

AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

Frequently asked questions

Implementation of the *Australian Curriculum* in the ACT

What is the *Australian Curriculum*?

The [Australian Curriculum](#) sets out what all Australian states and territories have agreed that young people should be taught through specific curriculum content and the learning expected at points in their schooling through achievement standards.

The *Australian Curriculum* has been developed through strong and committed collaboration between the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) and curriculum specialists from all states and territories representing public and private education sectors. Extensive collaboration will continue through the years of implementation of the full *Australian Curriculum*.

The development of the *Australian Curriculum* was guided by the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, adopted by the council of state and territory education ministers in December 2008.

The *Australian Curriculum* describes a learning entitlement for each Australian student that provides a foundation for successful, lifelong learning and participation in the Australian community. It acknowledges that the needs and interests of students will vary, and that schools and teachers will plan from the curriculum in ways that respond to those needs and interests.

The *Australian Curriculum* acknowledges the changing ways in which young people learn and the challenges that will continue to shape their learning in the future.

How will the *Australian Curriculum* be implemented in schools in the ACT?

An ACT Curriculum Taskforce has planned and is overseeing the implementation of the *Australian Curriculum* in the ACT since the national release of the first four curricula in English, Mathematics, Science and History at the end of 2010. All ACT schools are implementing these four curriculum areas and are ready to report on them in 2013.

All ACT schools are required to provide students with opportunities to access and engage with knowledge and skills outlined in the *Australian Curriculum* in order to progress their learning. Units of work using the curriculum content are developed within schools to reflect the context of individual schools and students. Student progress at each year level is referenced using the Achievement Standard for their year level.

Changes for the *Australian Curriculum* in the ACT

What is the change from what students have been learning under the ACT Curriculum?

Every Chance to Learn and the *Australian Curriculum* have similar guiding principles and beliefs, for example, that every student can learn, and that curriculum should be inclusive and equitable. In the introduction to *Every Chance to Learn*, there are statements about providing students with knowledge, understandings and skills that will allow them to be active, effective and responsible participants in society and prepare them to take part in further education, training and work in the 21st century. These and other statements of intent in *Every Chance to Learn* correlate strongly with those developed in learning areas in the *Australian Curriculum*.

A Bridging Document for ACT Schools has been produced and provided to schools to support the initial transition from *Every Chance to Learn* to the *Australian Curriculum* for the phase one learning areas and there are many similarities between the two frameworks.

The *Australian Curriculum* provides a suggested scope and sequence for student learning each year. However, schools are responsible for deciding how they will organise the curriculum to maximise opportunities for students to access content and skills, and ensure that students do not repeat subject material within year levels.

Every Chance to Learn will continue to be used as the framework in the ACT for learning areas not yet released by ACARA.

Once the full F – 10 curriculum is implemented across Australia, students will be assured of receiving a common, sequenced, and comprehensive curriculum as the basis of learning nationally.

What is the real educational benefit of this change for students?

Increasingly, in a world where knowledge itself is constantly growing and evolving, students need to develop a set of knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions across key learning area to equip them to be lifelong learners able to operate with confidence in a complex, information-rich, globalised world.

The Australian Curriculum is designed to respond to this imperative and provides a world-class curriculum which:

- ✓ has been benchmarked against curricula of leading nations
- ✓ sets challenging standards for each student
- ✓ pursues deep learning
- ✓ includes a set of seven General Capabilities that allow students to learn across disciplines, to develop and build new expertise, as well as function effectively in the communities and workplaces of the 21st century

Once the F – 10 curriculum is fully implemented across Australia, students will be assured of receiving a common, sequenced, and comprehensive curriculum as the basis of learning. All students, regardless of whether they live in an urban or rural setting, or in a large or small state or territory, will have access to a well-resourced, common, world-class curriculum designed to provide them with the knowledge and skills needed for success in the twenty first century.

What are the core subject areas in the *Australian Curriculum*?

Schools are expected to provide learning opportunities in English, mathematics, science, history, and health and physical education for all students from F - 10.

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 years;
- increasing emphasis on all eight learning areas in the upper primary years and in years 7–8; and
- creating greater opportunities for students to choose learning pathways that build individual needs and interests in secondary schooling.

Does the change in curriculum impact on the time teachers spend in the classroom?

Contact hours, that is the time teachers' spend in the classroom, is a jurisdictional responsibility and governed by state and territory legislation and Enterprise Agreements. The Australian Curriculum details learning experiences for all students but does specify contact hours for any given learning area.

Schools and teachers within their normal responsibilities will continue to plan and organise the curriculum to best address the learning needs of individual students.

What support is available to students in moving over to the *Australian Curriculum*?

The gradual implementation of the *Australian Curriculum* has been designed to minimise the impact of changes on students and to help ensure that a curriculum of high quality continues to be provided.

The *Australian Curriculum* has been developed at a national level, in consultation with each state and territory. The release of the curriculum is being managed in three phases. In each phase consultation is undertaken with all stakeholders. All stakeholders including schools and parents are encouraged to participate in the consultation process.

What are the implications if a child moves between schools once the *Australian Curriculum* has been widely implemented?

All states and territories have committed to full implementation of the Phase 1 subjects (English, Mathematics, Science and History) in Foundation to year 10 by 2015. Most states and territories have also indicated that they will have implemented *Australian Curriculum* in Phase 2 and 3 subjects by 2016, however, these dates may change subject to ACARA's final curricula release dates.

When fully implemented, the *Australian Curriculum* will form the basis of all teaching and assessment in Australia. This means that, students will be taught the same content and assessed using the same standards as other students in the same year level in every other school in Australia that has implemented the curriculum.

Adopting a common Australian curriculum and assessment framework has many benefits, some of which include:

- parents and students can expect that students will learn the same important understandings and skills regardless of where they live in Australia,
- teachers across Australia will be using the same standards and work samples to determine grades and to report on student progress, and
- knowledge gaps caused when students currently move between schools will be minimised because students will continue to study within the nationally agreed framework.