek possibilities, consider alternatives and solve problems. Critical and creative thinking are integral to activities that require students to think broadly and deeply using skills, behaviours and dispositions such as reason, logic, resourcefulness, imagination and innovation in all learning areas at school and in their lives beyond school.

### **Personal and social capability**

Students develop personal and social capability as they learn to understand themselves and others, and manage their relationships, learning, lives and work more effectively. The capability involves students in a range of practices including recognising and regulating emotions, developing empathy for others and understanding relationships, establishing and building positive relationships, making responsible decisions, working effectively in teams, handling challenging situations constructively and developing leadership skills.

### **Ethical understanding**

Students develop ethical understanding as they identify and investigate the nature of ethical concepts, values and character traits, and understand how reasoning can assist ethical judgment. Ethical understanding involves students in building a strong personal and socially oriented ethical outlook that helps them to manage context, conflict and uncertainty, and to develop an awareness of the influence that their values and behaviour have on others.

### **Intercultural understanding**

Students develop intercultural understanding as they learn to value their own cultures, languages and beliefs, and those of others. They come to understand how personal, group and national identities are shaped, and the variable and changing nature of culture. The capability involves students in learning about and engaging with diverse cultures in ways that recognise commonalities and differences, create connections with others and cultivate mutual respect.

## Dimensions of the Australian Curriculum

34. The Australian Curriculum is designed to meet the needs of students by delivering a relevant, contemporary and engaging curriculum that build on the educational goals of the Melbourne Declaration. The Melbourne Declaration identifies three key areas that need to be addressed for the benefit of both individuals and Australia as a whole. In the Australian Curriculum these have become priorities that provide students with the tools and language to engage with and better understand their world at a range of levels. The priorities provide dimensions which will enrich the curriculum through development of considered and focused content that fits naturally within learning areas. They enable the delivery of learning area content at the same time as developing knowledge, understanding and skills relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia or Sustainability. Incorporation of the priorities will encourage conversations between learning areas and between students, teachers and the wider community. The cross-curriculum priorities to be included in the Australian Curriculum are:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures
- Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia
- Sustainability.

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures**

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures priority provides opportunities for all learners to deepen their knowledge of Australia by engaging with the world's oldest continuous living cultures. Students will understand that contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are strong, resilient, rich and diverse. The knowledge and understanding gained through this priority will enhance the ability of all young people to participate positively in the ongoing development of Australia.

### **Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia**

The Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia priority will ensure that students learn about and recognise the diversity within and between the countries of the Asia region. They will develop knowledge and understanding of Asian societies, cultures, beliefs and environments, and the connections between the peoples of Asia, Australia, and the rest of the world. Asia literacy provides students with the skills to communicate and engage with the peoples of Asia so they can effectively live, work and learn in the region.

### **Sustainability**

The Sustainability priority will allow young Australians to develop the knowledge, skills, values and world views necessary for them to act in ways that contribute to more sustainable patterns of living. It will enable individuals and communities to reflect on ways of interpreting and engaging with the world. The Sustainability priority is futures-oriented, focusing on protecting environments and creating a more ecologically and socially just world through informed action. Actions that support more sustainable patterns of living require consideration of environmental, social, cultural and economic systems and their interdependence.



# Dimensions of the Australian Curriculum

## The curriculum across the years of schooling

35. For some learning areas, the Australian Curriculum has been written with the intention that it is taught to all students in each year of schooling from Foundation to Year 10, with decisions to be made subsequently about further learning in the senior secondary years. For other learning areas, the Australian Curriculum will be written for Foundation to Year 10, but with the intention that it is taught to all students across Foundation to Year 8, with subsequent decisions to be made about further learning in Years 9, 10, and then for senior secondary schooling.
36. The relative emphasis given to each of the eight learning areas varies across the stages of schooling according to factors such as:
- making literacy and numeracy priority areas in the early years
  - increasing emphasis on all eight learning areas in the upper primary years and in Years 7–8
  - creating greater opportunities for students to choose learning pathways that build individual needs and interests in secondary schooling.
37. In the early years of schooling, priority is given to literacy and numeracy development because these are the foundations on which further learning is built. The foundation for literacy is built primarily in English and the foundation for numeracy primarily in mathematics. However, both literacy and numeracy must be reinforced and strengthened through learning in other contexts, including science, history and geography. Priority is also given to movement skills development, participation in physical activity and the development of safer and healthier personal practices through the teaching of health and physical education. Equally, all students in these early years will have the opportunity to develop their sensory, cognitive and affective appreciation of the world around them through exploratory and creative learning in The Arts and Technologies. The opportunity to learn a language may also be available subject to school and curriculum authority arrangements.
38. In the upper primary years and the first years of lower secondary schooling, the Australian Curriculum continues to prioritise English and literacy and mathematics and numeracy, along with the opportunity for a broad education drawing from each of the eight learning areas outlined in the Melbourne Declaration. The Australian Curriculum across these years of schooling provides core or common learning opportunities, while also providing opportunities for students to deepen their learning in particular areas according to their interests and needs.

## Dimensions of the Australian Curriculum

39. The design of the Australian Curriculum for Years 9 and 10 recognises that many students commence senior secondary pathways and programs, including vocational pathways, in these years. The curriculum is designed to provide increased opportunities for students to make choices about learning pathways and to deepen their understanding in each learning area. It is based on the assumption that school and/or curriculum authorities will provide learning opportunities in English, mathematics, science, history, and health and physical education for all students and will also provide learning opportunities from other learning areas and in vocational and applied learning, including National Trade Cadetships. In Years 9 and 10, there is flexibility for students to undertake more specialised learning pathways that ensure all students are fully engaged and prepared to continue learning into the senior secondary years.
40. The senior secondary curriculum provides students with increased opportunities to make choices about pathways through school and beyond. These choices are informed by previous success and enjoyment, future options for training, learning or employment, and the setting in which the learning is to occur. The senior school curriculum offers more opportunities for specialisation in learning, including within the regular school program and through accredited vocational education and training.

### The diversity of learners

41. ACARA is committed to the development of a high-quality curriculum for all Australian students that promotes excellence and equity in education.
42. All students are entitled to rigorous, relevant and engaging learning programs drawn from a challenging curriculum that addresses their individual learning needs. The Australian Curriculum recognises that the needs of all students encompass cognitive, affective, physical, social, and aesthetic curriculum experiences.
43. The three-dimensional design of the Australian Curriculum, comprising learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities, provides teachers with flexibility to cater for the diverse needs of students across Australia and to personalise their learning.
44. ACARA will publish explicit advice for teachers, along with examples, on using the three-dimensional design of the Australian Curriculum to address the diversity of learning needs, including the needs of students with disability, gifted and talented students, and students for whom English is an additional language or dialect (EAL/D).
45. ACARA acknowledges that many **students with disability** are able to achieve educational standards commensurate with their peers, as long as the necessary adjustments are made to the way in which they are taught and to the means through which they demonstrate their learning.

## Dimensions of the Australian Curriculum

46. In some cases curriculum adjustments are necessary to provide equitable opportunities for students to access age-equivalent learning area content. Teachers can draw from Australian Curriculum content at different levels along the Foundation to Year 10 sequences. In particular, teachers can use the extended general capabilities learning continua in Literacy, Numeracy and Personal and social capability to adjust the focus of learning according to individual student need.
47. Teachers can use the Australian Curriculum flexibly to meet the individual learning needs of **gifted and talented** students.
48. Teachers can enrich student learning by providing students with opportunities to work with learning area content in more depth or breadth; emphasising specific aspects of the general capabilities learning continua (for example, the higher order cognitive skills of the Critical and creative thinking capability); and/or focusing on cross-curriculum priorities. Teachers can also accelerate student learning by drawing on content from later levels in the Australian Curriculum and/or from local state and territory teaching and learning materials.
49. Students for whom **English is another language or dialect (EAL/D)** enter Australian schools at different ages and at different stages of English language learning and have various educational backgrounds in their first languages. Whilst many EAL/D students bring already highly developed literacy (and numeracy) skills in their own language to their learning of Standard Australian English, there is a significant number of students who are not literate in their first language, and have had little or no formal schooling.
50. While the objectives of the Australian Curriculum are the same for all students, EAL/D students must reach these objectives while simultaneously learning a new language and learning content and skills through that new language. These students may require additional time and support, along with teaching that explicitly addresses their individual language learning needs. Students who have had no formal schooling will need additional time and support in order to acquire skills for effective learning in formal settings.
51. A national *English as an Additional Language or Dialect: Teacher Resource* has been developed to support teachers in making the Australian Curriculum: Foundation to Year 10 in each learning area accessible to EAL/D students. This resource is located at [www.acara.edu.au/curriculum/student\\_diversity/eald\\_teacher\\_resource.html](http://www.acara.edu.au/curriculum/student_diversity/eald_teacher_resource.html).

## Curriculum content

### Organisation of the Australian Curriculum F-10

52. The key elements of the F-10 Australian Curriculum in each learning area are the rationale, aims, curriculum content and achievement standards. Year level descriptions or band descriptions provide information about the learning contexts that apply to the content descriptions and achievement standards.
53. The curriculum content, presented as content descriptions, specifies the knowledge, understanding and skills that teachers are to teach and young people are expected to learn across the years of schooling.
54. F–10 content descriptions are accompanied by ‘content elaborations’ which, as support material, provide illustrations and/or examples of the content descriptions.
55. The achievement standards describe what students are typically able to understand and able to do. They describe expected achievement. Across F–10 the set of achievement standards describe a broad sequence of expected learning.
56. The sequence of achievement standards within each learning area or subject emphasises the depth of conceptual understanding, the sophistication of skills and the ability to apply essential knowledge expected of students.
57. Achievement standards will be accompanied by sets of annotated student work samples, as support material, to assist teachers to make judgments about the extent to which each achievement standard has been met.

### Learning area knowledge, understanding and skills

58. The Australian Curriculum describes knowledge, understanding and skills organised by learning areas. The selection of content for particular learning areas takes into account the rapid expansion in bodies of knowledge and the challenges this presents for curriculum development.
59. For each learning area, the Australian Curriculum emphasises the knowledge, understanding and skills that form the entitlement of a learning area. Teachers are able to choose how best to introduce concepts and processes, and how to progressively deepen understanding to maximise the engagement and learning of every student.
60. The Australian Curriculum is designed to ensure that students develop the knowledge and understanding on which the major disciplines are based. Each discipline offers a distinctive lens through which we interpret experience, determine what counts as evidence and a good argument for action, scrutinise knowledge and argument, make judgments about value and add to knowledge.
61. Rather than being self-contained or fixed, disciplines are interconnected, dynamic and growing. A discipline-based curriculum should allow for cross-disciplinary learning that broadens and enriches each student’s learning.

## Curriculum content

62. In each learning area, the Australian Curriculum provides a rationale for the choice of curriculum content. The rationale describes the nature of the subject in general terms and provides an outline of how learning in this course relates to the contemporary world and current practice. It also explains the place and purpose of the subject, how learning in the subject is valuable and how it contributes to meeting the national goals of schooling.
63. The scope and sequence for each learning area ensures that learning is appropriately ordered and unnecessary repetition is avoided.

### General capabilities

64. General capabilities are represented to different degrees in each of the learning areas. Some are best developed within specific learning areas. Others can be developed in any learning area depending on teachers' choices of classroom activities. Curriculum documents make explicit how the general capabilities can be addressed in each learning area and allow flexibility in implementation.
65. For each of the general capabilities, a learning continuum has been developed that describes the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that students can be expected to have developed at particular stages of schooling. The general capabilities have been developed to enhance learning area content and will assist teachers to plan for and to guide student learning of these important areas of the curriculum. Teachers are expected to teach and assess general capabilities to the extent that they are incorporated within each learning area. State and territory curriculum and school authorities will determine whether and how student learning of the general capabilities will be separately assessed and reported.

### Cross-curriculum priorities

66. The cross-curriculum priorities are contemporary issues about which young Australians should learn. The cross-curriculum priorities to be addressed in the Australian Curriculum F-10 are:
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures
  - Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia
  - Sustainability.
67. Each of these priorities is represented in learning areas in ways appropriate to that area. For each of the cross-curriculum priorities, a set of organising ideas has been developed. These are consistent across the curriculum and are reinforced in learning areas.

## Curriculum content

### Development of the F-10 curriculum on a year-by-year or bands-of-school-years basis

68. In English and Mathematics, much is known about sequences of learning, and there is empirical evidence to guide the writing of curriculum on a year-by-year basis. For science, history and geography the curriculum has also been developed on a year-by-year basis although the descriptions of skills in these areas, for example, are by bands of years.
69. Decisions about the structure of the curriculum for the remaining learning areas will be the subject of consultation during the development process and will take into account:
- the evidence base available to guide writers – that is, what is known about the typical sequence of student learning and the development of competence in a given learning area
  - the frequency with which a subject is expected to be taught to all students — that is, whether it is expected that all students will learn the subject in each year of schooling
  - the extent to which it is desirable to provide flexibility to schools in how they deliver the curriculum — that is, whether writing the curriculum in bands of years provides schools with greater flexibility to decide when to teach particular content, while bearing in mind the increased risk of repetition of content for students who move between schools.

### Organisation of the senior secondary Australian Curriculum

70. The senior secondary Australian Curriculum will be written for subjects as agreed to nationally.
71. The senior secondary Australian Curriculum comprises rationale and aims, learning outcomes, content descriptions and achievement standards.
72. Content descriptions detail the knowledge, understanding and skills to be taught and learned within a given subject, including the Australian Curriculum general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities that naturally align with the subject.
73. Achievement standards refer to the quality of learning (the depth of understanding, extent of knowledge and sophistication of skill) demonstrated by students within a given subject. The senior secondary achievement standards are subject-specific and align with the major dimensions of learning as described in the learning outcomes and detailed in the content for the subject. Typically these dimensions are categorised into knowledge and understanding, and skills and written as five levels of achievement.

## Curriculum content

74. State and territory curriculum, assessment and certification authorities continue to be responsible for the structure and organisation of their senior secondary courses and will determine how they integrate the Australian Curriculum content and achievement standards into their courses. They will determine the assessment and certification specifications for their courses that use the Australian Curriculum content and achievement standards and any additional information, guidelines and rules to satisfy local requirements.



## Quality assurance and review of the Australian Curriculum

75. The development of the Australian Curriculum takes account of the following assumptions:
- a) The teaching and learning programs offered by schools are based on the Australian Curriculum, in conjunction with state or territory curriculum, and other learning opportunities and activities determined by the school.
  - b) The Australian Curriculum for each learning area describes core content that should be taught when that curriculum is offered.
  - c) Where Australian Curriculum exists for a learning area, it should form the basis of what is taught in schools for that learning area.
  - d) For any year of schooling, Foundation to Year 10, the Australian Curriculum is written so that it should not take up more than 80 per cent of the total teaching time available in schools, with this proportion peaking in Years 7 and 8, and reducing significantly in Years 9 and 10 as core expectations are reduced.
  - e) The Australian Curriculum content for any learning area should be ‘teachable’ within an indicative time allocation that ACARA sets for its curriculum writers, to avoid overcrowding and to allow for the inclusion of other content.
  - f) Decisions relating to the organisation and delivery of the Australian Curriculum, including such matters as time allocations, rest with education authorities and schools. School and curriculum authorities can specify more teaching time.
76. Development of the curriculum is based on the assumption that teachers, when planning for teaching and learning, will account for current levels of learning of individual students and the different rates at which students develop.
77. The design of the curriculum assumes that schools are best able to decide how to deliver the curriculum and will, for example, apply integrated approaches where appropriate and use pedagogical approaches that account for students’ needs, interests and the school and community context.
78. The Australian Curriculum leaves scope for education authorities and/or schools to offer additional learning opportunities beyond those provided by the Australian Curriculum.
79. Teachers will use a range of different assessment strategies to ascertain what each student has learnt — actual achievement — and will make judgments about the extent and quality of each student’s achievement in relation to the Australian Curriculum achievement standards.



## Teaching, assessing and reporting

80. Reporting to parents will provide information about a student's actual achievement against the achievement standards.
81. The use of Australian Curriculum achievement standards as a common reference point for reporting to parents will contribute to national consistency in reporting.
82. Current requirements for reporting to parents include the requirement for student achievement to be reported in terms of A–E grades (or an equivalent 5-point scale).
83. Education authorities and individual schools are able to determine, in consultation with parents and communities, the style and format of reporting that best meets local needs and circumstances, including provision of any additional elements of student reports. This might include written comments about the quality of learning demonstrated by the student; indicators of student effort, engagement, behaviour and improvement; student self-assessment; and future learning goals.
84. As the Australian Curriculum is being implemented, ACARA will work with the states and territories and the Australian Government to investigate ways that may strengthen national consistency in reporting of student learning.
85. The Australian Curriculum is a dynamic curriculum. The online publication of the curriculum facilitates ongoing monitoring and review, as well as providing the opportunity to update the curriculum in a well-managed and effectively communicated manner.
86. Any updating will take into account review and evaluation data; new national and international knowledge and practice about learning, teaching, curriculum design and implementation; and contemporary research in discipline and cross-discipline areas.
87. In this way, the Australian Curriculum will be subject to evaluation and validation during implementation and will continue to be benchmarked against the curricula of countries that are leading the world in education excellence and performance.

## Towards a world-class Australian Curriculum

88. The Australian Curriculum provides a world-class curriculum. The Australian Curriculum:
- has been subject to extensive and sustained consultation during its development
  - has been benchmarked against curricula of leading nations during the development process
  - sets challenging standards for each student
  - does not overload the curriculum
  - pursues deep learning.
89. The Australian Curriculum has been written to equip young Australians with the knowledge, understanding and skills that will enable them to engage effectively with, and prosper in, society, to compete in a globalised world and to thrive in the information-rich workplaces of the future.
90. While the traditional structure of scope and sequence within discrete learning areas is retained, the Australian Curriculum gives explicit attention to seven general capabilities and three cross-curriculum priorities. This will ensure that Australian students are able to learn across disciplines, to develop and build new expertise, as well as function effectively in the communities and workplaces of the 21st century.
91. The Australian Curriculum is published online, via the website <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au>, which is accessible to all members of the Australian community. Publishing the Australian Curriculum online provides flexibility in how people use and organise the curriculum. For example, users can view, download and print the curriculum for a particular learning area at one year level or across multiple year levels. They can also view, download and print content with a focus on the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities.



# Curriculum Design Paper

Version 3.1



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[www.acara.edu.au](http://www.acara.edu.au)

**Australian Curriculum, Assessment and  
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# Curriculum design: Foundation to Year 12

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## Amendment History

Date	Version	Comment
18 May 2009	1.0	Approved by the ACARA Board (21–22 May).
5 November 2009	2.0	Amended to include changes approved by the ACARA Board (6–7 October); separation of specifications for F–10 and senior secondary; update on achievement standards.
February 2010	2.1	Amended to include updated nomenclature.
2011	2.2	Amended to align with <i>The Shape of the Australian Curriculum v2.0</i> and the achievement standards F–10.
March 2012	3.0	Amended to align with <i>The Shape of the Australian Curriculum v3.0</i> and the updated design specifications for the senior secondary curriculum.
June 2013	3.1	Amended to include explanatory notes clarifying indicative times.

# Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

This document provides background information and design specifications to guide the writing of the Australian Curriculum. The document has been and will continue to be revised from time to time, taking account of issues that have arisen during the curriculum development process and/or as the scope of the Australian Curriculum changes.

## 1.2 Related documents

This document should be read in conjunction with other key documents, namely:

- Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (2008)
- *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum v4.0*
- *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum* documents for each curriculum area
- The Curriculum Development Process v6.0

## 2. The context for the F - 12 Australian Curriculum

The work of the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (ACARA) in developing the Australian Curriculum is guided by the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (2008). *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum v4.0*, builds on this work and provides detail about the context for and development of the Australian Curriculum.

### **Promoting world-class curriculum and assessment**

*Curriculum will be designed to develop successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens.*

*State, Territory and Commonwealth governments will work together with all school sectors to ensure world-class curriculum in Australia. Together the national curriculum and curriculum specified at the State, Territory and local levels will enable every student to develop:*

- *A solid foundation in knowledge, understanding, skills and values on which further learning and adult life can be built*
- *Deep knowledge, understanding, skills and values that will enable advanced learning and an ability to create new ideas and translate them into practical applications*
- *General capabilities that underpin flexible and analytical thinking, a capacity to work with others and an ability to move across subject disciplines to develop new expertise.*

*Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians December 2008*

### **Building Australia's future**

*Education plays a critical role in shaping the lives of the nation's future citizens. To play this role effectively, the intellectual, personal, social and educational needs of young Australians must be addressed at a time when ideas about the goals of education are changing and will continue to evolve.*

*The Shape of the Australian Curriculum October 2011*

A curriculum for the twenty-first century will need to reflect and acknowledge the changing nature of young people as learners and the challenges and demands that will continue to shape their learning in the future. Young people will need a wide and adaptive set of skills to meet the changing expectations of society and to contribute to the creation of a more productive, sustainable and just society.

Curriculum is only one element of education that influences how well young Australians are prepared for their futures, but it is important because it sets the level of expectation for their learning. High-performing countries set high expectations. They support the fulfilment of those expectations with high-quality teaching, school and system leadership, and commitment and support from families, communities, business and industry. Providing high quality education is valuable to the community at large, and justifies people's investments of time, effort and resources.



## 3. Elements of the Australian Curriculum

The Australian Curriculum F-12 is developed as a web-based publication that is, using web technologies to embed links and enable multiple views and access. The key elements of the Australian Curriculum will be curriculum content (with content elaborations) and achievement standards (with work sample portfolios).

### 3.1. Curriculum content

Curriculum content identifies what teachers are expected to teach and students are expected to learn. Curriculum content includes knowledge, understanding and skills that will be described for a particular learning area/subject at a particular year level (for example, Mathematics, Year 5) or bands of years (for example, the Arts, Years 5-6).

The curriculum content, presented as content descriptions, specifies the knowledge, understanding and skills that young people are expected to learn and that teachers are expected to teach across the years of schooling. The F–10 content descriptions will be accompanied by ‘content elaborations’ which, as support material, will provide illustrations and/or examples of the content descriptions.

### 3.2 Achievement standards

Achievement standards describe what students are typically able to understand and do. Achievement standards will describe the learning (understanding and skills) expected of students at each year level from F-10.

Across F–10 the set of achievement standards describe a broad sequence of expected learning. The sequence of achievement standards provides teachers with a framework of growth and development in a curriculum area. This will assist teachers to plan and monitor learning, and to make judgments about student achievement.

Achievement standards can support formative and summative assessment practices and aid consistency of assessment and reporting across states and territories.

For each learning area the achievement standards will be accompanied by portfolios of annotated work samples that illustrate the expected learning.

### 3.3 Foundation to Year 10

For F-10, the curriculum content and achievement standards will be presented with other information that sets the context for what is to be taught. This information will include:

- Rationale
- Aims
- Organisation of the <learning area/subject> curriculum
- Representation of general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities.

## 3. Elements of the Australian Curriculum

### 3.4 Senior Secondary

ACARA will develop the senior secondary Australian Curriculum, which will specifically include content and achievement standards. State and territory curriculum, assessment and certification authorities will develop courses that contain the 'national' content and achievement standards as well as additional information, guidelines and rules that meet local assessment and certification requirements. Senior secondary courses are approved by the relevant state and territory curriculum, assessment and certification authority.

The specifications developed by ACARA for each subject in the senior secondary Australian Curriculum include:

- a. key elements:
  - subject rationale and aims
  - unit learning outcomes
  - content descriptions
  - achievement standards
- b. information that:
  - outlines the purpose of each unit in relation to the overall rationale and aims
  - explains the structure of, and connection between, the units
  - explains connections between the F-10 Australian Curriculum and the senior secondary curriculum in the learning area
  - identifies any assumptions about prior learning
  - defines key terms and gives any key references.

## 4. Design considerations: F - 12

This section provides key considerations for the process of curriculum writing. In particular, curriculum writers will consider the following matters:

- **The nature of the learner and learning**, including consideration of how the Australian Curriculum will take into account the developmental changes in young people attending school.
- The **whole curriculum** and how Australian Curriculum learning areas relate to it.
- **Structural matters**, including commencement and completion of school and transition points.
- **Inclusivity** and how the Australian Curriculum will provide for the educational needs of every child.
- **General capabilities**, describing how the Australian Curriculum will attend to general capabilities learning.
- **Cross-curriculum priorities**, describing perspectives that should be included in each learning area.

### 4.1 Nature of the learner and learning

The Australian Curriculum will detail what teachers are expected to teach and students are expected to learn for each year of schooling. The curriculum will describe the knowledge, understanding and skills and that students will be expected to develop for each learning area across the years of schooling. This description of curriculum content will result in a curriculum sequence that will represent what is known about the progression of learning in that area.

Teachers understand the developmental diversity of the students they teach and are responsible for organising learning opportunities to meet individual learning needs. While the curriculum will be described by years or bands of years, its organisation and presentation will take account of changing developmental characteristics of students across Foundation to Year 12. There are varied views about the best way to organise the curriculum into phases or stages, but there is general agreement that the curriculum should not predetermine the instructional approach to be taken by teachers and should provide some flexibility for them to accommodate different levels of student development and achievement and approaches to learning.

Writing of the Australian Curriculum will take account of the broad characteristics of the learner and learning within four overlapping age bands. These are documented in *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum v4.0* (pp. 15-18). While written on a year or band-of-year basis, the curriculum will need to acknowledge that, in any one year-group, there will be a significant range of achievement. Curriculum documents will be written in a way that assists teachers to identify and respond to this range of achievement.

## 4. Design considerations: F - 12

### 4.2 The whole curriculum

In developing a national curriculum for particular learning areas, the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* is a key reference point. The Declaration's second goal is that 'All young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens' and the declaration states that curriculum will be designed to develop such learners. The Declaration (p. 13) also proposes that the Australian Curriculum (and state or territory and local curriculum) will develop the following:

- A solid foundation in knowledge, understanding, skills and values on which further learning and adult life can be built.
- Deep knowledge, understanding, skills and values that will enable advanced learning and an ability to create new ideas and translate them into practical applications.
- General capabilities that underpin flexible and analytical thinking, a capacity to work with others and an ability to move across subject disciplines to develop new expertise.

The Australian Curriculum documents will indicate how learning in each area contributes to the national goals and the agreed features of a quality curriculum. This advice will assist teachers to see the whole curriculum, as well as how learning in each national curriculum area contributes to the whole. The whole view of curriculum includes state/territory and school-developed curriculum.

The Australian Curriculum for each learning area or subject describes core content that should be taught to students studying in that learning area/subject. Where Australian Curriculum exists for a learning area or subject, it should be taught in schools for that learning area.

For any year of schooling, Foundation to Year 10, the Australian Curriculum is written so that it should not take up more than 80 per cent of the total teaching time available in schools. This proportion peaks in Years 7 and 8 and reduces significantly in Years 9 and 10 as core expectations are reduced.

The Australian Curriculum content for any learning area should be 'teachable' within the indicative time allocation that ACARA sets for its curriculum writers, to avoid overcrowding and to allow for the inclusion of other content. Such an approach is not designed to establish time allocations for education systems and sectors, schools or teachers. Rather, it is a design assumption about relative emphasis given to curriculum areas and is intended to guide writers on the teaching/learning time that they can assume as they write the curriculum.

Decisions relating to the organisation and delivery of the Australian Curriculum, including such matters as time allocations, rest with education authorities and schools. School and curriculum authorities can specify more teaching time.

Curriculum writers will be guided by the indicative time allocations as shown in Table 1 for Foundation to Year 10. The senior secondary curriculum is written notionally to 50–60 hours per semester unit.

## 4. Design considerations: F - 12

**Table 1: Indicative times for writers**

Learning Area	Subject	Year F	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
English		27%	27%	27%	22%	22%	20%	20%	12%	12%	12%	12%
Mathematics		18%	18%	18%	18%	18%	16%	16%	12%	12%	12%	12%
Science		4%	4%	4%	7%	7%	7%	7%	10%	10%	12%	12%
Humanities and Social Sciences	History	2%	2%	2%	4%	4%	4%	4%	5%	5%	5%	5%
	Geography	2%	2%	2%	4%	4%	4%	4%	5%	5%	5%*	5%*
	Economics and Business		-				2%	2%	2%	2%	5%*	5%*
	Civics and Citizenship				2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%*	2%*
The Arts		4%	4%	4%	5%	5%	5%	5%	8%	8%	8%*	8%*
Health and Physical Education		8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%
Languages		equivalent to 5% per year							8%	8%	8%*	8%*
Technologies	Design and Technologies	2%	2%	2%	4%	4%	6%	6%	8%	8%	4%*	4%*
	Digital Technologies										4%*	4%*
PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL TIME ALLOCATED		72%	72%	72%	79%	79%	79%	79%	80%	80%	49%	49%
PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL TIME UNALLOCATED		28%	28%	28%	21%	21%	21%	21%	20%	20%	51%	51%

**Notes:**

- a) The indicative times are provided as percentages of total teaching time and are developed to guide curriculum writers only.
- b) Decisions about the actual organisation and delivery of curriculum, including opportunities for integration are best taken at the school level.
- c) The time taken for individual students to learn a body of knowledge, understanding and skill will vary significantly, with some students learning more quickly and others needing more time.
- d) The estimated percentages assume a total of 1000 hours of teaching time each year (25 hours of teaching time each week; 40 weeks/year).
- e) 1% equates to approximately 10 hours per year.
- f) \* indicates that the Australian Curriculum will be developed on the assumption that the curriculum could be taught as an elective.

## 4. Design considerations: F - 12

### 4.3 Structural matters

Decisions about the structure of the curriculum for each learning area will be the subject of consultation during the development process and will take into account:

- the evidence base available to guide writers, that is, what is known about the typical sequence of student learning and the development of competence in a given learning area/subject
- the frequency with which a learning area/subject is expected to be taught to all students, that is, whether it is expected all students will learn the subject in each year of schooling
- the extent to which it is desirable to provide flexibility to schools in how they deliver the curriculum, that is, whether writing the curriculum in bands of years provides schools with greater flexibility to decide when to teach particular content, while bearing in mind the increased risk of repetition of content for students who move between schools.

The Australian states and territories have different structural arrangements for organising and delivering curriculum. These differences and the way in which ACARA will address them are outlined below.

i. School starting age.

While there is variation in the age of and requirement for commencement of schooling between states and territories, the Australian Curriculum will take Foundation Year (known in states and territories variously as Kindergarten, Pre-primary, Preparatory, Reception, Transition) as the first year of schooling and design curriculum for students who are between 5 and 6 years old in this first year.

ii. The placement of Year 7 in primary or secondary schooling.

There is significant variation in the placement of Year 7 within curriculum and school arrangements. While most states and territories have Year 7 as the first year of secondary schooling and the rest have it as the last year of primary schooling, there is considerable variation in the ways that schools are organised, including separate primary and secondary schools, middle years structures and Year 10 to Year 12 school structures. The Australian Curriculum will be designed for Year 7 to be taught in a range of settings and not necessarily requiring specialist teachers and resources.

iii. The use of stages or phases of schooling to organise the curriculum or as organisers of schooling

The Australian Curriculum will be organised by years or bands of years of schooling, with age-related developmental considerations being taken into account within this framework. This approach to curriculum design does not preclude schools and school authorities aggregating curriculum content across years to facilitate a stage of schooling delivery strategy or to facilitate composite or multi-age class arrangements.

## 4. Design considerations: F - 12

### iv. Commencement of senior secondary schooling

Some states and territories allow early commencement of senior school studies, based on curriculum documents designed for Year 11 and Year 12 students. The Australian Curriculum will be designed for Years F–10 and Senior Secondary Years. This does not preclude states and territories continuing to allow early commencement of senior secondary curriculum.

### 4.4 Inclusivity

The Australian Curriculum will contribute to achieving the goals of the Melbourne Declaration, including the promotion of equity and excellence in education. The curriculum must value and build on students' prior learning, experiences and goals. Examples used in the curriculum should reflect the diversity of knowledge, experience and cultural values of students. Particular consideration should be given to visible and positive ways of representing groups that might otherwise be vulnerable to exclusionary pressures.

Some of the variation among students in their level of development and progress can become the basis for inequities in their educational experiences. The Australian Curriculum is developed to ensure that curriculum content and achievement standards establish high expectations for all students. The curriculum provides flexibility for teachers to take into account the different rates at which students develop and a diverse range of learning and assessment needs. In developing curriculum for all Australian students, the Board will not accommodate these differences by setting different expectations for different groups, since that reinforces differences and creates inequitable outcomes.

Teachers understand the diversity in the students they teach and are responsible for organising learning opportunities to meet individual learning needs. Teachers, schools and school authorities have a primary role in dealing with these differences. For example, for students with intellectual disabilities, individual education plans are developed to determine which adjustments should be made to the curriculum to best meet the needs of the individual student.

As per current arrangements, teachers will refer to school authority policies, resources and practices designed to assist particular student cohorts as they plan for and teach the Australian Curriculum. These policies typically address support for:

- students from low socioeconomic backgrounds
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- students learning English as an additional language or dialect
- students of non-English speaking background
- students who live in isolated communities
- students with a physical or intellectual disability.

In addition, issues of gender and levels of academic achievement need to be taken into account to ensure an inclusive curriculum.



## 4. Design considerations: F - 12

The senior secondary Australian Curriculum will be designed with the needs of the full range of students in mind. Consideration will be given to making each senior secondary Australian Curriculum subject accessible to as many students as possible, acknowledging that the full suite of courses and pathways available in states and territories, across and within learning areas, will provide for a range of interests and capabilities. In some cases state/territory-developed courses and pathway options will continue to exist, further extending the opportunities available to students.

The Australian Curriculum promotes excellence and equity in education. The Australian Curriculum is based on the assumptions that each student can learn and that the needs of every student are important. It enables high expectations to be set for each student as teachers account for the current levels of learning of individual students and the different rates at which students develop. Students in Australian classrooms have multiple, diverse, and changing needs that are shaped by individual learning histories and abilities as well as cultural, language backgrounds and socioeconomic factors.

ACARA is working with state and territory education authorities to support the implementation of the Australian Curriculum and will produce advice about using the curriculum to address the diversity of student learning.

Specific guidelines to assist writers address inclusivity will include questions, such as those that follow.

### *Language*

- Does the curriculum acknowledge that students bring a diverse range of language resources and that these need to be recognised, used and extended?
- Has care been taken to ensure that language used is not exclusive and that terms selected are not negative?
- Is the student's language acknowledged as an important learning resource? For example, are students encouraged to explore concepts using their home language when appropriate?

### *Stereotypes*

- Are any groups ascribed characteristics that are more negative or positive than other groups? In what context?
- Are connections made to a variety of skills, knowledge and careers in non-stereotyped ways?

### *Bias*

- Is there evidence of bias in the language being used, such as different language being used to describe the same idea or experience for various groups, with pejorative connotations?
- Is a particular view or situation portrayed as 'natural' rather than one of many?



## 4. Design considerations: F - 12

### *Context for learning*

- Does the curriculum value and use what students bring to the class from their own background and life experiences?
- Does the content/context cater for different levels of ability?
- Does the content/context cater for different socioeconomic situations and/or geographic locations?
- Are examples appropriate to different learning contexts, learners and learning styles?

The curriculum writing process will involve advice and review of documents by advisory group members with expertise on inclusivity to ensure the appropriateness of curriculum content and expectations of achievement.

### 4.5 General capabilities

The *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* identifies essential skills for twenty-first century learners – in literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT), thinking, creativity, teamwork and communication. It describes individuals who can manage their own wellbeing, relate well to others, make informed decisions about their lives, become citizens who behave with ethical integrity, relate to and communicate across cultures, work for the common good and act with responsibility at local, regional and global levels. In the Australian Curriculum these skills are primarily addressed through the general capabilities.

General capabilities comprise an integrated and interconnected set of knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that students develop and use in their learning across the curriculum. They are addressed through the learning areas and are identified wherever they are developed or applied in content descriptions. They are also identified where they offer opportunities to add depth and richness to student learning in content elaborations.

Curriculum documents show how the general capabilities are addressed in each learning area. Each capability will be represented in each learning area in ways appropriate to that area. For some they will be included because they need to be developed and applied in the particular learning area. For others they can be taught and learned by students in any learning area – their development will depend on teachers' choices of classroom activities. .

The Australian Curriculum specifically covers the following general capabilities:

#### *Literacy*

Students become literate as they develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions to interpret and use language confidently for learning and communicating in and out of school and for participating effectively in society. Literacy involves students in listening to, reading, viewing, speaking, writing and creating oral, print, visual and digital texts, and using and modifying language for different purposes in a range of contexts.

## 4. Design considerations: F - 12

### *Numeracy*

Students become numerate as they develop the knowledge and skills to use mathematics confidently across all learning areas at school and in their lives more broadly. Numeracy involves students in recognising and understanding the role of mathematics in the world and having the dispositions and capacities to use mathematical knowledge and skills purposefully.

### *Information and communication technology (ICT) capability*

Students develop ICT capability as they learn to use ICT effectively and appropriately to access, create and communicate information and ideas, solve problems and work collaboratively in all learning areas at school, and in their lives beyond school. The capability involves students in learning to make the most of the digital technologies available to them, adapting to new ways of doing things as technologies evolve and limiting the risks to themselves and others in a digital environment.

### *Critical and creative thinking*

Students develop capability in critical and creative thinking as they learn to generate and evaluate knowledge, clarify concepts and ideas, seek possibilities, consider alternatives and solve problems. Critical and creative thinking are integral to activities that require students to think broadly and deeply using skills, behaviours and dispositions such as reason, logic, resourcefulness, imagination and innovation in all learning areas at school and in the lives beyond school.

### *Personal and social capability*

Students develop personal and social capability as they learn to understand themselves and others, and manage their relationships, lives, work and learning more effectively. The capability involves students in a range of practices including recognising and regulating emotions, developing empathy for and understanding of others, establishing positive relationships, making responsible decisions, working effectively in teams and handling challenging situations constructively.

### *Ethical behaviour*

Students develop capability in learning to behave ethically as they identify and investigate the nature of ethical concepts, values, character traits and principles, and understand how reasoning can assist ethical judgment. Ethical behaviour involves students in building a strong personal and socially oriented ethical outlook that helps them to manage context, conflict and uncertainty, and to develop an awareness of the influence that their values and behaviour have on others.

## 4. Design considerations: F - 12

### *Intercultural understanding*

Students develop intercultural understanding as they learn to value their own cultures, languages and beliefs, and those of others. They come to understand how personal, group and national identities are shaped, and the variable and changing nature of culture. The capability involves students in learning about and engaging with diverse cultures in ways that recognise commonalities and differences, create connections with others and cultivate mutual respect.

### 4.6 Cross-curriculum priorities

There are other cross-curriculum matters that can be thought of as priorities rather than capabilities. The Australian Curriculum, through development of curriculum documents for learning areas/subjects, will address three cross-curriculum priorities.

The Australian Curriculum has been written to equip young Australians with the knowledge, understanding and skills that will enable them to engage effectively with and prosper in a globalised world. Students will gain personal and social benefits, be better equipped to make sense of the world in which they live and make an important contribution to building the social, intellectual and creative capital of our nation.

Accordingly, the Australian Curriculum must be both relevant to the lives of students and address the contemporary issues they face. With these considerations and the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* in mind, the curriculum gives special attention to these three priorities:

- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures**, to ensure that all young Australians will be given the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, their significance for Australia and the impact these have had, and continue to have, on our world
- **Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia**, to reflect the importance of young people knowing about Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia, because as they develop a better understanding of the countries and cultures of the Asia region, they will come to appreciate the economic, political and cultural interconnections that Australia has with the region
- **Sustainability**, to allow young people to develop an appreciation of the need for more sustainable patterns of living, and to build capacities for thinking, valuing and acting necessary to create a more sustainable future.

Cross-curriculum priorities are represented in all learning areas/subjects. They will have a strong but varying presence depending on their relevance to the learning areas. For each of the cross-curriculum priorities, a set of organising ideas has been developed. These are consistent across the curriculum and are reinforced in learning areas. At the commencement of the shaping process, the writers will determine which of the cross-curriculum priorities organising ideas are taken to be inherent to learning in the area and which ones could also be developed with an appropriate choice of activities by the teacher. These are then confirmed at the beginning of the writing process.

## 4. Design considerations: F - 12

The content descriptions that support the knowledge, understanding and skills of the cross-curriculum priorities are tagged with icons. The tagging brings the need and opportunity to address the cross-curriculum priorities to the attention of teachers. Elaborations in the F–10 curriculum will provide further advice on how this can be done, or teachers can select the hyperlink which will provide links to more detailed information on each priority.

### 4.7 Assessment and reporting

Teachers will use a range of different assessment strategies to ascertain what each student has learnt (actual achievement) and will make judgments about the extent and quality of each student's achievement in relation to the Australian Curriculum achievement standards.

Reporting to parents will provide information about a student's actual achievement against the achievement standards. The use of Australian Curriculum achievement standards as a common reference point for reporting to parents will contribute to national consistency in reporting.

Individual school authorities will have specific assessment and reporting requirements that schools and/or teachers will need to meet.

Current Commonwealth requirements for reporting to parents include the requirement for student achievement to be reported in terms of A-E grades (or an equivalent 5-point scale).

Education authorities and individual schools are able to determine, in consultation with parents and communities, the style and format of reporting that best meets local needs and circumstances, including provision of any additional elements of student reports. This might include written comments about the quality of learning demonstrated by the student; indicators of student effort, engagement, behaviour and improvement; student self-assessment; and future learning goals.

As the Australian Curriculum is being implemented, ACARA will work with the states and territories and the Australian Government to investigate ways to strengthen national consistency in reporting.

## 5. Design specifications: F - 10

This section outlines the elements of the F–10 Australian Curriculum and provides guidelines for its development.

### 5.1 Rationale

In each learning area, the Australian Curriculum provides a rationale for the choice of curriculum content. This rationale makes clear to teachers and students why the chosen content is important for students and outlines the broad scope and sequence of learning to be expected from Foundation to Year 10. The rationale makes clear how certain choices were made — whether they were based on ‘big ideas’ essential to a deep understanding of a domain of knowledge; learning that is essential for further learning in a particular area; other important considerations such as the students’ developing sense of personal identity; or Australia’s geographical and historical context.

A rationale:

- will be no more than 200 words
- will be written for F–10.

### 5.2 Aims

The aims of the learning area will identify the major learning that students will be able to demonstrate as a result of being taught the curriculum.

The statement of aims for F–10:

- will comprise a small number (4-6) of statements for the learning area
- will be based on the draft aims in the Shape of the Australian Curriculum: <learning area> documents. Agreement on the broad aims should be one of the first tasks for the writing team in consultation with the learning area advisory group.

### 5.3 Organisation of the <learning area> curriculum

This section will provide an overview of how the curriculum in the learning area will be organised for F–10. The curriculum across F–10 will be developed in a way that supports and coherently presents the continuity of learning, but which also provides for changing emphases across F–10.

The organisation section of the curriculum will include the following elements (acknowledging there may be additional ones for specific learning areas or subjects):

- Content structure: Describes the nature of the strands and their relationship; a summary of the major concepts; year level descriptions; content descriptions and a glossary.
- The nature of learners F–10: Provides advice across different year groupings on the nature of learners and the relevant curriculum.

## 5. Design specifications: F - 10

Achievement standards: Generic description consistent with the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum* paper.

- Diversity of learners: Includes generic text on students with disability and those learning English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D).
- General capabilities: Includes a combination of generic text and specific curriculum area text for each general capability, that is, a brief summary of the general capabilities that have been explicitly included in the content of the curriculum area.
- Cross-curriculum priorities: Includes a combination of generic text and specific curriculum area text for each cross-curriculum priority, that is, a brief summary of where and how each of the three priorities have been explicitly included in the content of the curriculum area.
- Links to other learning areas: Identifies substantive links to other Australian Curriculum learning areas to assist teachers to make connections in their planning for student learning.
- Implications for teaching and assessment: A brief overview of how the Australian Curriculum can accommodate particular approaches to teaching and assessment. Some of the text will be generic.

### 5.4 Curriculum content

Across the years of schooling F–10, curriculum content will be presented in a sequence that guides teaching and learning, designed to build depth of knowledge, skill and understanding. Curriculum content will be presented in the form of ‘content descriptions’.

Curriculum content is primarily for use by schools and individual teachers although it also provides a reference for discussions with students, parents and the broader community.

#### *Content descriptions*

Content descriptions are statements that describe the knowledge, concepts, skills and processes which teachers are expected to teach. They will include the general capabilities, as appropriate, for each learning area. These statements will be linked to present a scope and sequence across years of schooling.

This approach will assist the development of fundamental concepts and skills that need to be revisited across a number of years of schooling. The intention is for students to develop both deeper understanding of concepts and their application in a learning area, and relationships between ideas in a learning area.

Content descriptions are:

- developed in accord with advice in *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum* <learning area> papers
- arranged by curriculum organisers (strands)



## 5. Design specifications: F - 10

- written for each year or bands of years of schooling
- designed so that they can be covered comfortably in the indicative time
- written to facilitate rigorous, in-depth study, with an emphasis on depth rather than breadth
- developed to ensure that learning is appropriately ordered and that unnecessary repetition is avoided
- able to provide the basis for the learning described in the achievement standards
- written to follow an implicit stem 'students will be taught'
- written in plain English.

### *Content elaborations*

The content elaborations may take the form of additional description or examples of contexts or of teaching points. They accompany the content descriptions to assist teachers to develop a common understanding about what is to be taught to students. They are not intended to be indicators of achievement or a set of complete or even comprehensive content points that all students need to be taught. They will be provided as support material only, not part of the Australian Curriculum to be implemented.

Content elaborations:

- provide further detail for teachers who may need this level of support
- illustrate and exemplify content descriptions with a diverse range of examples
- follow an implicit stem 'this may involve students' and commence with a verb in the present continuous tense, for example 'identifying', 'exploring', 'describing'
- are written in plain English.

In the digital version of the curriculum, there will be access to content elaborations and hyperlinks to other learning areas, support information and further exemplification.

### 5.5 Achievement standards

*What are achievement standards?*

- The achievement standards describe what students are typically able to understand and able to do. They describe expected achievement.
- Across F-10 the set of achievement standards describe a broad sequence of expected learning. This sequence provides teachers with a framework of growth and development in each of the learning areas.
- Achievement standards emphasise the depth of conceptual understanding and the sophistication of skills.
- Achievement standards will be accompanied by portfolios of annotated student work samples, as support material to illustrate the achievement standard.

## 5. Design specifications: F - 10

*How should they be viewed?*

- The content descriptions and achievement standards are not independent — they should be read together.
- The achievement standard at each year level should be read as a whole (that is, the understanding and skills elements are read together).
- When viewing the sequence of achievement standards for a learning area, look at the broad development of conceptual understanding and skills (that is, read them holistically, not in an atomised way).

Writers will:

- draft the achievement standard statements concurrently with the writing of curriculum content, although work on achievement standards will be preceded by a draft scope and sequence of curriculum content
- take account of what is known from research about the progression of student learning in the different learning areas; be guided by analysis of state/territory and national student achievement data sets that provide empirical information on the sequence of learning of fundamental concepts, skills and understanding in the learning area and the threshold points at which students typically demonstrate achievement of these concepts, skills and understandings
- identify, as the focus of achievement standards, the key concepts, skills and understanding that describe a sequence of fundamental learning across the years of schooling
- ensure that specific content knowledge is not unnecessarily repeated in achievement standards and that achievement standards clearly state what students are expected to be able to do having been taught the curriculum content
- have access<sup>1</sup> to graded student work samples in key areas to guide and inform their writing of achievement standards and to enable them to identify areas for which further work samples might need to be collected.

Curriculum writers will consider the following when writing achievement standards:

- Year by year content requires year by year standards. For learning areas where the content of some strands is described on a two-year basis (and the rest on a year by year basis), standards should be written accordingly.
- Attention needs to be paid to ensuring that the quality of achievement is appropriately captured in the descriptions. One important test of this will occur when viewing the standards across a number of year levels.
- Achievement standards are to emphasise skills and understandings in two separate paragraphs. In describing understandings include an active component, that is, the 'how' not just the 'what'.

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<sup>1</sup> This access will need to be negotiated with relevant curriculum authorities.



## 5. Design specifications: F - 10

- Content descriptions should not be repeated in the achievement standard — the assumption is that the achievement standard is read in the context and with the knowledge of what is to be taught that year.
- Consider for each description ‘how you would know’, that is, how it can be represented effectively in evidence.
- In writing achievement standards,
  - ✓ begin, ‘By the end of Year ...’
  - ✓ avoid the use of examples
  - ✓ use direct language and remove unnecessary words like ‘is able to’
  - ✓ do not use dot points — this would not be consistent with their summative purpose and intended use
  - ✓ do not use headings/titles — this provides a more holistic sense of the performance.

## 6. Design specifications: Senior Secondary

### 6.1 Background

The design specifications for the senior secondary Australian Curriculum build on:

- a) the *Senior Secondary Years Position Paper* that was subject to national consultation in the last quarter of 2009
- b) discussion on senior secondary curriculum in *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum v4.0*, which included reference to overall characteristics of the senior secondary Australian Curriculum.

### 6.2 Key terms

The senior secondary Australian Curriculum will specify content and achievement standards for a senior secondary subject.

- a) **Learning areas** are broad areas of the curriculum listed in the Melbourne Declaration, including English, Mathematics, Science, Humanities and social sciences, the Arts, Languages, Health and physical education, and Technologies.
- b) A **subject** is a discrete area of study that is part of a learning area. For example, History is a subject within the learning area of Humanities and social sciences. There may be one or more subjects in a single learning area.
- c) The senior secondary Australian Curriculum for each subject will be organised into **units**. A unit is a component of content that can be feasibly taught in about half a 'school year' (50-60 hours).
- d) **Content** refers to the knowledge, understanding and skills to be taught and learned within a given subject.
- e) **Achievement standards** refer to the quality of learning (the depth of understanding, extent of knowledge and sophistication of skill) demonstrated by students within a given subject.
- f) A **course** sets out the requirements for the implementation of a senior secondary Australian Curriculum subject. It will include specifications for content, achievement standards, assessment and certification.
- g) A **program of learning** is what a school provides to implement the course for a subject. It meets requirements for content, scope and sequence set out in the approved course. Students follow programs of learning in schools as part of their senior secondary studies.

## 6. Design specifications: Senior Secondary

### 6.3 Structure

The senior secondary Australian Curriculum for each subject will be organised into **four units**. The last two units will be developmentally more challenging than the first two units.

Each unit will be designed to be taught in about half a 'school year' (approximately 50–60 hours duration including assessment and examinations) of senior secondary studies.

Each unit begins with a short description that outlines the purpose and nature of the unit, that is, provides a brief overview of the broad content or focus of the unit.

Senior secondary curriculum will include assumptions about prior learning. These assumptions will be implicit in the course content. Additional information about assumed prior learning may be provided as appropriate.

Senior secondary units will be designed so that students may study them singly, in pairs (that is, year-long), or study all four units.

The senior secondary Australian Curriculum for each subject will be designed to be accessible to as many students as possible. During development, any limitations on accessibility will be explicitly identified and justified in terms of the nature of the subject as senior secondary curriculum.

State and territory curriculum, assessment and certification authorities will determine permitted entry and exit points and credit for completed study, in line with their certification requirements.

The specifications developed by ACARA for each subject in the senior secondary Australian Curriculum will include the following key elements:

- Rationale and Aims
- Learning outcomes
- Content descriptions
- Achievement standards.

### 6.4 Rationale

The rationale will

- describe the nature of the subject in general terms and provide an outline of how learning in this course relates to the contemporary world and current practice
- explain the place and purpose of the subject, how learning in the subject is valuable and how it contributes to meeting the national goals of schooling
- be consistent with the F–10 learning area rationale
- be approximately 200 words.

## 6. Design specifications: Senior Secondary

### 6.5 Aims

The aims will present high-level statements of the major purpose of the subject and the intended developments in student learning.

The aims will:

- contain a small number of statements for the subject (approximately 4–6)
- apply across the four units of the subject
- be consistent with *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum* paper for the learning area.

### 6.6 Learning outcomes

The learning outcomes will describe in broad terms what a student is expected to have learned as a result of studying the specified content. Learning outcomes will describe the major dimensions of content, namely the knowledge, understanding and skills required by the subject. Four to six learning outcomes will be written for each unit; some will focus on knowledge and understanding and some on skills.

### 6.7 Content descriptions

Content descriptions will state the specific subject-based knowledge, understanding and skills to be taught and learned.

Content descriptions will be written for each unit. Together with learning outcomes and levels of achievement, they will provide sufficient detail for:

- a) teachers and students to know what is expected to be taught and learned
- b) state and territory authorities to set assessment and certification requirements.

Content descriptions will be organised so that it is clear which content is common and which is elective.

Content descriptions will incorporate Australian Curriculum general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities that naturally align with the subject.

Content descriptions:

- consist of a lead statement about conceptual focus, with further detail exemplified by a series of sub-points where necessary to describe the breadth and depth of the knowledge, understanding and skills
- describe knowledge and understanding without the use of active verbs
- describe skills using active verbs
- use examples within the description to elaborate content as necessary.

## 6. Design specifications: Senior Secondary

### 6.8 Achievement standards

Achievement standards will be subject-specific and align with the major dimensions of learning as described in the learning outcomes and detailed in the content for the subject. Typically these dimensions will be categorised into ‘knowledge and understanding’ and ‘skills’.

The achievement standards will be written as five levels of achievement<sup>2</sup> for each pair of units: units 1 and 2, and units 3 and 4. Each will broadly describe what students are able to do, including for the lowest level where achievement will be described positively, albeit as very limited achievement.

The achievement standards will be designed and written:

- a) to provide an ordered sequence of descriptions of the achievement evident within the population of students completing a pair of units
- b) to describe the qualities typical in the knowledge, understanding and skill displayed by students at five levels
- c) to be challenging and reflective of the population of students typically taking that subject.

Achievement standards will not be written to be of direct equivalence across subjects. The highest level of achievement in one subject will describe the characteristics of outstanding achievement in that subject — it will not describe outstanding achievement in another subject.

Noting that state and territory authorities have their own assessment and reporting policies and processes, the primary role of achievement standards will be to exemplify the range of performance for a given subject. The achievement standards will be subject to review and refinement as state and territory authorities work to incorporate the national content and achievement standards into courses for use in their state or territory.

State and territory assessment and certification authorities will determine assessment arrangements and associated processes for assigning students to levels and for generating other assessment information, including subject scores.

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<sup>2</sup> For certification purposes, states and territories may include an additional level to describe unsatisfactory or incomplete performance.

## 6. Design specifications: Senior Secondary

### 6.9 Other information

The specifications developed by ACARA for each subject in the senior secondary Australian Curriculum will also include:

- an **organisation** section which will include:
  - a description of each of the subjects in the learning area
  - an outline of the overall senior secondary curriculum structure and design specifications
  - unit descriptions (about the purpose of each unit in relation to the overall rationale and aims), and the connection between the units
  - an outline of strands or content organisers and the relationships between them
  - the nature and rationale for the achievement standards structure
  - the connections between the F–10 Australian Curriculum and the senior secondary curriculum in the learning area, including any assumptions about prior learning
  - generic text about the general capabilities, with subject-specific text about those capabilities represented strongly
  - generic text about the cross-curriculum priorities, with subject-specific text about those priorities represented strongly;
- a **glossary** of key terms used in the subject; subject specific terms that are considered essential for students to know and be able to use are defined and referenced to acknowledged sources.



# Curriculum Development Process

Version 6



April 2012

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# Curriculum Development Process

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## Amendment history

Date	Version	Comment
19 February 2009	1.0	Approved version following February 2009 interim National Curriculum Board meeting.
8 May 2009	2.0	Updated to take account of ACARA Board decisions and planning for writing.
11 August 2009	3.0	Updated to take account of ACARA Board decisions about development of key issues position paper and meetings of panels to discuss senior years curriculum.
6 May 2010	4.0	Revisions approved by ACARA Board to take account of issues identified during curriculum development for English, Mathematics, Science and History, including greater clarity about the roles and responsibilities of individuals and groups involved in the process, and the establishment of a national panel.
January 2011	5.0	Revised to take account of areas for improvement identified in the development of English, mathematics, science and history; and to incorporate the curriculum evaluation and review phase. (For internal ACARA use only)
February 2012	6.0	Revised to take account of review of curriculum development process.

## Purpose and Context

### Purpose

1. This paper describes the curriculum development process used by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) to develop the Australian Curriculum. It includes:
  - an outline of the structures and the roles and responsibilities of the individuals and groups involved in the curriculum development process
  - the major features of the four phases of the curriculum development process
  - the key criteria for curriculum development
  - the broad timeframe and milestones for curriculum development, which translate into specific curriculum development timelines for particular activities.

### Context

2. *Curriculum Development Process* (v6.0) is to be read in conjunction with other documents including:
  - *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA December 2008)
  - *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum* v3.0 (ACARA 2011)
  - *Curriculum Design* v3.0 (ACARA 2012)
3. ACARA's curriculum development work is guided by the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, adopted by the Ministerial Council in December 2008. The Melbourne Declaration emphasises the importance of knowledge, skills and understanding of learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities as the basis for a curriculum designed to support twenty-first century learning.
4. All Australian governments have committed to the goals of the Melbourne Declaration, which are that Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence, and that all young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens. Promoting world-class curriculum and assessment is one of eight interrelated areas for action designed to achieve the Melbourne Declaration goals
5. ACARA is committed to a process of curriculum development that:
  - is based on agreed curriculum design principles
  - involves high-level curriculum expertise nationwide
  - provides opportunities for national consultation
  - establishes achievable timelines with available resources
  - ensures high-quality curriculum documents.

## Curriculum elements

6. The design elements of the Australian Curriculum are described in detail in ACARA's *Curriculum Design* paper. The curriculum development process will result in a curriculum that includes the following elements for each learning area or subject:
- rationale and aims outlining the place and purpose of the area, how it contributes to meeting the goals in the national declaration, and the major learning that students will be able to demonstrate
  - content descriptions that detail the essential knowledge, skills and understanding that students will be taught and are to learn, including consideration of general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities as appropriate
  - content elaborations (F–10) that provide examples to illustrate the content descriptions
  - achievement standards that describe the learning expected of students at points in their schooling, as a result of being taught the content
  - annotated student work samples that illustrate the achievement standards.

## The four phases of the curriculum development process

7. The process for developing the Australian Curriculum has been designed to generate broad engagement with, and discussion and feedback about, the shape and content of the Australian Curriculum.
8. The curriculum development process involves four interrelated phases:
  - curriculum shaping
  - curriculum writing
  - preparation for implementation
  - curriculum monitoring, evaluation and review.
9. The **curriculum shaping** phase produces a broad outline of the Foundation to Year 12 (F–12) curriculum for a learning area<sup>1</sup>, firstly as an initial advice paper and then as the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: <Learning Area>*. This paper, developed with expert advice, provides broad direction on the purpose, structure and organisation of the learning area. Along with the *Curriculum Design* paper, it is intended to guide writers of the curriculum. It also provides a reference for judging the quality of the final curriculum documents for the learning area. This phase includes key periods of consultation — open public consultation as well as targeted consultation with key stakeholders including teachers and schools, state and territory education authorities, parents and students, professional associations, teacher unions, universities and industry and community groups.
10. The **curriculum writing** phase produces an Australian Curriculum for a particular learning area, that is, specifications of content and achievement standards to be used by education authorities, schools and teachers in all states and territories. This phase involves teams of writers, supported by expert advisory groups, and includes key periods of consultation — open public consultation as well as targeted consultation with key stakeholders including teachers and schools (through intensive engagement activities), state and territory education authorities, parents and students, professional associations, teacher unions, universities and industry and community groups. The writing phase incorporates the process for validation of achievement standards and culminates in publication of the Australian Curriculum for the learning area.
11. The **preparation for implementation** phase involves delivery of the curriculum to school authorities and to schools in an online environment in time for school authorities, schools and teachers to prepare for implementation. Implementation and implementation support are the responsibility of state and territory school and curriculum authorities. ACARA works with state and territory curriculum and school authorities to support their ongoing implementation planning by providing briefings, introductory information materials and national facilitation for planning.

<sup>1</sup> Learning area refers to the learning areas and subjects in the *Melbourne Declaration* (2008).

## The four phases of the curriculum development process

12. The **curriculum monitoring, evaluation and review** of the Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum will be ongoing, with annual reports to the ACARA Board detailing any issues identified. Analysis of the issues and any recommended actions, including any that might include further investigation, will be included. Monitoring will be coordinated by ACARA and, where relevant data gathering is required, will include partnerships with state and territory curriculum and school authorities. This might include data about areas for which teachers require ongoing support in order to teach the curriculum. Specific monitoring mechanisms will be negotiated with state and territory curriculum and school authorities for the provision of relevant local data about the Australian Curriculum. ACARA will provide a monitoring framework, including research questions and associated data gathering, which can be used by state and territory education authorities as part of their own monitoring strategies, to assist in their collection and provision of state and territory data about the Australian Curriculum to ACARA. The evaluation process may result in minor changes to, or a revision of, the curriculum.

## Curriculum development criteria

13. At each phase of curriculum development, the basis for approval or endorsement of curriculum documentation by the ACARA Board involves criteria which focus on the quality of the product and the process.
14. The quality criteria:
  - provide a focus for consultation, with particular attention given to consultation questions asked and the subsequent analysis and reporting of consultation data
  - are supported by the quality assurance process, including a quality assurance checklist
  - are used by the ACARA Board, the F–12 Curriculum Reference Group and advisory groups in their review of draft curriculum materials.
15. Criteria that will be used to judge the quality of the curriculum include:
  - The curriculum is clear about what is to be taught across the years or bands of schooling and the quality of learning expected of students as they progress through school.
  - The curriculum is flexible enough that it:
    - can accommodate the reality of student, teacher and school diversity
    - has high expectations and standards that are challenging yet realistic.
  - The curriculum specifies what all young Australians:
    - should learn as they progress through schooling
    - can be taught well within the overall teaching time and with the resources available to teachers and students.
  - The curriculum is concise and expressed in plain language while preserving a complexity appropriate for professional practitioners and is consistent in terms of language and broad structure.
  - The curriculum is established on a strong evidence base, including the implications of the curriculum for learning, pedagogy and what works in professional practice, and has been benchmarked against international curricula.

## Curriculum development criteria

16. Criteria that will be used to judge the quality of the curriculum development process include:
- ACARA has identified and engaged with key stakeholders (and maintained an accurate record of their engagement, contact and feedback).
  - The range of consultation strategies used to elicit feedback and engage stakeholders in the development, consultation and review of the curriculum is appropriate for the range and diversity of stakeholders.
  - The analysis of quantitative and qualitative data is rigorous and findings from consultation are accurately represented and incorporated in reports.
  - ACARA has responded to, and can account for, the range of stakeholder feedback as part of the revision process.
  - The quality control and assurance measures are rigorous, and achievement of key milestones is timely.



## Roles and responsibilities

17. There are a number of groups involved in ACARA's curriculum development process at both the consultation and decision-making stages of the process. Their composition and respective roles and responsibilities are outlined below.

### ***Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC)***

18. Membership of the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) comprises Australian state and territory, Australian Government and New Zealand ministers with responsibility for school education and early childhood development.
19. The Council aims to ensure all Australian children are fully prepared for learning and life. Consistent with the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, the Council will work to ensure high-quality schooling and early childhood development experiences for all young Australians. The Council provides a forum through which strategic policy on school education and early childhood development can be coordinated at the national level, and through which information can be shared and resources used collaboratively towards the achievement of agreed objectives and priorities.
20. The areas of responsibility covered by the Council are:
- primary and secondary education
  - cross-sectoral matters including transitions and careers
  - early childhood development including early childhood education and care.
21. The ACARA Board reports directly to SCSEEC for information, advice, feedback and final decisions relating to the release of the Australian Curriculum.

### ***Australian Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs Senior Officials Committee (AEEYSOC)***

22. The council is supported by a group of senior officials who meet regularly as the Australian Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs Senior Officials Committee (AEEYSOC). AEEYSOC is directly responsible to the council for the execution of its decisions.
23. The council is also supported by a number of taskforces and working groups, convened as needed for particular tasks. These taskforces have prescribed timeframes and reporting arrangements and are reviewed annually by AEEYSOC.

## Roles and responsibilities

### ACARA Board

24. The ACARA Board comprises 13 members as set out in the *Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority Act 2008*.

In relation to the development of the Australian Curriculum the ACARA Board:

- authorises policy and procedures for the development of curriculum (for example, curriculum development process, curriculum design)
- endorses draft and final documents for release or for submission to the SCSEEC (for example, shape papers, curriculum documents)
- makes decisions about issues having a significant impact on ACARA's operating environment, including strategic directions, political implications and key relationships.

### ACARA Curriculum Group

25. The ACARA Curriculum Group manages the curriculum development projects as they progress through each phase of the curriculum development process.

The Curriculum Group:

- manages the drafting, revision and final quality assurance of curriculum documents
- manages the writing teams and the advisory groups during the shaping and writing processes
- liaises closely with lead writers as they in turn lead, guide and support the writing process
- builds and maintains successful and productive working relationships and communication between the writers and advisory group members and also with key external stakeholders
- communicates key advice from the Board to both the writing teams and the advisory groups and maintains transparent communication and decision-making processes
- provides clear evidence-based advice to the Board and the General Manager, Curriculum about key developments, key issues that require resolution and recommended positions prior to approval
- establishes and maintains consultative networks of key stakeholders
- manages a range of consultation, communication, monitoring, review and evaluation strategies
- ensures that a range of perspectives and views are canvassed and addressed.

## Roles and responsibilities

### *F–12 Curriculum Reference Group*

26. The F–12 Curriculum Reference Group provides the ACARA executive with high level advice to advance strategic priorities in ACARA’s work plan. It provides advice on:
  - F–12 curriculum design and development policies and practices, and reviewing and providing feedback on draft documents
  - strategies to respond to issues raised during curriculum development and consultation
  - curriculum and implementation support strategies and materials.
27. Group members endeavour to represent the high-level views of their jurisdiction/organisation on matters discussed by the group and ensure, as far as practicable, that information relating to the work of the group is communicated to the jurisdiction/organisation.
28. The F–12 Curriculum Reference Group consists of:
  - the General Manager Curriculum at ACARA (chair)
  - one nominee from each state and territory drawn from members of the Curriculum Directors Forum
  - one nominee of the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC)
  - one nominee of the Independent School Council of Australia (ISCA)
  - one nominee of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)
  - members of the ACARA Board as determined by the Board.

### *Lead writer*

29. In the curriculum-shaping phase for a learning area, a lead writer is appointed on a contractual basis by ACARA. Depending on the learning area, other discipline contributors may also be appointed to support the lead writer in the shaping phase.
30. Lead writers and discipline contributors are selected because of the esteem in which they are held in the community, their networks and their expertise in the learning area, that is, their deep knowledge of learning, pedagogy and contemporary professional practice.
31. The lead writer:
  - develops an initial advice paper and a draft *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: <Learning Area>* paper based on advice from ACARA, including the position paper for the learning area
  - supports ACARA in the review of consultation feedback on the draft shape paper and in the writing of the final shape paper

## Roles and responsibilities

- acts in a consultancy role for ACARA during the shaping and curriculum writing phases
- acts as coach or mentor during the writing phase
- may act as a public advocate for ACARA during all phases of curriculum development.

### Curriculum writers

32. For the curriculum-writing phase, a small team of writers is appointed (up to two for each stage of schooling)<sup>2</sup> following a national selection process, with coordination being undertaken by the ACARA curriculum manager and senior project officer. Writers will be engaged by ACARA to undertake the writing task.
33. Additional specialist writers may be appointed to assist in writing for specific discipline areas in some F–10 learning areas and in the senior secondary curriculum.
34. Writers are selected from an expression of interest register and/or may be nominated by ACARA. Selection takes account of learning area/subject expertise, curriculum development expertise and teaching or related experience.
35. The role of writers is to complete the writing task in accordance with the parameters and writing instructions established through the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum* paper, the relevant *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: <learning area>* paper, the *Curriculum Design* paper, and any other directions provided by ACARA.

### Learning area advisory groups

36. The writing team for a learning area or subject is assisted in the curriculum shaping and writing process by a panel of experts, known as a learning area advisory group, which provides advice on draft materials at key stages in the development process.
37. The advisory group is responsible for providing guidance and advice to ACARA on the Australian Curriculum materials as they are drafted.
38. In particular, the advisory group:
  - provides advice to writing teams at prescribed points throughout the project (as defined by the detailed project plan)
  - provides advice on groups or individuals to be consulted
  - reviews documentation prepared during the curriculum development process
  - provides advice to the board and/or the ACARA executive on the suitability and quality of curriculum documents (both for consultation and for final publication).

<sup>2</sup> This may vary by learning area and disciplines therein.

## Roles and responsibilities

39. The chair of each advisory group is a relevant ACARA curriculum manager or ACARA nominee. The relevant senior project officer acts as the executive officer for the group.
40. Each advisory group meets at key stages in the curriculum development process. The meetings include face-to-face meetings and tele/videoconferences. These are negotiated initially as part of the contractual arrangements and reviewed as necessary.
41. Each advisory group comprises 8 – 12 members. Each member has particular expertise in the relevant learning area/subject, with selection of members based on expertise rather than representation. That expertise may be drawn from:
  - established, leading academics in the discipline and the field of education
  - teachers with a range of experience in the learning area from Foundation to Year 12
  - members of peak national bodies in the learning area or subject
  - industry professionals or community members (if applicable)
  - curriculum experts from school and curriculum authorities.
42. Typically, members are appointed for a particular phase of the curriculum development process, that is the curriculum shaping phase, the curriculum drafting phase, or final curriculum writing. Membership is reviewed at the end of each phase and there is a process of closure and re-engagement as necessary.
43. Panel membership is dynamic, in order to reflect the different phases of curriculum development, but some continuity of membership is maintained to assist with continuity of practice and knowledge across phases of the curriculum development process. At particular phases there will be a demand for particular types of expertise and, depending on the learning area, this may require appointing additional specialists.

### *Across learning area advisory groups*

44. ACARA has established advisory groups to provide particular expert guidance and advice on strategic policy directions and on draft curriculum at key stages in the curriculum development process. Three such groups are the Equity and Diversity Advisory Group, the Students with Disability Advisory Group and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group.
45. The Equity and Diversity Advisory Group has been established to provide ACARA with advice on equity and diversity perspectives at key stages in the curriculum development process, including curriculum design and development processes, draft curriculum, and associated information and support materials. Initially the group provides advice about questions to be considered in the curriculum development process to ensure a curriculum that is inclusive of all students. In order to provide final feedback, this group uses these questions to reference its feedback during the consultation process.

## Roles and responsibilities

46. The Students with Disability Advisory Group has been established to provide ACARA with explicit guidance and advice concerning students with disability. The advisory group provides advice to writing teams at defined stages throughout the project; provides advice on the groups or individuals who are to be consulted; reviews documentation prepared during the curriculum development process; and provides advice to the ACARA Executive on the suitability and quality of curriculum documents for students with disability.
47. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group has been established to provide ACARA with explicit guidance and advice concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. The advisory group provides advice to writing teams at defined stages throughout the project; provides advice on the groups or individuals who are to be consulted; reviews documentation prepared during the curriculum development process; and provides advice to the ACARA Executive on the suitability and quality of curriculum documents.
48. The chair of each advisory group is typically the General Manager Curriculum or a delegated ACARA curriculum manager. The relevant senior project officer acts as the executive officer for the group.
49. Advisory groups meet at key stages in the curriculum development process. The meetings include face-to-face meetings and tele/videoconferences. These are negotiated initially as part of their agreements and reviewed as necessary.
50. Each advisory group comprises 8 – 12 members. Each member has particular expertise in the relevant area/s, with selection of members based on expertise and representation. That expertise may be drawn from:
  - established, leading academics in the discipline and the field of education
  - members of peak national bodies in the relevant area/s
  - industry professionals or community members (if applicable)
  - expertise in schools and education authorities.

### *Other advisory or working groups*

51. From time to time ACARA will establish other advisory groups to provide ACARA with particular expert advice or to undertake particular curriculum-related tasks.
52. From time to time ACARA will establish specific purpose working groups to undertake particular curriculum-related tasks, for example, the English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) Working Group.



## Roles and responsibilities

### *National panels*

53. National panels are responsible for providing state, territory, and professional association feedback to ACARA at key points in the shaping and writing phases of the curriculum development process. In particular, identifying from their perspectives the key risks, challenges and opportunities at those critical points.
54. The national panel for each Foundation to Year 12 learning area, subject or senior secondary subject consists of members with relevant curriculum expertise and curriculum development experience and is representative, including:
  - up to two education authority representatives from each state and territory
  - one representative from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)
  - representatives of relevant national professional teacher associations (who may meet separately to the education authority representatives).
55. National panels are convened at critical stages in the development process to review:
  - the draft shape paper prior to national consultation
  - the revised draft shape paper in response to national consultation feedback
  - the draft learning area broad overview and scope and sequence
  - the draft Australian Curriculum for the learning area prior to national consultation
  - the national consultation feedback and proposed ways forward
  - the revised draft Australian Curriculum in response to national consultation.
56. National panel meetings are chaired by the General Manager Curriculum or by delegation to the Senior Manager Curriculum.

### *National forums*

57. National forums of key stakeholders are occasionally constituted to gauge broader stakeholder opinion on the Australian Curriculum materials as they are drafted.
58. A national forum is conducted in the shaping phase to review the initial advice paper.
59. The forums are expert and representational including:
  - Up to five nominees from each state and territory (three teachers — lower primary, upper primary, lower secondary; and two non-school-based — primary and secondary)
  - Up to four representatives of professional teacher associations
  - Up to six tertiary representatives (with discipline and education backgrounds)
  - Other stakeholder experts as nominated by ACARA.
60. In some cases, for example as in Languages or the Arts, there may be a variation to the membership profile to best meet the needs of the area under development.

## Roles and responsibilities

### *Curriculum Directors Forum*

61. The Curriculum Directors Forum provides advice on ACARA's curriculum development program (shaping, writing, preparation for implementation and monitoring, review and evaluation). By keeping informed of work in progress, members of the forum are also able to play a key communication role within their jurisdictions.
62. The Curriculum Directors Forum provides advice to ACARA on:
  - key structural and organisational matters in relation to curriculum, including assessment and reporting
  - key process and engagement matters, including advice on communication and preparation for implementation.
63. The Curriculum Directors Forum comprises a nominee from each curriculum authority and school authority in each state and territory (that is, four from each jurisdiction) with additional representatives from DEEWR. The group meets four times a year, with dates set by ACARA once the year's curriculum development program is set. In between meetings forum members communicate via email and via a dedicated SharePoint site.
64. Forum members are encouraged to play an active role in providing input and feedback as experts in their own right. They can also provide a state/territory perspective on certain topics for discussion.
65. Each state and territory nominates an officer to be a key contact or liaison with ACARA on operational matters related to curriculum development and consultation activity, including any school engagement activity. These officers are responsible for conveying relevant information to and from the relevant system and sectors within their state or territory.



## Roles and responsibilities

### *Intensive engagement schools*

66. As part of the consultation on the draft curriculum, ACARA selects up to 50 schools to participate in a more intensive engagement program with the draft curriculum for each learning area. (Typically one or two teachers in each school are selected/nominated to trial the curriculum, that is, a maximum of 100 teachers in total).
67. The aim of the intensive engagement program is three-fold:
  - to gain feedback on the manageability of draft curriculum through short-term intensive classroom activities
  - to collect a range of planning and assessment documents to assist in preparation for implementation of the Australian Curriculum
  - to collect a range of samples of student work to exemplify student achievement of the standards.
68. The final selection of schools will ensure that there is reasonable representation in terms of geographical location (rural, remote, metropolitan), school system (independent, Catholic, government), stage of schooling (F–2, 3–6, 7–10, 11–12), socioeconomic status (low, medium, high), coverage of all subjects within disciplines, states and territories, and representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, learners of English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) and students with disability.

## The curriculum development process — broad timeframe and milestones

69. The following table provides an outline and indicative timeframe for ACARA's curriculum development process.

Deliverables	Activities	Approval steps
<b>CURRICULUM SHAPING PHASE (9 MONTHS)</b>		
<b>Project plan</b>	<p>Project plan including a communications strategy and a risk assessment analysis</p> <p>Project plan aligned with corporate documents including the ACARA Strategic Plan and the Risk Management Plan</p> <p>SharePoint site established</p> <p>Analysis of stakeholders including who the stakeholders are, what their issues are, who will be engaged in the development process and why, when and how</p>	GM, Curriculum approves project plan
<b>Scan and literature review</b>	<p>Environmental scan and desktop mapping of state, territory and international curricula and national and international literature review</p> <p>F–12 Curriculum Reference Group provides feedback on scan, mapping and review</p>	GM, Curriculum approves literature review and mapping
<b>Position paper on key issues</b>	<p>Identification of experts in the field to attend position paper workshop</p> <p>Workshop with experts to identify key issues that will guide development of a position paper.</p> <p>Development of draft position paper</p> <p>Cross-curriculum and inclusivity check to ensure appropriate attention has been given to general capabilities, cross-curriculum priorities, students with disability and equity and diversity<sup>3</sup></p> <p>F–12 Curriculum Reference Group provides feedback on position paper</p>	<p>GM, Curriculum approves position paper</p> <p>Board provides advice on key issues in the position paper</p>

<sup>3</sup> This refers to collaborative work undertaken between learning area officers and those responsible for general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities, to identify opportunities for effective embedding and representation.

## The curriculum development process — broad timeframe and milestones

Deliverables	Activities	Approval steps
<b>Initial advice paper drafted</b>	<p>Lead writer appointed</p> <p>Small advisory group appointed to support the lead writer</p> <p>Lead writer prepares initial advice paper with feedback from ACARA</p> <p>F–12 Reference Group provides strategic advice on the draft paper</p> <p>Cross-curriculum and inclusivity check</p>	<p>Board provides advice on lead writer and advisory group membership</p> <p>GM, Curriculum approves appointment of lead writer and advisory group</p> <p>GM, Curriculum approves initial advice paper for submission to Board</p> <p>Board approves initial advice paper for national forum</p>
<b>National forum consultation on initial advice paper</b>	<p>ACARA officers prepare invitation list and seek nominations</p> <p>National forum conducted</p> <p>Consultation feedback from forum analysed and key directions for redrafting established</p>	<p>GM, Curriculum approves national forum feedback report and key directions for redrafting</p>
<b>Draft shape paper prepared</b>	<p>Lead writer commences drafting shape paper</p> <p>Cross-curriculum and inclusivity check</p> <p>Draft shape paper reviewed and commented on by learning area advisory group</p> <p>National panel meeting to collect feedback</p> <p>F–12 Curriculum Reference Group provides feedback on draft shape paper</p> <p>Draft shape paper finalised</p> <p>Consultation questions and online questionnaire prepared by ACARA</p> <p>Draft shape paper published for online consultation (consultation period — 10 weeks)</p> <p>Promotion of consultation on draft shape paper to stakeholders</p>	<p>GM, Curriculum approves draft shape paper, online questionnaire and consultation plan for submission to Board</p> <p>Board approves draft shape paper for national consultation</p>

## The curriculum development process — broad timeframe and milestones

Deliverables	Activities	Approval steps
<b>Draft shape paper finalised</b>	<p>Consultation feedback analysed and consultation report prepared with proposed actions</p> <p>Draft shape paper revised</p> <p>Shape paper and consultation report published on ACARA website</p>	<p>GM, Curriculum approves consultation report and final shape paper for submission to Board</p> <p>Board approves shape paper and consultation report</p>

## The curriculum development process — broad timeframe and milestones

Deliverables	Activities	Approval steps
<b>CURRICULUM WRITING PHASE (20 MONTHS)</b>		
<b>Broad outline of curriculum drafted (F–10 rationale, aims, scope and sequence; senior secondary overview – rationale, aims, content scope)</b>	<p>Expressions of Interest for writers and advisory group members</p> <p>Selection of writers and advisory group members</p> <p>Writing work plan and templates developed</p> <p>Induction of writers and learning area advisory group</p> <p>Cross-curriculum and inclusivity check</p> <p>Development of broad outline by writers with advisory group led by ACARA officers</p> <p>Broad outline of aims, rationale and scope and sequence developed, reviewed and commented on by learning area advisory group</p> <p>National panel meeting to provide response to broad outline and overview of curriculum</p> <p>Broad outline of curriculum revised</p>	GM, Curriculum approves broad outline
<b>Detailed curriculum materials drafted</b>	<p>Advisory group membership reviewed</p> <p>Drafting of curriculum content descriptions, elaborations and achievement standards</p> <p>Cross-curriculum and inclusivity check</p> <p>Consultation plan prepared</p> <p>Identification and confirmation of trial schools and activity</p>	
<b>Finalisation of draft curriculum materials</b>	<p>Draft curriculum reviewed and commented on by learning area advisory group</p> <p>National panel meeting to provide response to draft curriculum materials</p> <p>Preparation for online consultation including online questionnaire</p> <p>Communication plan developed</p>	<p>GM, Curriculum approves draft curriculum for submission to Board</p> <p>Board approves draft curriculum for consultation</p>

## The curriculum development process — broad timeframe and milestones

Deliverables	Activities	Approval steps
<b>Draft curriculum published and released for online consultation</b>	<p>Publish and promote draft curriculum (consultation period — 10–12 weeks)</p> <p>Trial school activity, collection of work samples and monitoring by ACARA</p> <p>Consultation workshops and/or presentations</p>	
<b>Consultation report, trial school report and proposed responses to key findings published</b>	<p>Consultation feedback analysed</p> <p>Draft consultation report, trial schools report, and directions for revision prepared</p> <p>F–12 Reference Group provides strategic advice on consultation report and directions for revisions</p> <p>Cross-curriculum and inclusivity check</p> <p>Consultation report published on ACARA website and promoted</p>	<p>GM, Curriculum approves consultation reports</p> <p>Board approves consultation reports for publication</p>
<b>Draft curriculum materials revised</b>	<p>Preparation of work samples to be included with final curriculum</p> <p>Revisions to curriculum in response to consultation report</p> <p>Cross-curriculum and inclusivity check</p> <p>Revised draft curriculum reviewed and commented on by learning area advisory group</p> <p>National panel meetings to provide feedback on draft revisions</p> <p>Revised draft curriculum finalised for publication</p>	<p>GM approves revised draft curriculum for placement on the website</p>
<b>Revised drafts available publicly on the Australian Curriculum website for viewing and for comment for up to 6 weeks</b>	<p>Revised draft curriculum uploaded to the website for viewing and comment</p> <p>Consultation with state and territory authorities seeking feedback on revised draft curriculum</p> <p>Work samples finalised</p>	<p>GM, Curriculum approves revised curriculum prior to validation</p>

## The curriculum development process — broad timeframe and milestones

Deliverables	Activities	Approval steps
<b>Curriculum validated</b> (The validation process will focus on the extent to which the achievement standards are coherent, well sequenced and pitched appropriately)	Validation process includes two national meetings of teachers and some online collaboration Achievement standards validated Final validation report prepared	GM, Curriculum approves validation report
<b>Publication of final curriculum</b>	Final revised curriculum (and work sample portfolios) prepared for publication Final revised curriculum prepared for Board approval Information materials prepared Communication plan for launch and implementation prepared Curriculum published on Australian Curriculum website	GM, Curriculum approves final revised curriculum (and work samples) Board endorses final curriculum Standing Council approves final curriculum

### PREPARATION FOR IMPLEMENTATION (12 MONTHS)

Development of stakeholder briefing packages highlighting:

- public information materials on the ACARA website,
- how it will 'impact' stakeholders concerned
- support strategies available.

Review and publication of revised information sheets and multimedia material (for example, video).

Briefing sessions held with state and territory authorities and other key stakeholder groups.

Summaries of implementation strategies of state and territory school and curriculum authorities to be shared on the ACARA website.

Work with Curriculum Directors Forum and the F–12 Curriculum Reference Group to collect feedback on implementation issues and any useful materials such as work samples.

A report on implementation issues to be provided to the ACARA Board.

Collection, collation and analysis of data on use of Australian Curriculum.