

The Senior Secondary Australian Curriculum

What is the focus of the Senior Secondary Australian Curriculum?

The Australian Curriculum is being developed from Foundation to Year 12. The curriculum for the senior secondary years will provide 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 secondary curriculum will offer more opportunities for specialisation in learning, including within the regular school program and through accredited vocational education and training.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) has developed draft content for the senior secondary English, mathematics, science and history 'courses', listed below.

Subject	Course
English	Essential English
	English as an Additional Language
	English
	Literature
Mathematics	Essential Mathematics
	General Mathematics
	Mathematical Methods
	Specialist Mathematics
Science	Physics
	Chemistry
	Biology
	Earth and Environmental Science
History	Ancient History
	Modern History

While ACARA will develop Australian Curriculum for the senior secondary years across a range of learning areas, states and territories will continue to offer their own subjects and courses that do not overlap significantly with the Australian Curriculum. They will also determine assessment, certification and quality assurance requirements of Australian Curriculum courses.

ACARA is working with state and territory curriculum, assessment and certification authorities on the development of senior secondary courses

Initial consultation on the draft senior secondary curriculum content

The draft senior secondary Australian Curriculum for English, Mathematics, Science and History was released on 14 May 2010 for national public consultation until 30 July 2010.

All the consultation feedback including online data, national forum feedback and other responses was analysed by Insync Surveys and the findings incorporated in their final report.

Overall the findings have suggested that:

- in terms of curriculum content, there was a need for greater clarity and explicitness of what was to be taught and to what depth; that this would assist to ensure the curriculum was manageable in the time
- the overall purpose and rationale of both the courses and the units within each course needed to be clearer

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- the lack of achievement standards concerned many respondents. Once achievement standards become clearer, concerns about the depth of inquiry required may abate
- many concerns were expressed about how the draft senior secondary Australian Curriculum will be implemented; chief among these are concerns about teacher training, resourcing and changes to the structure of the school year that may be required in various jurisdictions.

Senior secondary curriculum revision and development of achievement standards

In response to the initial consultation feedback, work has begun on revising the curriculum content for english, mathematics, science and history courses. This includes the development of subject-specific achievement standards. These describe expected learning at each unit and a range of levels of achievement expected of students studying each pair of units (units 1 and 2; and units 3 and 4). They make no assumptions about methods of assessment and will allow flexibility for teachers, schools and jurisdictions to determine the particular assessment methods to be used for informing judgments about student learning.

The revision work will take place for the remainder of 2011 and a second round of consultation is planned between February and April 2012 on curriculum content and achievement standards, focusing on: the structure of each course including its aims, rationale and organisation; the appropriateness and coherence of the units for each course; the appropriateness and

clarity of the draft senior secondary content; and the appropriateness and clarity of the draft achievement standards.

The senior secondary timelines for english, mathematics, science and history are based on the assumption that the Australian Curriculum in these areas should be ready for Ministerial endorsement by October 2012 and available for implementation from 2014, building on the implementation of and learning from the Foundation to Year 10 curriculum in these areas. This timeline provides for the curriculum to be available for one year prior to implementation to allow for implementation and professional learning, planning and support. An implementation timeline is yet to be determined for senior secondary curriculum.