

Background

Q: Why develop an Australian Curriculum? What are the benefits?

A: Australian federal, state and territory governments decided to authorise work on an Australian Curriculum in response to major global challenges and demands placed on the Australian education system, including:

- global integration and international mobility
- the growing influence of India, China and other Asian nations
- globalisation and technological change
- complex environmental, social and economic pressures such as climate change
- rapid and continuing advances in information and communication technologies (ICT).

These challenges make it imperative that all young Australians are provided with an education that enables them to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens.

The development and implementation of an Australian Curriculum will bring many benefits, including:

- gaining national agreement on the curriculum content that all Australian students should be taught and advice on the level of achievement that they should be demonstrating, regardless of individual circumstances or location of their school
- equipping young Australians with the agreed skills, knowledge, understanding and capabilities to enable them to effectively engage with and prosper in society, compete in a globalised world and thrive in the information-rich workplaces of the future
- providing teachers and parents with a clear understanding of what needs to be covered at each year level; and teachers with the flexibility to shape their teaching programs around the

curriculum essentials to best meet the needs of their students

- assisting teacher and student mobility across the nation, for example, overcoming the barrier of curriculum variation that adversely affects the many students and families who move interstate each year.

Q: What is the scope of the Australian Curriculum work?

A: The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) has the charter to develop an Australian Curriculum from Kindergarten to Year 12, beginning with the learning areas of English, mathematics, science and history.

A second phase of work involves the development of an Australian curriculum in languages, geography and the arts.

Meanwhile, Australian education ministers have agreed that subsequent curriculum development will focus on the learning areas of health and physical education, information and communications technology, design and technology, economics, business, and civics and citizenship.

Q: How will the Australian Curriculum be a world-class curriculum?

A: The Australian Curriculum seeks to equip young Australians with the skills, knowledge and understanding that will enable them to effectively engage with and prosper in society, compete in a globalised world and thrive in the information-rich workplaces of the future.

Every effort is being made to ensure that the Australian Curriculum will be a world-class curriculum by:

- benchmarking it to curricula of leading nations
- setting challenging standards
- not overloading the curriculum
- pursuing deep learning

- providing opportunities for local content and relevant contexts to be included.

The draft and final forms of the Australian Curriculum will be published online. This allows flexibility in how people read and organise the curriculum. It will also allow all Australians to see what is being taught in schools across the nation.

While the traditional structure of scope and sequence within discrete learning areas is retained, the Australian Curriculum will give explicit attention to 10 general capabilities. These are:

- literacy
- numeracy
- information and communication technology
- thinking skills
- creativity
- self management
- teamwork
- intercultural understanding
- ethical behaviour
- social competence.

Attention will also be given to three cross-curriculum dimensions:

- Indigenous history and culture
- a commitment to sustainable living
- Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia.

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 workplaces of the 21st century.