

ACT Feedback to ACARA from teacher consultation meeting

Provided by ACT Board of Studies

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English

English – feedback from teacher consultation meetings

1. Does the rationale provide clarity about the subject's broad scope, distinctive nature and importance?

- Each course makes specific reference to language learning and academic skills.
- Distinction between Literature and other English courses is unclear.
- Essential English clearly describes skills and content.
- The phrase 'aesthetic use of language' referred to in the English and Literature courses is unclear.
- How language is used or crafted needs to be more explicit in the English and Literature courses.
- Creation of texts and multimodal texts needs to be more explicit in Literature.
- Specific mention of 'language learning' and acquisition of 'academic skills' in EALD, were endorsed. There is significant improvement on the original drafts.

2. Do the aims comprehensively describe the intended learning as a result of studying the subject?

- Need to clarify distinction in aims between Literature and English courses.
- Literature aims do not mention multimodal texts.
- Suggest that Literature aims include an understanding of literature as a power and an agent for change.
- Include study of Australian texts in all English units, not just the Literature course.
- Essential English is specific about comprehension and evaluation of text.

3. Does the four unit structure reflect internal logic and coherence?

- Literature units are logical and well sequenced.
- English units 2 and 3 need to be reversed so that they align with Literature course.
- Substantial research in Essential English. There are a lot of similarities across units.

4. Provide feedback on units:

- Content descriptors are clearly set out under essential headings.
- Essential English units 2 and 3 are very similar. Concern that intended audience will become disengaged.
- Concern about duplication of content in Literature (unit 1) and Year 10 courses.
- Reference to the text list rather than course documentation is needed to indicate the level of challenge in courses.

5. Are achievement standards across units 1-2 and 3-4 organised in an order consistent with your experience?

- Communication needs to be in responding, as well as creating (Literature).
- Expand on relationship between audience and speaker in Literature achievement standards. Literature achievement standards in units 1 and 2 should include 'a knowledge and ability to engage with audience'.
- Absence of personal viewpoint in Literature achievement standards, units 1 and 2.
- Need to make reference to students achieving an original and creative insight and expressing this successfully in an analytical task, across all grades in Literature achievement standards.
- EALD achievement standards need to be reviewed to align with EALD focus on language acquisition and expression, so that it can be measured separately, in addition to cognitive and academic aspects.
- All course achievement standards need qualifiers to clearly distinguish each grade.
- Essential English E achievement is too difficult. E students do not create an argument.
- EALD achievement standards do not allow teachers to measure performance in language learning and acquisition of academic skills (such as paragraph writing and referencing) both of which are specified in the EALD units.
- EALD achievement standards do not allow teachers to measure cognitive ability/higher order thinking skills separately from language skills. This applies to the other English units as well as EALD.

6. Do general capabilities and cross curriculum priorities naturally fit this subject?

- Suitable and can be achieved.
- Suggested that cross curriculum priorities be explicitly reflected in aims and mapped in units.

History

Ancient History – ACT Feedback to ACARA from teacher consultation meeting

- 1. Does the rationale provide clarity about the subject's broad scope, distinctive nature and importance**
 - Curriculum is broad and clear.
 - Feedback from the last consultation round has been incorporated in the current draft.
 - Greece and Rome are over represented. In addition, it is suggested that Ancient Indian history be included to avoid limiting the scope to Christian and Jewish religious history.
- 2. Do the aims comprehensively describe the intended learning as a result of studying the subject?**
 - Aims are sound and useful.
 - A greater distinction between the use of artefacts and written sources is required.
 - History should also be recognised as a political tool (e.g. constructing national identities, social and political impact of legacy).
 - 'Events' need to be included in the aims.
- 3. Does the four unit structure reflect internal logic and coherence?**
 - Coherence of four unit structure is not clear, lacks chronology and a logical narrative.
 - Absence of an Asian option reinforces a Eurocentric perspective.
- 4. Provide feedback on the units:**
 - Endorse the focus, scope and expected learning but concerned about the narrow content.
 - Unit 3 over emphasises the role of the individual.
 - The 'two issues' in unit 1 are engaging.
 - Unit 1 topic elective should be the earliest topics.
 - Units 1 and 4 are considered Eurocentric and do not fit.
 - Unit 2 needs to include more options, such as Asia and the Americas.
- 5. Are achievement standards across units 1-2 and 3-4 organised in an order consistent with your experience?**
 - Ancient History achievement standards are stronger than those for Modern history.
 - Terminology for A-E achievement could be more precise. In addition, teachers identified a discrepancy between the Ancient and Modern History D grade achievement standards. D grade 'explains key events' while the D grade Modern History 'identifies key events'. They should be similar.
 - Historical skills need to be reflected in the structure of the achievement standards.
 - Unclear about the difference between A and B achievement standards in Unit 1 and 2.
 - A standard achievement needs to be more rigorous.

Modern History – ACT Feedback from teacher consultation meetings

1. Does the rationale provide clarity about the subject's broad scope, distinctive nature and importance

- Curriculum is broad and clear.
- Feedback from the last consultation round has been incorporated in the draft Modern History curriculum.
- The rationale needs to be more distinctive and articulate higher order thinking skills.
- Senior content similar to Years 9 and 10.
- Empathy is not acknowledged in the curriculum.

2. Do the aims comprehensively describe the intended learning as a result of studying the subject?

- Goals are sound and useful.
- Aims articulate clear links to Years 9 and 10 curriculum and pathways to tertiary studies.
- Aims should make a statement about culture and individual roles. In addition, point 4 needs to include 'ethical, analytical and critical'.

3. Does the four unit structure reflect internal logic and coherence?

- Four unit structure reflects chronological skill development.
- Unit 3 allows a link to Asia and the West.
- Unit 2 duplicates topics covered in-depth in year 10 (e.g. Indigenous people unit). In addition, Unit 2 is too similar to Year 10 'Rights and Freedoms'.
- The Modern History curriculum is constructed around a timeframe that may limit choices compared to a thematic approach.

4. Provide feedback on the units:

- Concern about the degree of overlap with content in Years 9 and 10.
- Content is limited in the Napoleonic era unit.
- Unit 1 should make explicit reference to Asia. It was noted that the unit does not allow for teachers to explore parts of the world other than Europe and America.
- Unit 2 (option 7) should have more options for country studies.
- Unit 3 was considered a very good unit. It is suggested that an Israel or Middle East unit link to unit 4.
- Options in Unit 4 were considered too broad and should be scaled back.

5. Are achievement standards across units 1-2 and 3-4 organised in an order consistent with your experience?

- Terminology for A-E achievement could be more precise and have greater emphasis on higher order thinking.
- There is a discrepancy between the Ancient and Modern History D grade achievement standards.

Mathematics

Mathematics – ACT feedback from teacher consultation meetings

- 1. Does the rationale provide clarity about the subject's broad scope, distinctive nature and importance?**
 - Clear distinction between the expectations of all 4 courses.
- 2. Do the aims comprehensively describe the intended learning as a result of studying the subject?**
 - Aims are reflected in achievement standards.
 - Aims need to describe intended learning.
- 3. Does the four unit structure reflect internal logic and coherence?**
 - Statistics in Unit 4 Methods is too difficult.
 - Concern that sequences is not in Methods.
 - No commonality in topics covered in semester one across Mathematics courses. Movement between courses will be difficult for students needing to change levels.
 - Concern that matrices is not in Methods.
 - Concern about splitting probability across Methods and Specialist.
- 4. Provide feedback on units:**
 - Essential Mathematics duplicates content in Years 9 and 10 (e.g.: measurement).
 - There is not a single Specialist Mathematics course at an advanced level.
 - Methods exponential distributions are in Unit 3. Why is Poisson not included?
 - Specialist Mathematics is content heavy. It is suggested that content (which would be better in methods) means possible loss of in depth (e.g. probability / stats, logic).
- 5. Are achievement standards across units 1-2 and 3-4 organised in an order consistent with your experience?**
 - Generally not a lot to distinguish between A & B.
 - What is the difference between non routine and non-standard.
 - Some students will not meet the E standard.
 - Use of language requires subjectivity (e.g. limited understanding, limited familiarity and limited forms).
- 6. Do general capabilities and cross curriculum priorities naturally fit this subject?**
 - Inclusion of cross-curriculum priorities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Sustainability, and Australia's engagement with Asia is not clear.

Science

Biology – ACT feedback from teacher consultation meetings

- 1. Does the rationale provide clarity about the subject's broad scope, distinctive nature and importance?**
 - Scope of the curriculum is broad.
 - First sentence highlights the importance of evolution; however, this is not developed in the course.
 - There are many ideas presented in the rationale, which reduces its clarity.
- 2. Do the aims comprehensively describe the intended learning as a result of studying the subject?**
 - Aims are clear and adequately address intended learning.
 - Point 3 needs to emphasise the interaction of systems and processes to sustain life.
- 3. Does the four unit structure reflect internal logic and coherence?**
 - Cells should be studied before diversity.
 - Unit 3 (dot point 6) belongs in unit 2 cells.
 - Unit 2 needs to include mitosis and meiosis.
 - ACARA has stipulated osmoregulation and omitted osmoconformer. It is suggested that it be reworded to "animals have varying methods of maintaining water balance".
- 4. Provide feedback on units:**
 - Focus of course is on breadth rather than depth. Concern about covering all content in a semester (e.g. reproductive system, muscular and skeletal system)
 - Unit 1 (Biodiversity) description states "students work together to collect". This is not reflected in the content description, learning outcomes or achievement standards.
 - Indigenous perspectives are not represented in the course.
 - Absence of central ideas/themes.
 - Evolution needs to be addressed in greater detail.
- 5. Are achievement standards across units 1-2 and 3-4 organised in an order consistent with your experience?**
 - Units 1 / 2 and 3 / 4 do not clearly reflect advancement in skills and understanding.
 - It will be extremely difficult to achieve an A in one semester unit as not all content, concepts and skills can be covered.

Chemistry – ACT feedback from teacher consultation meetings

- 1. Does the rationale provide clarity about the subject's broad scope, distinctive nature and importance?**
 - Rationale is clear, concise and communicates clearly the importance of chemistry.

- 2. Do the aims comprehensively describe the intended learning as a result of studying the subject?**
 - Item 5 will be a significant challenge.

- 3. Does the four unit structure reflect internal logic and coherence?**
 - Inclusion of enthalpy change would fit better in unit 3 than in unit 1.
 - Rates would fit better in unit 3.
 - Assume that unit 4 can be adapted to a biochemical focus.

- 4. Provide feedback on units:**
 - Unit 1 is content heavy.
 - Environmental content is over stated in all units.

- 5. Are achievement standards across units 1-2 and 3-4 organised in an order consistent with your experience?**
 - The Achievement Standards need to be unpacked to clearly define A-E achievement.

Earth and Environmental Science (EES) feedback from teacher consultation meetings

- 1. Does the rationale provide clarity about the subject's broad scope, distinctive nature and importance?**
 - Rationale adequately articulates the scope, nature and importance of the course.
- 2. Do the aims comprehensively describe the intended learning as a result of studying the subject?**
 - Aims are clear and adequately address intended learning. However, units will be difficult to design and implement compared to more classical units (e.g. geology, oceanography, atmospheric studies).
- 3. Does the four unit structure reflect internal logic and coherence?**
 - Clear and relevant links to/from Years 7-10 EES curriculum.
- 4. Provide feedback on the units:**
 - Endorse focus of the course and the field work is fantastic.
 - Concern about amount of content in unit 2; will take at least 3 terms to teach.
 - Suggest that 'Biogeochemical processes' be cut back or removed from unit 1 & 3 as the units are considered content heavy.
 - Scope of EES course is broad with not much opportunity to focus on topics in depth.
 - Remove content that is covered in yr10 (e.g. Energy efficient design of buildings in unit 2).
- 5. Are achievement standards across units 1-2 and 3-4 organised in an order consistent with your experience?**
 - Achievement standards are workable.
 - Suggest greater differentiation between C, D and E achievement standards.
 - E standard needs to reflect a student that has demonstrated a very limited achievement (e.g. change 'describe' to 'identify'.
 - Inquiry skills communication standard needs to reflect greater differentiation.
 - ACT EES teachers are unfamiliar with the phrase 'range of modes and genres' and suggest that it be reworded.

Physics – ACT Feedback from teacher consultation meetings

- 1. Does the rationale provide clarity about the subject's broad scope, distinctive nature and importance?**
 - Rationale adequately articulates the scope, nature and importance of the course.
 - Rationale should mention scientific method and limitations of measurement.
 - Concern that the rationale conveys physics as 'infallible' and 'perfect'. Replace with 'unlocking secrets of the universe'.
- 2. Do the aims comprehensively describe the intended learning as a result of studying the subject?**
 - Aims are clear and address intended learning.
 - Inclusion of 'commitment to accounting for uncertainty in measurement' is suggested as more appropriate.
- 3. Does the four unit structure reflect internal logic and coherence?**
 - Newtonian physics of motion needs to be covered early i.e. Unit 1 or 2.
 - Nuclear physics should not appear in the first unit as significant prior knowledge is required.
- 4. Provide feedback on the units:**
 - Unit 2 (Waves) needs to be strengthened. Thin films, air wedges etc are not included (work into constructive interference section).
 - Quantum is very well covered in unit 4.
 - Concerns that there will not be enough time to teach all content, and adequately address design investigations.
- 5. Are achievement standards across units 1-2 and 3-4 organised in an order consistent with your experience?**
 - Similar achievement descriptions between units 1 / 2 and 3 / 4. This does not address the issue of academic maturity which should reflect more rigorous standards for units 3 / 4.
 - Insert 'independently' into the A standard.