

ACARA Charter

Introduction

This Charter is issued by the Council of Australian Government's Education Council to take effect from 23 November 2016. It replaces the previous Charter approved by the former Ministerial Council, which took effect from 3 August 2012.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is established under the *Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority Act 2008 (Cth)* (the Act), with its functions detailed under section 6 of the Act. Section 7 of the Act states that ACARA must perform its functions and exercise its powers in accordance with this Charter.

Purpose

The Ministerial Council sets the strategic direction for ACARA through the Charter.

The Charter reflects ACARA's role as an independent statutory authority and provides guidance about the nature of the activities ACARA is expected to undertake in fulfilling its functions and executing the policy directions set by Council.

The Charter should inform the development of ACARA's rolling Quadrennial Work Plan, which should contain detailed information regarding the key deliverables, budget and timeframes for addressing the strategic directions and work priorities established by the Ministerial Council.

Collectively, the Charter and Quadrennial Work Plan establish the Ministerial Council's clear expectations regarding ACARA's priority activities.

Context

The Charter is developed within the following context:

The rationale for an Australian curriculum centres on improving the quality, equity and transparency of Australia's education system. In particular, a national curriculum ensures that every child in Australia, regardless of where they live or the school they attend, has access to a world-class curriculum.

National assessment provides school education leaders, teachers and parents with the means to periodically assess students against previous performance, national benchmarks and their peers using an objective measure. The *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)* is used in combination with other forms of assessment to diagnose learning and inform priorities for students, cohorts and schools. New digital technologies provide the means to transform assessment, including delivering more precise results and the faster turnaround of information.

Public reporting promotes accountability and engagement in school education. Provision of quality information on schooling is important for schools and their students, for parents and their families and for the community and governments.

In the context of an emerging period of curriculum stability at a national level, ACARA's highest priority is to ensure successful transition to online assessment, particularly NAPLAN online. During this period ACARA also needs to assemble the necessary data to provide for future evidence based policy and curriculum development.

Strategic Directions

The strategic directions outlined below acknowledge the commitment to promoting world-class curriculum, assessment and reporting, in alignment with the objectives of the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* agreed by Education Ministers in December 2008, and the Council's agreed reform agenda. ACARA will prioritise pursuit of the directions established by the Charter and the Quadrennial Work Plan.

Assessment

ACARA will provide a quality, comprehensive and cohesive suite of national assessments.

In delivering this strategic direction, ACARA will initially address the following priorities:

- *ensure ACARA's resources and attention are focused on its assessment function, in particular ACARA's responsibilities for the successful transition to NAPLAN online*
- *ensure that the suite of online assessments are directly linked to the national curriculum, to improve the understanding of educational outcomes for Australian students.*

Data and Reporting

ACARA will:

- provide and apply a comprehensive and reliable national measurement framework
- facilitate the use and dissemination of data for research and policy development in accordance with agreed protocols
- present detailed, accessible, timely and meaningful school education performance information

In delivering this strategic direction, ACARA will initially address the following priorities:

- *assess data needs to review, and if necessary introduce, new performance indicators in the measurement framework*
- *manage the collection and quality assurance of data for policy development in the school education sector and provide accessible and comprehensive national school and schooling information (including the My School website and National Assessment Program reporting)*
- *produce a revitalised, timely and accessible National Report on Schooling which meets the goals for national performance reporting.*

Curriculum

ACARA will:

- provide a world-class curriculum from Foundation to Year 12 in specified learning areas agreed to by Council*
- assemble the evidence base required to review, develop and refine curriculum

* For the avoidance of doubt, 'school subjects' for the purposes of section 6(a) of the ACARA Act are the learning areas set out in Schedule 1 to the Charter and may be amended from time to time in accordance with a resolution of the Ministerial Council.

In delivering this strategic direction, ACARA will initially address the following priorities:

- *monitor and enhance the accessibility, balance and manageability of the national curriculum*
- *collect curriculum implementation information to assist with development of the next generation of curriculum*
- *scope options for further development of senior secondary curriculum in partnership with interested jurisdictions.*

Collaboration and Leadership

ACARA will:

- provide effective national leadership in curriculum development, educational assessment and national reporting
- closely collaborate with jurisdictions, the non-government education sector and relevant stakeholders in pursuing the national education agenda

In delivering this strategic direction, ACARA will initially address the following priorities:

- *collaborate with all Australian governments, the non-government education sector and Education Services Australia in the transition to NAPLAN online*
- *work in partnership with senior officials to implement the National Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) School Education Strategy and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy.*

Principles

ACARA operates according to the following principles in its work:

- **National Interest:** ACARA's priorities are based on initiatives that are collectively agreed by the Ministerial Council, focusing on matters that are most effectively undertaken at a national level
- **Alignment:** work streams undertaken by ACARA align internally and complement the national education agenda
- **Quality and Innovation:** delivering superior, creative and effective products and services that are fit for purpose and actively assist jurisdictions in the implementation of the national education agenda
- **Efficiency:** ensuring products and services are developed and delivered in a timely manner within agreed budgets
- **Transparency and Accountability:** ACARA's planning and reporting is undertaken in a manner that provides assurance to the Ministerial Council that ACARA's work is in the national interest
- **Engagement:** working collaboratively with all jurisdictions, the non-government education sector, Ministerial companies and authorities and relevant stakeholders, to ensure ACARA's outputs are aligned with the national education agenda and ACARA communicates effectively with the general public.

In performing its functions, ACARA will:

- ensure it acts in accordance with the decisions of the Ministerial Council; and
- progress advice to the Ministerial Council in accordance with protocols, procedures and/or arrangements agreed to by the Ministerial Council, or the Australian Education Senior Officials Committee (AESOC) on behalf of the Ministerial Council, from time to time.

Reporting to Ministerial Council

The accountability framework for ACARA includes: a Charter, a Board, a rolling quadrennial work plan and budget, and monitoring by Ministerial Council through regular reporting.

ACARA will:

- present its rolling quadrennial work plan and budget annually to Council for endorsement
- report to Ministerial Council (via the Australian Education Senior Officials Committee (AESOC)) at least once per year regarding progress against the work plan
- provide an annual report to Council in accordance with the Act
- respond to requests from Council for supplementary information and/or additional reports.

Schedule 1

Section 6(a) of the *ACARA Act* states that the functions of ACARA include to *'develop and administer a national school curriculum, including content of the curriculum and achievement standards, for school subjects specified in the Charter.'*

For the purposes of section 6(a), ACARA will develop and administer a national school curriculum, including curriculum content and achievement standards, and as amended from time to time by the Ministerial Council, for:

Foundation to Year 10

English

Mathematics

Science

Humanities and Social Science (HASS)

- F-6/7 HASS
- 7-10 History
- 7-10 Geography
- 7-10 Civics and Citizenship
- 7-10 Economics and Business

The Arts

- Dance
- Drama
- Media Arts
- Music
- Visual Arts

Technologies

- Design and Technologies
- Digital Technologies

Health and Physical Education

Languages

- Arabic
- Auslan
- Chinese
- Classical Greek
- Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages
- Framework for Classical Languages
- French
- German
- Hindi
- Indonesian

- Italian
- Japanese
- Korean
- Latin
- Modern Greek
- Spanish
- Turkish
- Vietnamese

9-10 Work Studies (optional)

Year 11 and Year 12

English

- English
- English as an Additional Language or Dialect
- Essential English
- Literature

Mathematics

- Essential Mathematics
- General Mathematics
- Mathematical Methods
- Specialist Mathematics

Science

- Biology
- Chemistry
- Earth and Environmental Science
- Physics

Humanities and Social Sciences

- Ancient History
- Geography
- Modern History

Developing and administering a national school curriculum includes ACARA determining whether alternative curriculum frameworks meet the requirements of the national curriculum.