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The Shape of the Australian Curriculum

Version 5.0

A decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping, wavy lines in shades of blue and orange, spanning the width of the page below the title.

June 2020

www.acara.edu.au

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Amendment history

Date	Version	Comment
April 2020	5.0	<p><i>The Shape of the Australian Curriculum</i> (Version 5.0) provides background to the development of the first Australian Curriculum and sets out the rationale, dimensions and structure of the Australian Curriculum. It has been updated from previous versions (see below) to reflect the <i>Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration</i> (December 2019) and includes the aims for the review of the Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum (v8.5) commencing in 2020.</p> <p>Approved by the ACARA Board on 24 April 2020 and the Education Council on 12 June 2020.</p>

Previous versions guiding the initial development of the Australian Curriculum

Date	Version	Comment
May 2009	1.0	Approved by the Interim National Curriculum Board in May 2009 and the Ministerial Council in September 2009 to guide the development of the first phase of the Australian Curriculum (English, Mathematics, Science and History).
October 2010	2.0	<p>Updated to support implementation of the Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum for English, Mathematics, Science and History, to provide the context for the next stage of development of the Foundation to Year 12 curriculum and to promote ongoing discussion about the shape of the Australian Curriculum as a whole.</p> <p>Approved by the ACARA Board on 26 October 2010 and the Ministerial Council in December 2010.</p>
October 2011	3.0	<p>Updated to include information from the F–10 Curriculum Position paper on the whole curriculum, achievement standards and support for students with disability endorsed by the Ministerial Council in July 2011.</p> <p>Approved by the ACARA Board on 9 September 2011 and the Ministerial Council in October 2011.</p>
October 2012	4.0	<p>Updated to include information about the shape of the senior secondary curriculum and additional advice on how the Australian Curriculum meets the needs of the diverse range of students in Australian schools.</p> <p>Approved by the ACARA Board on 16 October 2012 and revisions noted by the Education Council in December 2012.</p>



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Purpose

1. *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum* (Version 5.0) provides background to the development of the first Australian Curriculum and sets out the rationale, dimensions and structure of the Australian Curriculum. It also describes the processes for quality assurance and review of the Australian Curriculum, including the aims for the review of the Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum (Version 8.5) commencing in 2020.
2. The first *Shape of the Australian Curriculum* (Version 1.0) was written in May 2009 to guide the development of the first phase of the Australian Curriculum (English, Mathematics, Science and History). It was approved by the Ministerial Council in September 2009. Subsequent versions were approved by Ministers in December 2010 (Version 2.0), October 2011 (Version 3.0), and October 2012 (Version 4.0).
3. The *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration* (December 2019) articulates the vision for an Australian Curriculum.

Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration

To achieve excellence, and for our system to be equitable, every student must develop strong literacy and numeracy skills in their earliest years of schooling, and go on to develop broad and deep knowledge across a range of curriculum areas.

However, our education system must do more than this – it must also prepare young people to thrive in a time of rapid social and technological change, and complex environmental, social and economic challenges. Education plays a vital role in promoting the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, moral, spiritual and aesthetic development and wellbeing of young Australians, and in ensuring the nation's ongoing economic prosperity and social cohesion. They need to deal with information abundance, and navigate questions of trust and authenticity. They need flexibility, resilience, creativity, and the ability and drive to keep on learning throughout their lives.

Source: Council of Australian Governments Education Council, Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration, December 2019, p. 2

Preamble

4. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is an independent statutory authority established in 2008 to execute policy directions determined by the COAG Education Council regarding curriculum, assessment and reporting at the national level. ACARA's responsibilities for national curriculum involve:
 - providing a world-class curriculum from Foundation to Year 12 in specified learning areas agreed to by the Education Council (Australian education ministers)
 - assembling the evidence base required to review, develop and refine curriculum.
5. ACARA is committed to providing world-class curriculum that inspires improvement in the learning of all young Australians.
6. In 2009, as agreed by Australian education ministers, ACARA commenced the development of the Australian Curriculum. The curriculum was developed in three phases and completed in 2016:
 - Phase one: English, Mathematics, Science and History
 - Phase two: Geography, Languages and The Arts
 - Phase three: Health and Physical Education, Technologies, Economics and Business, and Civics and Citizenship.
7. ACARA has developed Foundation - Year 10 Australian Curriculum in:
 - The learning areas of English, Mathematics, Science, Humanities and Social Sciences, The Arts, Technologies, and Health and Physical Education
 - Languages – Arabic, Auslan, Chinese, Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages, Framework for Classical languages including curricula in Classical Greek and Latin, French, German, Hindi, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Modern Greek, Spanish, Turkish and Vietnamese
 - Work Studies (an optional elective subject for Years 9-10).
8. ACARA has developed senior secondary Australian Curriculum in the following learning areas:
 - English – for the subjects of English, English as an Additional Language or Dialect, Essential English and Literature
 - Mathematics – for the subjects of Essential Mathematics, General Mathematics, Mathematical Methods and Specialist Mathematics
 - Science – for the subjects of Biology, Chemistry, Earth and Environmental Science and Physics
 - Humanities and Social Sciences – for the subjects of Ancient History, Modern History and Geography.
9. The initial curriculum development work was guided by the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (December 2008), which emphasised the



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importance of learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities as the basis for a curriculum designed to support 21st century learning.

10. In December 2019, Education Council endorsed the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration*, which affirmed national commitment to a world-class Australian Curriculum based on learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities, and signaled Council's intent that ACARA review the content of the Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum (Version 8.5) to ensure it was still meeting the needs of students and teachers across the country.

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Goals of education

11. Education plays a critical role in shaping the lives of the nation's citizens and therefore in shaping the social and economic well-being of the nation.
12. It must engage our young people in acquiring the knowledge, understanding and skills that:
 - enable them to participate effectively in society;
 - foster collaboration and social cohesion; and
 - allow them to discover meaning and purpose and live the lives they have reason to value.
13. All Australian governments have committed to the goals of the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration* (December 2019) that:
 - The Australian education system promotes excellence and equity.
 - All young Australians become confident and creative individuals, successful lifelong learners, and active and informed members of the community.
14. Under the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration*, Australian governments have committed to ensuring that all education sectors deliver world-class curriculum and assessment in Australian schools as one of the areas of action to achieving these goals.

Educational goals of the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration

Goal 1: The Australian education system promotes excellence and equity

This means that all Australian Governments will work with the education community to:

- provide all young Australians with access to high-quality education that is inclusive and free from any form of discrimination
- recognise the individual needs of all young Australians, identify barriers that can be addressed, and empower learners to overcome barriers
- promote personalised learning and provide support that aims to fulfil the individual capabilities and needs of learners
- ensure that young Australians of all backgrounds are supported to achieve their full educational potential
- encourage young people to hold high expectations for their educational outcomes, supported by parents, carers, families and the broader community
- ensure that education promotes and contributes to a socially cohesive society that values, respects and appreciates different points of view and cultural, social, linguistic and religious diversity
- ensure that learning is built on and includes local, regional and national cultural knowledge and experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and work in partnership with local communities
- collaborate internationally to share best practice and help young Australians learn about and engage with the world
- support all education sectors – government and non-government, secular and faith-based
- promote a culture of excellence in all learning environments, by providing varied, challenging and stimulating learning experiences and opportunities that enable all learners to explore and build on their individual abilities, interests, and experiences

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- ensure that Australia's education system is recognised internationally for delivering high quality learning outcomes.

Goal 2: All young Australians become confident and creative individuals, successful lifelong learners, and active and informed members of the community.

Confident and creative individuals who:

- have a sense of self-worth, self-awareness and personal identity that enables them to manage their emotional, mental, cultural, spiritual and physical wellbeing
- develop personal values and attributes such as honesty, empathy, loyalty, responsibility and respect for others
- are resilient and develop the skills and strategies they need to tackle current and future challenges
- are able to recognise, adapt to, and manage change
- have a sense of optimism about their lives and the future
- show initiative, use their creative abilities and are enterprising
- have the imagination, knowledge, skills, understanding and values to establish and maintain healthy, satisfying lives
- understand their responsibilities as global citizens and know how to affect positive change
- have the confidence and capability to pursue learning throughout life, leading to enjoyable, fulfilling and productive employment
- relate well to others and form and maintain healthy relationships
- are well prepared for their potential life roles as friends, family, community and workforce members
- embrace opportunities, make informed decisions about their own lives and accept responsibility for their own actions
- have a sense of belonging, purpose and meaning that enable them to thrive in their learning environment.

Successful lifelong learners who:

- develop their ability and motivation to learn and play an active role in their own learning
- have the essential skills in literacy and numeracy as the foundation for learning
- engage in respectful debate on a diverse range of views
- are productive and informed users of technology as a vehicle for information gathering and sharing, and are able to adapt to emerging technologies into the future
- are able to think deeply and logically, and obtain and evaluate evidence as the result of studying fundamental disciplines
- are creative, innovative and resourceful, and are able to solve problems in ways that draw upon a range of learning areas and disciplines and deep content knowledge
- are inquisitive and experimental, and have the ability to test different sources and types of knowledge
- are responsive and adaptive to new ways of thinking and learning
- are able to plan activities independently, collaborate, work in teams and communicate ideas
- continue to improve through formal and informal learning in further education, and training or employment, and acquire the skills to make informed decisions throughout their lives
- are able to make sense of their world and think about how things have become the way they are
- are confident and motivated to reach their full potential.

Informed members of the community who:

- act with moral and ethical integrity
- have empathy for the circumstances of others and work for the common good, in particular sustaining and improving natural and social environments
- appreciate and respect Australia's rich social, cultural, religious and linguistic diversity and embrace opportunities to communicate and share knowledge and experiences
- have an understanding of Australia's system of government, its histories, religions and culture
- are committed to national values of democracy, equity and justice, and participate in Australia's

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- civic life by connecting with their community and contributing to local and national conversations
- understand, acknowledge and celebrate the diversity and richness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures
 - possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians
 - are informed and responsible global and local members of the community who value and celebrate cultural and linguistic differences, and engage in the global community, particularly with our neighbours in the Indo-Pacific regions.

Source: Council of Australian Governments Education Council, Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration, December 2019, pp. 5–8

Rationale

15. The Australian Curriculum contributes to improving the quality, equity and transparency of Australia's education system.
 - **Quality** – the Australian Curriculum was founded upon a willingness to work together, across geographical and school-sector boundaries, to provide a world-class education for all young Australians. Working nationally makes it possible to harness collective expertise and effort to produce a quality curriculum, as well as offering the potential for economies of scale and reduction in the duplication of time and resources.
 - **Equity** – the Australian Curriculum encourages and supports every student to be the very best they can be, no matter where they live, where they learn and what learning challenges they may face.
 - **Transparency** - the Australian Curriculum is publicly available online and presented in a way that makes clear to teachers what is to be taught, what students should learn, and the quality of learning expected of students as they progress through school.
16. More importantly, the Australian Curriculum is first and foremost an explicit statement of the priorities and aspirations we hold for our young people, and about what the Australian community values as the knowledge, understanding and skills that our young people should attain while at school.
 - **National community** – the Australian Curriculum exemplifies a shared commitment to high expectations of achievement across the country, to respectful and rational discussion of different perspectives, values and beliefs, and to democratic processes as the means of promoting the common good of all.
 - **National aspirations** – the Australian Curriculum supports every student to develop strong literacy and numeracy skills in their early years of schooling and to then go on to develop deep discipline knowledge within the learning areas, along with the capabilities to enable them to thrive in times of rapid social and technological change, and to contribute to our nation's progress as a prosperous, compassionate, tolerant and just society.
17. The Australian Curriculum must as far as possible, anticipate the conditions in which young Australians will need to function as individuals and members of the community

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when they complete their schooling and prepare them for entering and shaping our future world.

18. The world in which our students are learning is in a state of constant change; it is a technology-rich world, where communication is instant and information is immediately accessible. The way we interact with each other personally, socially, and at work has changed forever. Knowledge is growing and information is changing extremely quickly, creating new possibilities.
19. The Australian Curriculum must prepare young people for the future world in which they will learn and to respond to the challenges that will continue to shape their world. To do that, the Australian Curriculum sets out the essential knowledge, understanding and skills students need to learn and the expected quality of that learning.
20. The Australian Curriculum must ensure young people have a good understanding of the nature of Australian society within which they will be living and working as adults. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and perspectives are an important part of the development of our nation, as are the traditions and values of what is often referred to as 'Western society'.
21. The Australian Curriculum provides opportunities for all young Australians to learn about the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, of their contribution to Australia, and of the consequences of contact for communities, past and present. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the Australian Curriculum promotes the importance of pursuing excellence within education settings that respect and promote their cultural identity.

Development of the Australian Curriculum

Propositions shaping the Australian Curriculum

22. The Australian Curriculum reflects the following propositions:

- a) The Australian Curriculum recognises the entitlement of young Australians to knowledge, understanding and skills that will help them become confident and creative individuals, successful lifelong learners and active and informed members of the community.
- b) The Australian Curriculum is written to take account of the growth and development of young people across the years of schooling, the diverse needs of the student population in Australian schools, and the essential knowledge, understandings and skills that all young Australians should learn in terms of learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities.
- c) The Australian Curriculum introduces and develops critical foundational skills in the early years and provides the basis for developing increasing depth of knowledge, understanding and skill, and opportunities to transfer and apply that knowledge, understanding and skill across the years of schooling. It maintains a focus on literacy and numeracy foundations, while supporting deep discipline-based knowledge.
- d) The Australian Curriculum is presented as a continuum of learning that makes clear to teachers what is to be taught within and across the years of schooling. It also makes clear what students should learn and the quality of learning expected of them as they progress through school.
- e) The Australian Curriculum is based on the assumptions that each student can learn and the needs of every student are important. It enables high expectations to be set for each student as teachers account for the current levels of learning of individual students and the different rates at which students develop.
- f) The Australian Curriculum provides for rigorous, in-depth study in each learning area, but also recognises the value of an appropriate breadth of study within learning areas that all students should be exposed to.
- g) The Australian Curriculum is designed to be taught within the overall teaching time and with the resources available to teachers and students. School authorities make decisions about the allocation of time and other resources. Schools and school authorities will be able to offer curriculum beyond that specified in the Australian Curriculum.
- h) Jurisdictions, systems and schools are able to implement the Australian Curriculum in ways that value teachers' professional knowledge, reflect local contexts and consider individual students' family, cultural and community backgrounds.
- i) Schools decide how best to deliver the curriculum and determine pedagogical and other delivery considerations that account for students' needs, interests and the school and community context.

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- j) The Australian Curriculum is aligned with the *Early Years Learning Framework* and builds on its key learning outcomes, namely: children have a strong sense of identity; children are connected with and contribute to their world; children have a strong sense of wellbeing; children are confident and involved learners; and children are effective communicators.
- k) For some learning areas, the Australian Curriculum is written with the expectation that they will be taught in each year of schooling from Foundation to Year 10. For other areas, the Australian Curriculum will describe an entitlement that students will have the opportunity to learn across Foundation to Year 8, as well as additional learning they may choose and/or schools may choose to provide in Years 9–10.
- l) The primary audience for the Australian Curriculum is teachers. The curriculum is written in plain and concise language while utilising the vocabulary appropriate for professional practitioners of each learning area. Consistency in terms of language and structure is used to support teachers in planning within and across learning areas.
- m) The Australian Curriculum reflects a strong and contemporary evidence base, which is related to learning, pedagogy and what works in professional practice, and has been benchmarked against international curricula.

Curriculum development process

23. The process for developing the Australian Curriculum from 2009 to 2016 was designed to generate broad engagement with, and discussion and feedback about, the shape and content of the Australian Curriculum.
24. It involved four interrelated phases: curriculum shaping, curriculum writing, implementation, and curriculum evaluation and review.
25. Curriculum shaping involved the development of a paper for each learning area to set out a broad outline of the proposed curriculum. Expert advice was sought, and an initial draft shape paper was released for wide public consultation. Following modification, a final shape paper was published on ACARA's website at <http://www.acara.edu.au>.
26. Curriculum writing involved teams of writers, supported by expert advisory groups and ACARA curriculum staff. The draft Australian Curriculum for each learning area was released for public consultation and was subsequently revised in light of the feedback. The writing stage culminated in publication of the Australian Curriculum for the learning area following the endorsement by the ACARA Board and all Australian education ministers.
27. Major features, processes and broad timeframes that informed the curriculum shaping and writing phases from 2009 are elaborated in the *Curriculum Development Process* paper (Version 6, 2012) and the *Curriculum Design Paper* (Version 3.1, 2012), found

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at <http://www.acara.edu.au>.

28. Implementation of the Australian Curriculum is the responsibility of Australian states and territories. The Australian Curriculum is published in an online environment. ACARA works with jurisdictional curriculum and school authorities and teachers to support their ongoing implementation and planning.
29. Evaluation and review of the Australian Curriculum are based on implementation feedback from ACARA's annual monitoring processes and agreed revision and refinement processes and timeframes. State and territory authorities implement curriculum changes in accordance with their established processes and procedures.
30. Monitoring and evaluation processes were developed for the Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum. These are elaborated in the *Monitoring and Evaluation of the Australian Curriculum* paper (November, 2013), found at <http://www.acara.edu.au>.
31. Annual monitoring reports on the Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum can be found at <http://www.acara.edu.au>.
32. The terms of reference, processes and timeframes for ACARA's review of the Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum in 2020-2021 can be found at <http://www.acara.edu.au>.

Dimensions of the Australian Curriculum

Scope of the Australian Curriculum

33. The *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (December 2008) set the scope of the Australian Curriculum by identifying the three dimensions to comprise the national curriculum:
- discipline-based learning areas;
 - general capabilities as essential 21st century skills; and
 - contemporary cross-curriculum priorities.
34. The *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration* (December 2019) confirms the need for the Australian Curriculum to encompass all three dimensions.
35. The learning areas and the disciplines from which they are drawn provide the foundation of learning in the Australian Curriculum because they reflect the way in which knowledge has traditionally been, and will continue to be, developed and organised. They continue to serve as the foundations for identifying the essential concepts and skills that foster the higher-order thinking demanded of young people to learn and thrive in today's world, and to shape the world of the future.
36. The three-dimensional design of the Australian Curriculum also recognises that learning does not fit neatly into a curriculum solely organised by learning areas or subjects that reflect the disciplines. In a world where knowledge itself is constantly growing and evolving, students require a set of knowledge, skills, behaviours, competencies and dispositions – that is, general capabilities – that are developed within and can apply across learning areas, equipping them to be lifelong learners able to operate with confidence in a complex, information-rich, globalized world. Students also need to be engaged in their learning through cross-curriculum priorities that support the Australian Curriculum to be a relevant, contemporary and engaging curriculum.

***Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration:
Delivering world-class curriculum and assessment***

Recognising that students have different strengths, needs and backgrounds, the Australian Curriculum sets clear and challenging learning goals, while having the flexibility to support students to progress in their learning regardless of their starting point.

The Australian Curriculum enables students to develop knowledge and understanding in the learning areas of English, Mathematics, Science, Humanities and Social Sciences, Health and Physical Education, Technologies, Languages, and the Arts. The learning areas in the curriculum support the development of deep knowledge within a discipline and allow for a depth of learning appropriate to students' phases of development. These learning areas, along with general capabilities, are critical to equip students with the knowledge, skills and confidence to actively contribute to society and Australia's economic prosperity.

Science, Technologies, Engineering and Mathematics make up the STEM learning areas. The STEM learning areas are a key national focus for school education in Australia and are critical to equip students to engage productively in a world of rapidly changing technology.

Students learn about Australia's rich Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. This cross-curriculum priority provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with the ability to see themselves, their identities and cultures reflected in the curriculum and allows all students to engage in reconciliation, respect and recognition of the world's oldest continuous living cultures.

Dimensions of the Australian Curriculum

The curriculum supports students to become responsible local and global members of the community in an interconnected world and to engage with complex ethical issues and concepts such as sustainability. As a foundation for further learning and adult life, the curriculum includes practical skills development in areas such as ICT, critical and creative thinking, intercultural understanding and problem solving. These skills support imagination, discovery, innovation, empathy and developing creative solutions to complex problems. They are central to contributing to Australia's knowledge-based economy.

Council of Australian Governments Education Council, Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration, December 2019, p.15

Learning areas in the Australian Curriculum

37. The Australian Curriculum identifies and organises the essential knowledge, understandings and skills that students should learn in eight learning areas:
- English
 - Mathematics
 - Science
 - Humanities and Social Science - comprising the subjects of History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship and Economics and Business
 - The Arts - comprising the subjects of Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music and Visual Arts
 - Languages - comprising the subjects of Arabic, Auslan, Chinese, French, German, Hindi, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Modern Greek, Spanish, Turkish and Vietnamese, as well as the Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages, and Framework for Classical Languages including curricula for Classical Greek and Latin
 - Health and Physical Education
 - Technologies - comprising the subjects of Design and Technologies, and Digital Technologies.
38. The *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration* recognises the importance of the learning areas for supporting the development of deep knowledge within a discipline and for allowing for a depth of learning appropriate to students' phases of development.
39. The Australian Curriculum is designed to ensure that students develop the knowledge and understandings on which the major disciplines are based. Each discipline offers a distinctive lens through which we interpret the data of experience, formulate hypotheses about the meaning of that experience, determine what counts as evidence and a good argument for evaluating competing hypotheses, and make judgments about truth, value and courses of action.
40. For each learning area, the Australian Curriculum identifies the essential knowledge, understandings and skills that should be developed in increasing depth across the years of schooling and that provide the opportunities for students to transfer and apply their increasingly deep understanding to a variety of meaningful contexts.

Dimensions of the Australian Curriculum

41. Teachers choose how best to introduce essential concepts and processes, and how to progressively deepen understanding of discipline-based content, including through cross-disciplinary learning that broadens and enriches each student's learning.
42. Teachers use the content descriptions of each learning area to plan for teaching and learning; and use the achievement standards to assess student learning. State and territory curriculum and school authorities determine how student learning is assessed and reported.

Australian Curriculum: learning areas

English

The Australian Curriculum: English provides students with the skills to read, view, speak, write, create, listen to and reflect on increasingly complex and sophisticated spoken, written and multimodal texts with accuracy, fluency and purpose. It recognises that Australia is a linguistically and culturally diverse country and assists students to understand how Standard Australian English works to create meaning. The Australian Curriculum: English allows students to engage imaginatively and critically with literature.

Mathematics

The Australian Curriculum: Mathematics provides opportunities for students to: develop mathematics and numeracy for everyday life, work and as citizens; acquire knowledge and skills for further study; make connections and apply mathematics to pose and solve problems in different contexts; and communicate and interpret reasoning and findings. The curriculum encompasses concepts, structure, skills and processes of number, algebra, function, logic, space, measurement, data, randomness, chance, variability, computation and algorithms. It enables students to understand and manage human and natural worlds by posing questions, conjecturing, hypothesising; estimating, approximating and calculating; abstracting, proving, refuting and inferring; applying, investigating, modelling and problem solving.

Science

The Australian Curriculum: Science provides students with an understanding of important science concepts and processes, the practices used to develop scientific knowledge, and an appreciation of science's contribution to our culture and society, and its applications in real life. The curriculum develops students' science inquiry skills and builds a foundation of knowledge of the biological, chemical, physical, earth and space sciences. Students gain the scientific knowledge needed to explain and predict phenomena, to apply that understanding to new situations and events, and to appreciate the dynamic nature of science knowledge.

Humanities and Social Sciences

The Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences provides students with the opportunity to study human behaviour and interaction in historical, social, cultural, environmental, economic and political contexts. Students explore their own identity, Australia's heritage and cultural diversity and Australia's identity, place and role as a nation in the world. It examines traditions and shared values. Students learn about how societies and economies operate; how they change over time; how people, places, ideas and events are perceived and connected; and how people exercise their responsibilities, participate in society and make informed decisions.

The Arts

The Australian Curriculum: The Arts provides opportunities for students to learn both as artist and audience and by making and responding. Students examine past, present and emerging arts practices across a range of cultures and places. Using cognitive, affective and sensory/kinaesthetic response to arts practices students revisit increasingly complex content, skills and processes. The Australian Curriculum: The Arts comprises five distinct yet interrelated subjects: Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music and Visual Arts. Each involves different yet related approaches to arts practices and reflects distinct bodies of knowledge, understanding and skills.

Dimensions of the Australian Curriculum

Languages

The Australian Curriculum: Languages provides students with the opportunity to learn one or more languages in addition to English. It recognises the features that languages share as well as the distinctiveness of specific languages. Students have the opportunity to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to communicate in the language, to understand the relationship between language and culture, and to understand themselves as communicators. The Australian Curriculum: Languages includes language-specific curricula for world languages, Auslan, a Framework for Classical Languages including Classical Greek and Latin, and a Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages.

Health and Physical Education

The Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education develops the skills, knowledge, and understanding to strengthen students' sense of self, and build and manage satisfying, respectful relationships. Students improve safety and wellbeing by building on personal and community strengths and assets. They navigate a range of health-related sources, services and organisations to critique and challenge assumptions and stereotypes. Through Health and Physical Education students acquire movement skills and understand concepts to confidently, competently and creatively participate in a range of physical activities.

Technologies

The Australian Curriculum: Technologies provides students with the opportunity to learn about and work with traditional, contemporary and emerging technologies, and considering sustainability. They apply knowledge, skills and processes to create innovative solutions, independently and collaboratively using design, computational and systems thinking. The Australian Curriculum: Technologies comprises two distinct but related subjects: Design and Technologies, and Digital Technologies. In Design and Technologies students generate ideas and produce designed solutions for authentic needs and opportunities for a range of contexts. In Digital Technologies students purposefully use computational thinking and information systems to define, design, implement and evaluate digital solutions.

General capabilities in the Australian Curriculum

43. The seven general capabilities in the Australian Curriculum are:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Information and communication technology (ICT) capability
- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability
- Ethical understanding
- Intercultural understanding.

44. The general capabilities comprise a mix of knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that are developed through learning area content and can be applied, where relevant, to help students become confident and creative individuals, successful lifelong learners, and active and informed members of the community.

45. Discipline-based content knowledge is important for the development of general capabilities. General capabilities are developed drawing on the content of the learning area curriculum, rather than as isolated generic skills. The teaching of learning area content will be strengthened by the application of relevant general capabilities, as will the development of the general capabilities through appropriate learning area contexts.

Dimensions of the Australian Curriculum

46. General capabilities are represented to different degrees in each of the learning areas. Some are essential to and best developed within specific learning areas; others can support learning in any learning area.
47. Literacy and numeracy are fundamental to all learning. While literacy and numeracy development is core to the curriculum in English and mathematics, literacy and numeracy skills are required and applied in all learning areas.
48. Critical and creative thinking skills are integral to the process of gaining knowledge, problem-solving and making informed judgments within the context of a particular learning area. ICT capability supports students to be successful learners. Both general capabilities are important to learning within all learning areas.
49. Personal and social capability, Ethical understanding and Intercultural understanding support students to develop ways of being, behaving and learning to live with others, and while primarily a focus for development in Health and physical education, HASS and Languages, can be applied in all learning areas.
50. The Australian Curriculum includes advice as to how the general capabilities can be developed through each learning area.
51. Continua have been developed for the general capabilities that describe the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that students, typically, will have developed at particular stages of schooling.
52. For literacy and numeracy, more detailed learning progressions have been developed to describe the learning pathway(s) along which students typically progress regardless of age or year level.
53. Teachers teach general capabilities to the extent that they are incorporated within the curriculum of each learning area. State and territory curriculum and school authorities determine whether and how student learning of the general capabilities will be separately assessed and reported.

Australian Curriculum: General capabilities

Literacy

Literacy is fundamental to a student's ability to learn at school and to engage productively in society. Literacy involves students listening to, reading, viewing speaking, writing and creating oral, print visual and digital texts and using and modifying language for different purposes in a range of contexts.

Numeracy

Numeracy is the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that students need to use mathematics in a wide range of situations. It involves students recognising and understanding the role of mathematics in the world and having the ability to use mathematical knowledge and skills purposefully.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) capability

ICT capability involves students developing knowledge skills and behaviours that enable them to responsibly use ICT tools associated with information access and management, information creation and presentation, problem-solving, decision-making, communication, and creative expression.

Dimensions of the Australian Curriculum

Critical and creative thinking

Critical and creative thinking involve generating and evaluating knowledge, clarifying concepts and ideas, seeking possibilities, considering alternatives and solving problems. Critical thinking is at the core of most intellectual activity that involves students in learning to recognise or develop an argument, use evidence in support of that argument, draw reasoned conclusions, and use information to solve problems. Creative thinking involves students in learning to generate and apply new ideas in specific contexts, seeing existing situations in a new way, identifying alternative explanations, and seeing or making new links that generate a positive outcome.

Personal and social capability

Personal and social capability involves students understanding themselves and others, and managing their relationships, lives, work and learning more effectively.

Ethical understanding

Ethical understanding involves students identifying and investigating the nature of ethical concepts, values and character traits, and understand how reasoning can assist ethical judgement in a variety of learning area contexts. Ethical understanding involves students building a strong personal and socially oriented ethical outlook.

Intercultural understanding

Intercultural understanding involves students learning to value their own cultures, languages and beliefs, and those of others. Intercultural understanding combines personal, interpersonal and social knowledge and skills.

Cross-curriculum priorities in the Australian Curriculum

54. The three cross-curriculum priorities in the Australian Curriculum are:
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures
 - Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia
 - Sustainability.
55. The cross-curriculum priorities support the Australian Curriculum to be a relevant, contemporary and engaging curriculum. These three priorities are not separate learning areas or subjects; they provide opportunities to enrich the curriculum content of the learning areas, where appropriate, allowing students to engage with and better understand their world.
56. Each of these priorities has a set of organising ideas to assist teachers to plan for and enhance student learning and allow for flexible implementation.
57. Cross-curriculum priorities are represented in ways appropriate to the learning areas. The Australian Curriculum provides advice as to how the priorities can be addressed in each learning area.

Australian Curriculum: Cross-curriculum priorities

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures priority provides opportunities for all students to deepen their knowledge of Australia by engaging with the world's oldest continuous living cultures in a range of learning area contexts.

Dimensions of the Australian Curriculum

Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia

The Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia priority provides a regional context across the learning areas. It reflects Australia's engagement with Asia in social, cultural, political and economic spheres.

Sustainability

The Sustainability priority provides opportunities for students to develop the knowledge, skills, values and world views necessary to contribute to sustainable ways of living.

The Australian Curriculum F-10

Structural elements of the Australian Curriculum F-10

58. The Australian Curriculum sets out what young people should be taught through the specification of *content descriptions* in the learning areas and an expectation of the quality of their learning described through *achievement standards*.
59. Content descriptions in each learning area specify the essential knowledge, understandings and skills that teachers are to teach, and young people are expected to learn across the years of schooling.
60. Content descriptions provide the opportunity for rigorous study, with an emphasis on depth rather than breadth.
61. Content descriptions provide the basis for the learning described in the achievement standards.
62. Content descriptions are accompanied by *content elaborations* that provide optional support material for teachers.
63. Content elaborations are not essential content or indicators of achievement. They can assist teachers by providing examples to illustrate the content descriptions. Many content elaborations illustrate ways to address the cross-curriculum priorities and/or develop the general capabilities within the context of the relevant learning area.
64. Achievement standards describe what students are typically able to understand and to be able to do. They describe expected achievement at each year level or band of years. Across Foundation to Year 10, the set of achievement standards describe a broad sequence of learning.
65. The sequence of achievement standards within each learning area emphasises the depth of conceptual understanding, the sophistication of skills and the ability to apply essential knowledge expected of students.
66. Achievement standards are accompanied by sets of *annotated student work samples*, as support material, to assist teachers to make judgments about the extent to which each achievement standard has been met.
67. For each learning area, the scope described by content descriptions and the sequence described by achievement standards ensures that learning is appropriately ordered, and unnecessary repetition is avoided, while recognising the need to revisit core concepts.
68. Reporting to parents provides information about a student's demonstration of learning in relation to the achievement standards. The use of Australian Curriculum achievement standards as a common reference point for reporting to parents contributes to national consistency in reporting.
69. State and territory curriculum and school authorities and individual schools determine, in consultation with parents and communities, and with regard to agreed national requirements, the style and format of reporting that best meets local needs and circumstances, including provision of any additional elements of student reports.

The Australian Curriculum F-10

The curriculum across the F-10 years of schooling

70. The Australian Curriculum content for any learning area should be able to be taught within the indicative time allocation that ACARA set for its curriculum writers, as outlined in the *Curriculum Design Paper* (Version 3.1).
71. For any year of schooling, Foundation to Year 10, the Australian Curriculum is written with the intention that it should not take up more than 80 per cent of the total teaching time available in schools, with this proportion peaking in Years 7 and 8, and reducing significantly in Years 9 and 10 as core expectations are reduced.
72. The remaining 20 per cent of total teaching time provides schools and systems with the flexibility to include other content and activities. It is also recognised that some activities initiated by schools for their own purposes can be utilised in delivering important outcomes of the Australian Curriculum.
73. For some learning areas, such as English and Mathematics, the Australian Curriculum is written with the intention that it is taught to all students in each year of schooling from F–10, with decisions to be made subsequently about further learning in the senior secondary years.
74. For other learning areas, the Australian Curriculum is written for Foundation to Year 10, but with the intention that it is taught to all students across Foundation to Year 8, with education authorities and schools to make decisions about further learning in these areas in Years 9 and 10, and then for senior secondary years.
75. Learning area content is described in year levels or bands of year levels to reflect the frequency with which a learning area is expected to be taught to all students and to provide flexibility for schools in how they deliver the curriculum.
76. The relative emphasis given to each of the eight learning areas varies across the stages of schooling according to factors such as:
- making literacy and numeracy priority areas in the early to lower primary years (Foundation to Year 4)
 - increasing emphasis on all eight learning areas in the upper primary years and in the lower years of secondary (Years 5 to 8)
 - creating greater opportunities for students to choose learning pathways that build individual needs and interests in Years 9 and 10.
77. In the early years of schooling, priority is given to literacy and numeracy development as the foundations on which further learning is built. These foundations are built primarily in English and Mathematics, however, both literacy and numeracy must be reinforced and strengthened in appropriate contexts across all learning areas. Priority is also given to movement skills development, participation in physical activity and the development of safe and healthy personal practices. Equally, all students in these early years will have the opportunity to develop their sensory, cognitive, cultural and affective appreciation of the world around them through exploratory and creative learning.
78. In the upper primary years and the first years of lower secondary schooling, the Australian Curriculum continues to prioritise English (and literacy development) and

The Australian Curriculum F-10

Mathematics (and numeracy development), along with the opportunity for a broad education drawing from each of the other learning areas. The Australian Curriculum in these years provides breadth of learning across the learning areas, while also providing opportunities for students to deepen their learning in particular areas according to their interests and needs.

79. The Australian Curriculum in Years 9 and 10 recognises that many students may commence senior secondary pathways and programs, including vocational learning, in these years. The curriculum is designed to provide increased opportunities for students to make choices about learning pathways and to deepen their understanding in each learning area. The curriculum is based on the assumption that school and/or curriculum authorities will provide learning opportunities in English, Mathematics, Science, History, and Health and Physical Education for all students and will also provide learning opportunities from other learning areas and in vocational and applied learning. In these years, there is flexibility for students to undertake more specialised learning pathways that ensure all students are fully engaged and prepared to continue learning into the senior years.

The diversity of learners

80. All students are entitled to rigorous, relevant and engaging learning programs that address their individual learning needs and are drawn from the Australian Curriculum. The curriculum is based on the assumptions that each student can learn and the needs of each student are met. It enables high expectations to be set for each student.
81. The three-dimensional design of the Australian Curriculum provides teachers with flexibility to cater for the diverse needs of students across Australia and to personalise their learning.
82. The Australian Curriculum supports teachers to:
- use content to identify key concepts or essential learning that align with students' age and/or year level
 - take into account the range of students' abilities, current levels of learning, strengths, goals and interests
 - assess students' progress in relation to achievement standards
 - evaluate actions taken to personalise student learning.
83. The Australian Curriculum recognises that students with additional needs can achieve educational standards commensurate with their peers when the necessary adjustments are made to the way in which they are taught and to the means through which they demonstrate their learning.
84. Advice is published to support teachers to address the diversity of students' learning needs.

Senior secondary Australian Curriculum

Content of the senior secondary Australian Curriculum

85. The senior secondary curriculum provides students with increased opportunities to make choices about pathways through school and beyond. These choices are informed by previous success and enjoyment, future options for training, learning or employment, and the setting in which the learning is to occur. The senior school curriculum offers more opportunities for specialisation in learning, including within the regular school program and through accredited vocational education and training.
86. The senior secondary Australian Curriculum is written for subjects as agreed to nationally. Senior secondary Australian Curriculum has been developed in the following learning areas:
- English – for the subjects of English, English as an Additional Language or Dialect, Essential English and Literature
 - Mathematics – for the subjects of Essential Mathematics, General Mathematics, Mathematical Methods and Specialist Mathematics
 - Science – for the subjects of Biology, Chemistry, Earth and Environmental Science and Physics
 - Humanities and Social Sciences – for the subjects of Ancient History, Modern History and Geography.
87. The senior secondary Australian Curriculum comprises rationale and aims, learning outcomes, content descriptions and achievement standards.
88. In the senior secondary Australian Curriculum, content descriptions detail the knowledge, understandings and skills to be taught and learned within a given subject, including the Australian Curriculum general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities that naturally align with the subject.
89. In the senior secondary Australian Curriculum, achievement standards refer to the quality of learning (the depth of understanding, extent of knowledge and sophistication of skill) demonstrated by students within a given subject. The senior secondary achievement standards are subject-specific and align with the major dimensions of learning as described in the learning outcomes and detailed in the content for the subject. Typically, these dimensions are categorised into knowledge and understanding, and skills and written as five levels of achievement.
90. State and territory curriculum, assessment and certification authorities are responsible for the structure and organisation of their senior secondary courses and will determine how they integrate the Australian Curriculum content and achievement standards into their courses. They will determine the assessment and certification specifications for their courses that use the Australian Curriculum content and achievement standards and any additional information, guidelines and rules to satisfy local requirements.

Monitoring and review of the Australian Curriculum

Maintaining a world-class Australian Curriculum

91. The Australian Curriculum provides a world-class curriculum. The Australian Curriculum:
 - has been subject to extensive and sustained consultation, monitoring and evaluation during its development and implementation
 - has been benchmarked against curricula of leading nations during the development process and will continue to be benchmarked during any review processes.
92. The quality of the Australian Curriculum is maintained through ongoing monitoring, review and evaluation processes that take into account: evaluation data; monitoring feedback; and national and international benchmarking and research findings.
93. Evaluation and review of the Australian Curriculum are based on implementation feedback from ACARA's annual monitoring processes and agreed revision and refinement processes and timeframes.
94. Monitoring and evaluation processes have been applied to the Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum.
95. Revisions to the Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum as a result of any evaluation and review processes may inform revisions to the senior secondary Australian Curriculum. State and territory curriculum, assessment and certification authorities are responsible for the structure and organisation of their senior secondary courses and will determine processes for the monitoring and evaluation of their courses.
96. The Australian Curriculum is a dynamic curriculum and is published online, via the website <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au>, which is accessible to all members of the Australian community.
97. The online publication of the Australian Curriculum assists ongoing monitoring and review via data analytics, as well as providing the opportunity to efficiently update curriculum content and support materials.
98. Changes approved by the Education Council to the content of the Australian Curriculum are denoted by a change to the 'Version' number. Other changes and additions are denoted by a change to the nominal digit following the version number.

Monitoring the Australian Curriculum

99. Monitoring refers to ACARA's identification and collating of feedback about the effectiveness of the Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum and the public reporting of these findings each year following consideration by the ACARA Board.
100. As part of the annual monitoring process education authorities are invited by ACARA to contribute advice about the effectiveness of the Australian Curriculum in its implementation by schools.
101. Annual monitoring of the Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum has occurred

Monitoring and review of the Australian Curriculum

since 2015. Annual reports can be found at <http://www.acara.edu.au>.

102. Findings from annual monitoring processes may identify editorial corrections or minor updates required to the content of the Australian Curriculum, or more substantive issues that may warrant further consideration through supplementary review or evaluation processes.

Reviewing the Australian Curriculum

103. The Australian Curriculum was externally reviewed in 2014 and revisions were made to the content and presentation of the Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum (version 7.5 published in 2015).

104. A 2015 Australian Government review of ACARA recommended that ACARA undertake a six-year cycle of review of the Australian Curriculum.

105. In 2020, Education Council tasked ACARA to undertake the first cycle of review of the Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum, to ensure it is still meeting the needs of students and providing clear guidance for teachers. The review is to be completed by 2022.

106. The aim of the review is to improve the Australian Curriculum F-10 by refining, realigning and decluttering the content of the curriculum within its existing structure and underpinned by the education goals of the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration* (2019). Specifically, the review will:

- a) refine and reduce the amount of content across all eight learning areas of the Australian Curriculum F-10, with a priority on the primary years, to focus on essential content or core concepts
- b) improve the quality of content descriptions and achievement standards by removing ambiguity and unnecessary duplication, and ensuring consistency and clarity of language and cognitive demand
- c) rationalise and improve content elaborations, ensuring they are fit for purpose and they suggest to teachers the most authentic ways to treat general capabilities and cross curriculum priorities when teaching the learning area content
- d) improve the digital presentation of the Australian Curriculum in line with agreed content changes and user experience requirements.

107. The terms of reference, processes and timeframes for ACARA's review of the Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum in 2020-2021 are found at <http://www.acara.edu.au>.