

Towards an Australian curriculum (page 1 of 2)

About the Australian curriculum

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is responsible for the development of the Australian curriculum from Kindergarten to Year 12 in specified learning areas.

The first phase includes the development of curriculum for English, mathematics, science and history. The second phase includes geography, languages and the arts.

While these phases are organised around learning areas, the curriculum will also address the development of general capabilities and cross curriculum perspectives.

The ten general capabilities are literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology, thinking skills, creativity, self management, teamwork, intercultural understanding, ethical behaviour, and social competence.

The curriculum will also incorporate knowledge, skills and understanding related to the history and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, developing sustainable patterns of living, and Australia's engagement with Asia.

Development of the curriculum in the seven learning areas assumes that each will be incorporated into existing state and territory curriculum structures.

Recently, the Ministerial Council has asked ACARA to provide advice on how it might go about developing curriculum across the other learning areas and subjects listed in the Melbourne Declaration on National Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA 2008). This next phase of work will involve the development of an overall curriculum framework and greater attention to the role of general capabilities alongside learning areas.

Curriculum content and achievement standards

Curriculum content and achievement standards will be described for each learning area.

Curriculum content specifies what teachers are expected to teach. It includes the knowledge, skills and understanding for each learning area and is described for each year level (for example, Mathematics, Year 5).

Achievement standards describe the quality of learning students should typically demonstrate in relation to the content for each learning area for each year of schooling. This includes the depth of their understanding, the extent of their knowledge and the sophistication of their skills.

ACARA will also provide advice on how student achievement will be reported using a five-point reporting scale.

While the curriculum will make clear to teachers what has to be taught and what achievement standards are expected of students, classroom teachers will make decisions about the pedagogical approach that will lead to effective outcomes for their students.

How is the curriculum being developed?

ACARA's curriculum development process involves four stages: curriculum shaping, writing, implementation, and evaluation/review.

Curriculum development is being guided by a 'shape' paper for each learning area. Shape papers are available on ACARA's website.

The shape paper for each of the first four learning areas was written by a lead writer with support from an advisory group. The second phase learning areas will follow a similar process.

>> Continued on next page

Towards an Australian curriculum (page 2 of 2)

Curriculum writing is being undertaken by teams of 10-12 writers and an ACARA project officer, with guidance provided by the ACARA Board and the Curriculum Design document. Writers are supported by learning area and cross-learning area advisory panels, which comprise teachers, academics and curriculum experts from across the country.

Curriculum development workshops have been held with teachers and curriculum experts, nominated through jurisdictions and national professional associations.

At key stages in the development process draft documents are submitted to the ACARA Curriculum Committee, a sub-committee of the ACARA Board, for review and approval to commence the next stage of development.

Draft copies of the Australian curriculum will be available for four months for nationwide consultation starting in February 2010. Senior secondary curriculum in these areas will follow two months later.

How will the curriculum be published?

The Australian curriculum will be published online. Publishing the curriculum online will mean that teachers and others have significant flexibility in how they read and organise the curriculum.

Online publication of the curriculum, for consultation and for implementation, will also mean that teachers and others in the broader education community are able to review and provide feedback online.

When will the curriculum be implemented?

Australian curriculum for English, mathematics, science and history will be completed in the third quarter of 2010. Planning for implementation

by states and territories will take account of the differences between the Australian curriculum and existing state and territory curriculum.

While implementation may start in 2011, it is expected that K-10 implementation across the country will be underway in all schools in 2013. For some states and territories, 2011 will be a pilot year, with a sample of schools planning, teaching, assessing and reporting using Australian curriculum. The experience and advice from these schools will be used to guide implementation in the remaining schools in subsequent years.

Implementation sequences for senior secondary year's curriculum will be determined in early 2010.

More information

For more information, including copies of the shape papers for English, mathematics, science and history and the *Curriculum Development Process* and *Curriculum Design* documents, go to the ACARA website – www.acara.edu.au