

A curriculum for all young Australians

What is the Australian Curriculum?

The Australian Curriculum sets out what all young Australians are to be taught, and the expected quality of that learning as they progress through schooling. At the same time, it provides flexibility for teachers and schools to build on student learning and interest.

In 2008, the Australian education ministers agreed that a national curriculum would play a key role in delivering quality education and committed to the development of a Foundation to Year 12 national curriculum.

The Australian Curriculum is being developed initially in the areas of English, mathematics, science and history, followed by geography, the arts and languages and the remaining learning areas focusing on economics and business, civics and citizenship, health and physical education, design and the technologies.

Why have an Australian Curriculum?

An Australian Curriculum in the 21st century needs to acknowledge the changing ways in which young people will learn and the challenges that will continue to shape their learning in the future.

Education plays a critical role in shaping the lives of the nation's citizens and to maintaining Australia's productivity and quality of life. To play this role effectively, the intellectual, personal, social and educational needs of young Australians must be addressed at a time when ideas about the goals of education are changing and will continue to evolve.

Australia's education ministers have identified contemporary views of education over the period 1989-2008 and documented those most recently in the 2008 *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*. The Melbourne Declaration commits to supporting all young Australians to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens, and promotes equity and excellence in education.

Developing an Australian Curriculum means that:

1. School and curriculum authorities can collaborate to ensure high quality teaching and learning materials are available for all schools.
2. Greater attention can be devoted to equipping young Australians with those skills, knowledge and capabilities necessary to enable them to effectively engage with and prosper in society, compete in a globalised world and thrive in the information-rich workplaces of the future.
3. There will be greater consistency for the country's increasingly mobile student and teacher population.

What should all young Australians learn?

The Australian Curriculum focuses on an entitlement for all students while acknowledging that the needs and interests of students vary. As a result, the curriculum sets out what is expected for all students to learn as well as articulating additional learning options.

The first four areas of the Australian Curriculum have been written with the intention that they are taught to all students in each year of schooling from Foundation to Year 10. Decisions about the structure of the remaining areas will be the subject of consultation.

It is intended that jurisdictions, systems and schools will be able to implement the Australian Curriculum in ways that value teachers' professional knowledge, reflect the local contexts and take into account the individual's family, culture and community background.