

The process of recognition

For the recognition of alternative frameworks

Version 3.0 June 2022

Acknowledgement of Country

ACARA acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country and Place throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters, sky and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and Elders past and present.

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Amendment History

Date	Version	Comment
28 June 2011	1.0	Approved by the ACARA Board (18 May 2011).
25 May 2012	2.0	Amended to include changes approved by the ACARA Board (1 May 2012).
June 2013	2.1	Amended for clarity and to align with <i>The Shape of the Australian Curriculum v4.0</i> .
July 2016	2.2	Amended to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide a separate recognition pathway for learning areas/subjects additional to those already included on the Recognition Register for an alternative curriculum framework • clarify a process of updating the Recognition Register in the event of change to the Australian Curriculum and/or to an alternative curriculum framework • modify the pathway for endorsing alternative curriculum frameworks.
June 2022	3.0	Amended to include changes approved by the ACARA Board (23 February 2022) in response to publication of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration (December 2019) • The Shape of the Australian Curriculum Version 5.0 (June 2020) • Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 (May 2022).

1. Introduction

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) was established under the *Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority Act, 2008* (The ACARA Act) of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia.

Schedule 1 of ACARA's Charter (23 November 2016) explains ACARA's role in the recognition of alternative curriculum:

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.'

Developing and administering a national school curriculum includes ACARA determining whether alternative curriculum frameworks meet the requirements of the national curriculum. Source: <https://www.acara.edu.au/docs/default-source/corporate-publications/20170301-acara-charter.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

For the purpose of national recognition, the term "alternative curriculum framework" refers to a particular approach used by an alternative curriculum organisation for the delivery of the Australian Curriculum (AC) while meeting its own educational objectives.

An alternative curriculum framework is a curriculum framework recognised as having the capacity to guide learning that reflects the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, meet the requirements of ACARA's *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum Version 5.0* paper and provide a generally comparable entitlement to the Australian Curriculum, Version 9.0 content descriptions and achievement standards.

Terminology

"Recognition" is distinctly different to the "registration" of a school or group of schools as complying with their state and territory requirements. The process of recognition does not replace the role of state and territory authorities in making decisions about what curriculum schools will use.

In this document, the term "proponent" refers to an organisation proposing a curriculum framework for recognition. Following recognition, the curriculum framework is referred to as an "alternative curriculum framework" and the proponent is referred to as the "alternative curriculum framework organisation", commonly abbreviated to the "organisation".

The assessments of alternative curriculum frameworks are published on the ACARA Recognition Register. Subsequent to the recognition of an alternative curriculum framework, an organisation may seek the recognition of additional learning areas/subjects for inclusion as part of their alternative curriculum framework.

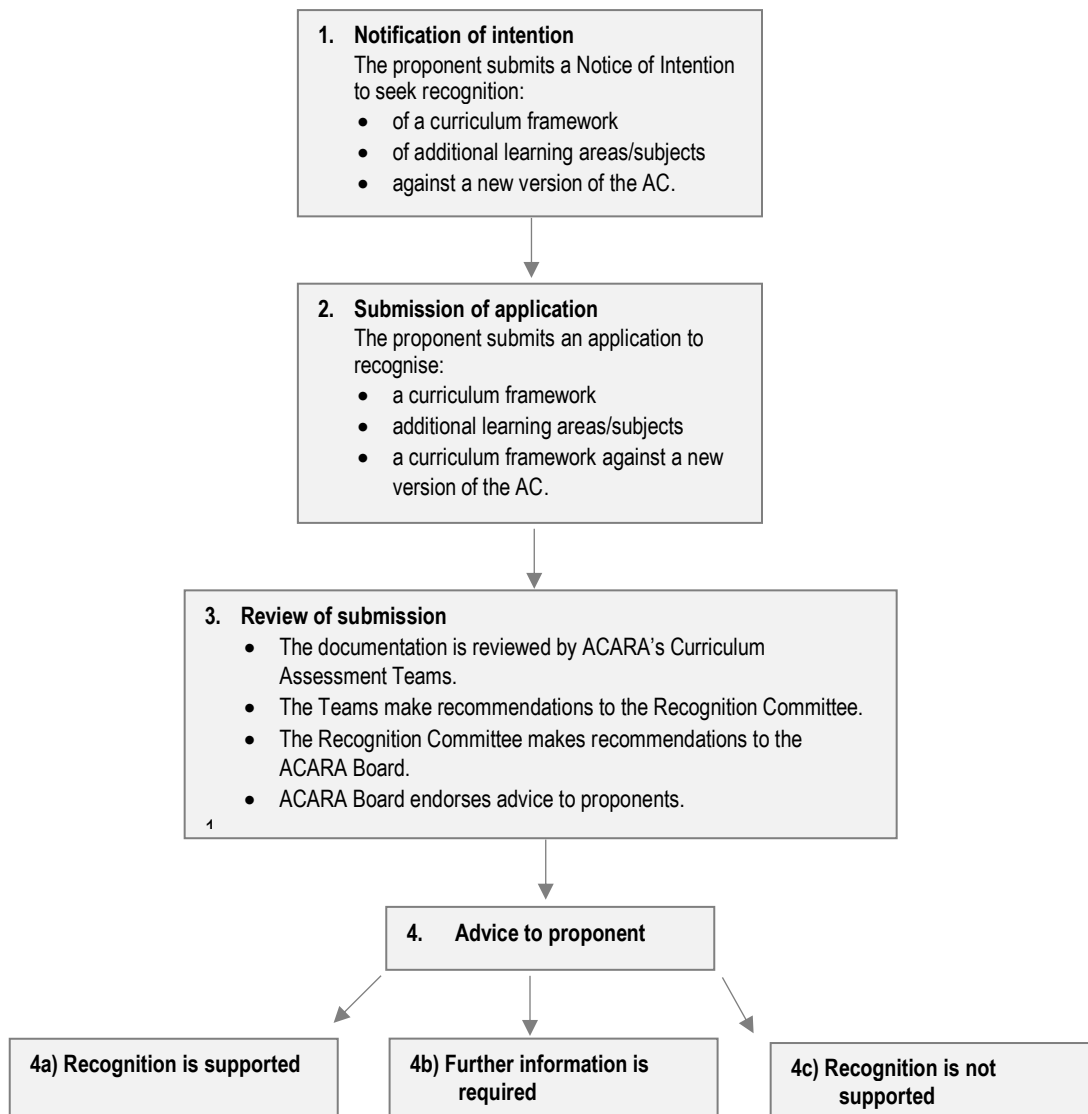
In addition to this document, further information is provided on the ACARA website to assist organisations in preparing submissions to the ACARA Recognition Committee. This information can be found at: <http://www.acara.edu.au/curriculum/alternative-curriculum-recognition>

2. The Recognition Process

The process of recognition comprises 3 pathways. A pathway for:

- proponents seeking national recognition of a curriculum framework
- recognised alternative curriculum framework organisations seeking recognition of additional learning areas/subjects
- recognised alternative curriculum framework organisations seeking recognition against a new version of the Australian Curriculum.

The process for these pathways involves 4 steps:



2.1 Pathway 1 (proponents seeking national recognition of a curriculum framework)

Step 1: Notification of intention to seek recognition of a curriculum framework

- a) The proponent formally advises ACARA of its intention to seek national recognition of a curriculum framework.
- b) Using the *ACARA Notice of Intention – curriculum framework template*, the following advice is provided:
 - background information about the proponent
 - the title and publication reference details of the intended curriculum framework
 - the proposed curriculum component with which to compare Australian Curriculum content descriptions
 - the proposed curriculum component with which to compare Australian Curriculum achievement standards
 - the proposed points for comparison between the curriculum framework and the Australian Curriculum, including (where applicable):
 - at the end of Year 4
 - at the end of Year 6
 - at the end of Year 8
 - at the end of Year 10.
 - a list of schools or locations using the curriculum framework for which national recognition is sought.
- c) ACARA acknowledges receipt of the Notice of Intention and provides the proponent with the following documentation about the recognition process:
 - the Process of Recognition paper
 - the Submission template for a curriculum framework.
- d) ACARA notifies state and territory registration and accreditation authorities that notification of intention to seek national recognition of a curriculum framework has been received. These authorities are able to submit any matters of interest to ACARA that are consistent with their legislative responsibilities.
- e) The ACARA Recognition Committee convenes to assess the submission of a curriculum framework, and convenes ACARA Curriculum Assessment Teams.

Step 2: Submission of application by proponent

- a) Using the *ACARA Submission – curriculum framework* template, the proponent details how the proposed curriculum framework meets the criteria for recognition.
 - The submission includes a copy of the curriculum framework and relevant publishing details so that it can be readily identified and referenced; and completed comparative documentation indicating alignment to Australian Curriculum content descriptions and achievement standards. A comparative curriculum template is to be provided by ACARA. The expected life and anticipated review process for that version of the curriculum framework should also be specified. Additional support materials are not necessary and should not be provided at this stage.
 - The submission provides clear information about evidence in the curriculum framework of comparability with the Australian Curriculum. Where possible, this information is electronically linked between the submission and the relevant section of the curriculum framework.
- b) The completed submission template and curriculum framework document(s) are submitted to ACARA.

Step 3: Review of submission

- a) The Recognition Committee considers whether:
 - the curriculum framework meets the criteria (See Section 5)
 - further information is required from the proponent, or
 - the curriculum framework does not meet the criteria.
- b) The Recognition Committee records evidence for its decision, including references to curriculum framework documents, and makes recommendations to the ACARA Board to determine the outcome of the recognition process.

Step 4: Outcome of recognition process

There are 3 possible outcomes from the recognition process:

1. Recommendation for recognition of the curriculum framework
2. Further information required
3. Recognition not supported.

Step 4a: Recognition is recommended

- a) The curriculum framework is included on ACARA's Register of Nationally Recognised Curriculum Frameworks.
- b) ACARA advises the proponent and the relevant state and territory registration authorities, referring to the version of the curriculum framework, learning areas and year levels that have been assessed as being generally comparable to the Australian Curriculum.

The Recognition Register provides any necessary information about differences in sequencing of learning at comparison points that may have implications for students who move between different school systems in Foundation to Year 10.

The period of recognition of the national alternative curriculum framework is for the life of that alternative curriculum framework and/or until the current Australian Curriculum is replaced by a subsequent version containing changes that impact on the currency of the assessment of the alternative curriculum framework.

Step 4b: Further information is required

- a) If the Recognition Committee determines that further information is required for the purposes of clarification, the proponent is advised and given a specified timeframe within which to respond in writing, and/or in person. This step provides the opportunity for proponents to identify and point to information that addresses any significant differences between the curriculum framework and the Australian Curriculum.
- b) The Recognition Committee then reconsiders the submission in light of the clarifying information and decides on its advice to the ACARA Board.

Step 4c: Recognition not supported

ACARA advises the proponent that the curriculum framework is not recognised and provides details of the appeals process. The ACARA Board will make decisions in relation to appeals by proponents.

2.2 Pathways 2 and 3 (organisations seeking recognition of additional learning areas/subjects *or* recognition against a new version of the Australian Curriculum)

Step 1: Notification of intention to seek recognition of additional learning areas/ subjects or Recognition against a new version of the Australian Curriculum

- a) The organisation, already having been granted recognition of an alternative curriculum framework, formally advises ACARA of its intention to seek recognition of:
- additional learning areas and/or subjects
 - recognition against a new version of the Australian Curriculum
- b) Using the:
- ACARA Notice of Intention – additional learning area(s) and/or subject(s) template or
 - ACARA Notice of Intention – recognition against a new version of the Australian Curriculum template
 - the organisation provides the following advice:
 - the title and publication reference details of the learning area/subject documents
 - the proposed alternative curriculum components with which to compare:
 - Australian Curriculum content descriptions
 - Australian Curriculum achievement standards
- and states the version of the Australian Curriculum.
- the proposed points for comparison between the additional learning area/subjects and the Australian Curriculum, including (where applicable):
 - at the end of Year 4
 - at the end of Year 6
 - at the end of Year 8 and
 - at the end of Year 10.
- c) ACARA acknowledges receipt of the Notice of Intention and provides the organisation with the following documentation about the recognition process:
- the Process of Recognition paper
 - the appropriate ACARA Comparative submission template
- d) The ACARA Recognition Committee is convened and convenes Curriculum Assessment Teams to assess learning areas/subjects proposed for addition to an alternative curriculum framework.

Step 2: Submission of application by recognised curriculum organisation

a) Using the:

- ACARA Comparative submission template – additional learning area(s) and/or subject(s) template or
- ACARA Comparative submission template – recognition against a new version of the Australian Curriculum

the organisation details how the learning areas/subjects are comparable to the Australian Curriculum in relation to learning entitlement at relevant points across year levels.

b) The submission includes:

- a copy of the relevant learning area/subject information and specific publishing details so that it can be readily identified and referenced
- completed comparative documentation indicating alignment to Australian Curriculum content descriptions and achievement standards. (Additional support materials are not necessary and should not be provided at this stage.)

c) The submission provides:

- clear information about evidence in the documentation. Where possible, this information is electronically linked between the submission and the relevant section of the learning area/subject documentation.

d) The completed submission template and learning area/subject documentation are submitted to ACARA.

Step 3: Review of submission

a) Curriculum Assessment Teams consider whether:

- the additional learning area/subject is comparable to the Australian Curriculum in relation to learning entitlement at relevant points across year levels
- further information is required from the proponent
- the additional learning area/subject is not comparable to the Australian Curriculum in relation to learning entitlement at relevant points across year levels.

b) The Curriculum Assessment Teams record evidence, including references to the curriculum framework documents, and make recommendations to the Recognition Committee.

c) The Recognition Committee makes recommendations to the ACARA Board to determine the outcome of the recognition process.

Step 4: Outcome of recognition process

There are 3 possible outcomes from the recognition process:

- Recommendation to add the proposed learning areas/subjects to the nationally recognised curriculum framework.
- Further information is required.
- Recognition is not supported.

Step 4a: Recognition is recommended

- a) The additional learning area/subject information or recognition against a new version of the Australian Curriculum is added to the relevant alternative curriculum framework assessment published on ACARA's Register of Nationally Recognised Curriculum Frameworks.
- b) ACARA advises the alternative curriculum framework organisation, and the relevant state and territory registration and accreditation authorities, referring to the version of the learning area/subject documents and year levels that have been assessed as meeting the requirements of the Australian Curriculum.
- c) The Recognition Register provides any necessary information about differences in sequencing of learning at comparison points that may have implications for students who move between different school systems in Foundation to Year 10.

Step 4b: Further information required

- a) If the Curriculum Assessment Team determines that further information is required for the purposes of clarification, the organisation is advised and given a specified timeframe within which to respond in writing, and/or in person. This step provides the opportunity for organisations to identify and point to information in learning area/subject information that addresses any significant differences between the curriculum framework and the criteria for meeting the requirements of the Australian Curriculum.
- b) The Curriculum Assessment Team then reconsiders the submission in light of the clarifying information and decides on its advice to the Recognition Committee.

Step 4c: Recognition not supported

ACARA advises the organisation that the curriculum framework learning areas/subjects are not recognised and provides details of the appeals process. The ACARA Board will make decisions in relation to appeals by alternative curriculum framework organisations.

3. Criteria for Recognition

The submission for national recognition of a curriculum framework used as an alternative to the Australian Curriculum should address the extent to which it:

1. aligns with the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration*, specifically the expectations described within the second goal
2. meets the principles and guidelines outlined in *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum, (2020, v5.0)*
3. is comparable to the Australian Curriculum in relation to learning entitlement at relevant points across year levels.

1.1 Criterion 1: Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration

The submission for national recognition of a curriculum framework used as an alternative to the Australian Curriculum should address the extent to which it demonstrates how it will assist students in becoming confident and creative individuals, successful lifelong learners, and active and informed members of the community, taking account of the elaboration of this goal in the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration*.

Proponents must demonstrate how their curriculum framework supports young people to:

- become confident and creative individuals, with specific attention to developing a sense of self-worth, self-awareness and personal identity to manage their emotional, mental, spiritual and physical well-being
- be successful lifelong learners, with specific attention to developing essential skills in literacy, numeracy and becoming productive and informed users of technology
- become active and informed members of the community.

Criterion 2: The Shape of the Australian Curriculum (2020, v5.0)

Proponents must demonstrate the extent to which their curriculum framework:

- makes clear to teachers what is to be taught, and to students what they should learn and what achievement is expected of them
- builds on the assumption that all students can learn
- sets high standards that apply to all learners while acknowledging the different rates at which students develop
- connects with and builds on the Early Years Learning Framework (if at the appropriate level)
- provides 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, understanding and skills that will help them in future.

Criterion 3: Direct comparisons between the Australian Curriculum and the curriculum framework

The direct comparison in relation to relevant points across year levels will:

- demonstrate the similarities and differences that exist between the curriculum content of the 2 documents, with an explanation of how the gaps are addressed, and why different content is valued by the proponent/organisation
- demonstrate the similarities and differences in standards of achievement expected of students at the comparison points agreed with ACARA, with an explanation of any differences in these standards and how the gaps will be addressed.

4. The process for updating assessments on the ACARA Recognition Register

Changes to the Australian Curriculum

Described below is the process for updating the assessment of an alternative curriculum framework to reflect a new version of the Australian Curriculum.

- ACARA informs the organisations when a new version of the Australian Curriculum is released and outlines that the Curriculum Assessment Team will now undertake an initial assessment to determine whether further documentation is required to maintain their alternate recognition.
- The Curriculum Assessment Team reviews the assessments published on the ACARA Recognition Register in relation to changes made to the Australian Curriculum.
- If a version change of the Australian Curriculum does not impact on the published assessment of an alternative curriculum framework, this recommendation would be communicated to the Curriculum Recognition Committee and to the Board. If approved by the Board, a statement to this effect will be sent to the organisation and published on the Recognition Register and no further action is necessary.
- If a version change is made to the Australian Curriculum that impacts on the currency of a published alternate recognition assessment, ACARA will inform the Curriculum Recognition Committee and the ACARA Board. If approved by the Board, this will be communicated to the relevant organisation, giving specific details relevant to its assessment
- The organisation considers the information provided by ACARA and responds by submitting Notice of Intent and indicating a timeframe for making amendments to its curriculum framework and then submitting their updated information for review using the comparative submission template.
- ACARA assesses the revisions in accordance with Step 3 of the Recognition process.
- Following the assessment of the revisions, the Recognition Register is updated to maintain its accuracy and to indicate the most recent version of the alternative curriculum framework.
- ACARA informs state and territory registration and accreditation authorities of the changes to the Recognition Register.

A record of Australian Curriculum version history can be found at: <https://www.acara.edu.au/curriculum>

Changes to an Alternative Curriculum Framework

Described below is the process for updating the assessments published on the Recognition Register to reflect changes made by an organisation to an alternative curriculum framework.

- The organisation provides ACARA with details of changes made to the content of its alternative curriculum framework.
- ACARA (Director and Senior Manager Curriculum) assesses the revisions in accordance with Step 3 of the Recognition process.
- Where applicable, the Recognition Register is updated to maintain its accuracy and to indicate the most recent version of the alternative curriculum framework.
- ACARA informs state and territory registration and accreditation authorities of the changes to the Recognition Register.
- If the change is substantial and impacts the alignment to the Australian Curriculum, ACARA recommends escalation to and convening of the ACARA Recognition Committee.

5. Roles and responsibilities

This section outlines the roles and responsibilities of the following parties:

- Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
- The proponent/alternative curriculum framework organisation
- State and territory registration and accreditation authorities
- ACARA Recognition Committee
- ACARA Curriculum Assessment Teams.

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

ACARA will be responsible for:

- developing, publishing and reviewing the process of recognition
- providing information about the assessment process and documentation needed to support submissions being made
- establishing and conducting a program for receipt and evaluation of submissions for national recognition
- determining when an action requires escalation to and convening of the Recognition Committee
- convening a Recognition Committee which will oversee Curriculum Assessment Teams for new proponents (ACARA CEO sends letter to Registration and Accreditation Authorities seeking nominations)
- convening Curriculum Assessment Teams for additional learning areas/subjects or alignment to new versions of the Australian Curriculum in consultation with Recognition Committee members and F–12 Curriculum Reference Group members
- advising proponents of the outcome of the review process
- advising state and territory registration and accreditation authorities of:
 - alternative curriculum frameworks that have been included on ACARA's Recognition Register, including the relevant publishing details so that the curriculum can be readily identified
 - changes made to assessments published on the Recognition Register
 - the list of schools or locations recorded on the proponent's Notice of Intention as using the curriculum framework
- establishing and conducting a Board-approved appeal process
- updating statements on the Recognition Register to reflect the assessment of changes made to alternative curriculum frameworks
- informing alternative curriculum framework organisations of changes to the Australian Curriculum in cases where the change impacts on the currency of assessments published on the Recognition Register
- reviewing changes to alternative curriculum frameworks in accordance with Step 3 of the Recognition process.

The proponent/alternative curriculum framework organisation

Proponents/organisations will be responsible for:

- accessing necessary information to guide the development of the submission
- providing the list of schools using the curriculum framework, maintaining the accuracy of listed schools and reporting changes to the list to ACARA
- preparing and submitting the application for recognition, including the provision of sufficient publishing details to readily identify the curriculum framework, completing the ACARA comparative submission template
- responding to ACARA requests for additional information, informing ACARA of changes made to the content of its alternative curriculum framework and providing details of these changes.

State and territory registration and accreditation authorities

Relevant state and territory registration and accreditation authorities will be responsible for:

- nominating available staff to work on the ACARA Recognition Committee to assess curriculum frameworks. A state or territory can opt not to nominate a representative.

ACARA Recognition Committee

Membership

The Recognition Committee consists of:

- Chair – ACARA Director, Curriculum
- ACARA Senior Manager
- at least one member of a registration authority
- a nominee from a non-government education sector (ISA or NCEC).

The role of the Recognition Committee is to oversee the assessment process and its ongoing review and refinement, and to report to the ACARA Board for applications from new proponents, including when there is a new version of the curriculum.

The major tasks of the Recognition Committee are to:

- oversee Curriculum Assessment Teams in the assessment of curriculum framework submissions; submissions of learning areas/subjects for addition to nationally recognised curriculum frameworks including against new versions of the Australian Curriculum
- review the recommendations of the Curriculum Assessment Teams and, if supported, report to the ACARA Board
- inform proponents of the process for an appeal if recognition is not recommended
- provide advice to the ACARA Board on a review of the assessment process.

ACARA Curriculum Assessment Teams

Membership

Overseen by the Recognition Committee, each team consists of:

- ACARA Curriculum Specialist for the relevant subject/learning area
- an expert in the subject/learning area under consideration and nominated by the Recognition Committee.

The role of the Curriculum Assessment Teams is to conduct the assessment of submissions for a curriculum framework that has already been recognised for either the addition of a specific learning areas/subject or for a new version of the Australian Curriculum, and to report to the Recognition Committee.

The major tasks of the Curriculum Assessment Teams are to:

- review the submission of the learning area/subject information and consider whether it is:
 - comparable to the relevant Australian Curriculum learning area/subject in relation to learning entitlement at relevant points across year levels
 - consistent with the organisation's nationally recognised curriculum framework
- request and consider further information from proponents if required
- record and certify recommendations to the Recognition Committee with explanatory comments and
- contribute advice to a review of the assessment process.