

## 10 Facts about the Australian Curriculum

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### FACT 1

## THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM SETS HIGH STANDARDS

The Australian Curriculum sets the expectations for what all young Australians should be taught, regardless of where they live.



The Australian Curriculum sets out expectations for all young Australians as they progress from Foundation through to Year 10.

The content descriptions in each learning area outline what all students should be taught and the achievement standards for each year or band of years indicate the levels of achievement that are expected.

Schools and teachers are responsible for the organisation of learning and they will choose contexts for learning and plan learning in ways that respond to their student's needs and interests.

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### FACT 2

#### THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM PROVIDES GUIDANCE FOR TEACHERS



**The Australian Curriculum assumes that teachers and schools will make decisions about how they organise learning to account for the needs of their students.**

The content descriptions and achievement standards of the Australian Curriculum provide specification for what students are expected to learn. For example, the Australian Curriculum includes discipline-specific language (such as phonics in the English curriculum) and the shared language of the teaching profession (such as investigate and plan an inquiry). The Australian Curriculum includes hyperlinked glossaries of key terms.

The Australian Curriculum provides some guidance to teachers to assist them to understand and implement the curriculum. This is through additional information including content elaborations and student work samples

The Australian Curriculum does not specify how the content must be taught. The final decision lies with the teacher which means they can teach the curriculum in accordance with the requirements and needs of their school and individual students.

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### FACT 3

#### GENERAL CAPABILITIES

**General capabilities are a key dimension of the Australian Curriculum. They are the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that will assist students to live and work successfully in the twenty-first century.**



The seven general capabilities addressed 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

These general capabilities support young people to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens in a globalised world.

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### FACT 4

#### CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES

**As the curriculum was developed, three curriculum related matters received particular attention. This means that the Australian Curriculum is more relevant to students' lives.**



The three cross-curriculum priorities that are addressed in learning areas as appropriate are:

- Asia and Australia engagement with Asia
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures
- Sustainability.

These priorities are only incorporated into those learning areas and subjects where they naturally fit. They are most often found within the content elaborations, provided as support material or ideas for teachers.

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### FACT 5

### TOP TALENT USED FOR DEVELOPMENT

**The curriculum development process used by ACARA has been national and rigorous, drawing on the best national talent and expertise to develop the curriculum.**



The processes undertaken by ACARA to develop the national curriculum were rigorous and robust. Each learning area and subject took between two to three years to develop.

We draw on the best national talent and expertise to draft the curriculum and we consult extensively with teachers, principals, state and territory education authorities, professional education associations, business, industry, community groups, the general public and all governments, in an open and transparent process.

In each area ACARA has developed a shape paper and then the draft curriculum which are published online. A 10-12 week period provided the opportunity for any member of the public to view the draft curriculum and provide feedback.

Over the course of consultation for F–12 English, mathematics, science, history and geography, ACARA received almost 12,000 submissions from individuals, groups and organisations.

Over the course of the consultation period for the arts, health and physical education, technologies, languages, economics and business, and civics and citizenship, ACARA received nearly 5000 submissions.

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### FACT 6

### INTERNATIONAL BENCHMARKING

**As the Australian Curriculum for each learning area or subject is developed, it is compared to the curriculum of other top-performing jurisdictions, such as Ontario, Finland and Singapore.**



This is to ensure that the expectations we have for our students match those considered by many as the best in the world. The development of the Australian Curriculum has also been informed by national and international research.

In developing the Australian Curriculum, we seek feedback from experts in other countries, to ensure that the Australian Curriculum reflects not just best practice and high expectations in Australia, but also internationally.

For example, independent reviewers of curriculum in other top- performing jurisdictions such as Ontario, Finland and Singapore have critiqued our curriculum documents.

In turn, educators and education systems across the world seek to collaborate with us as they work towards improving their own curriculum.

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### FACT 7

#### TIME TO TEACH

**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% of the total teaching time available in schools.**



The Australian Curriculum sets out what young people should learn as they progress through school. It provides a foundation for the future learning, growth and active participation of young Australians in work and life.

When developing the curriculum, we understand that the needs and interests of students will vary and that it is teachers that will make the curriculum come alive for their students.

For any year of schooling, the Australian Curriculum is written with the intention that it should not take up more than 80% of the total teaching time available in schools.

States and territories set the requirements for implementation of the Australian Curriculum and determine priorities and the focus of support for their schools.

In time, we will be able to gauge the impact of the curriculum on student results in national and international assessments. The first national data will be available when NAPLAN is aligned with the Australian Curriculum. This is scheduled to take place in 2016.

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### FACT 8

#### IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM



**The Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum for English, Mathematics, and Science has steadily been introduced across states and territories since 2011.**

In December 2010, the Australian Curriculum was published for English, Mathematics, Science and History for Foundation to Year 10. Its implementation is underway across the country.

The Australian Curriculum for Geography was published in May 2013.

States and territories set the timeline for implementation of the Australian Curriculum for their schools. Information on implementation across states and territories can be found here <http://bit.ly/1yTbiqq>

Senior secondary subjects for English, mathematics, science, history and geography have been published and states and territories are either in planning or integration of these has commenced into local courses and implementation schedules.

In February 2014, F-10 Australian Curriculum for the Arts was published.

In February 2014, F-10 Australian Curriculum in technologies, health and physical education, economics and business and civics and citizenship was made available for use on the Australian Curriculum website, even though it is yet to be endorsed by the Education Council.

In July 2014, F-10 Australian Curriculum for languages – Chinese, Italian, French and Indonesian was also made available for use.

In October 2014 ACARA released the Australian Curriculum: Work Studies, a world-class, future-oriented curriculum for students in Years 9–10.

In March 2015 ACARA made seven language curricula available (Arabic, German, Japanese, Korean, Modern Greek, Spanish, and Vietnamese) on the Australian Curriculum website for Foundation – Year 10.

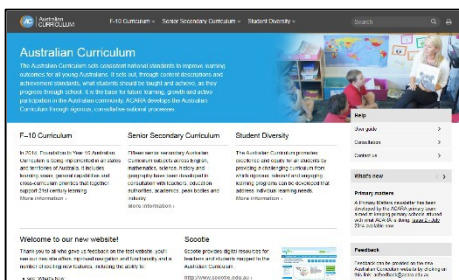
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### FACT 9

## AVAILABILITY AND WHERE IT CAN BE FOUND

The Australian Curriculum is available online for everyone.



The website includes both the curriculum standards (content descriptions and achievement standards) and advice and support materials (including year or band descriptions, content elaborations and work sample portfolios) that teachers may or may not choose to use.

It also includes information on supporting students' diverse learning needs, including students with disability, students for whom English is another language or dialect, and gifted and talented students.

The website includes both the curriculum standards (content descriptions and achievement standards) and support materials (including content elaborations and annotated work sample portfolios) that are optional for teachers to use.

Readers can apply filters to focus on certain parts of the curriculum, for example, all content descriptions for Year 3 learning areas' or, Years 2 to 4 mathematics.

The Australian Curriculum includes links to high quality teaching and learning resources via Scootle, the portal to access the national digital resource collection.

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### FACT 10

#### **CURRICULUM IS A WORK IN PROGRESS – MONITORING AND EVALUATION**



**All curriculum must evolve as our students' needs change and we learn more about quality teaching and learning.**

In 2014, ACARA has begun a monitoring and evaluation process to inform curriculum review and revision. This process balances the needs of schools for curriculum stability with the need for the curriculum to be able to evolve and change.

Following the Australian Government's review of the Australian Curriculum, the Education Council asked ACARA to make improvements to the Australian Curriculum with a focus on four themes: uncrowding the curriculum, rebalancing the curriculum, accessibility of the curriculum for students with disabilities, and increasing parent engagement with the curriculum.

ACARA has been working on actions to address these themes and manage perceptions of volume and manageability, especially in the primary years.

We have been collaborating with writers and a sample of practising teachers to propose improvements to the Australian Curriculum, and these were recently approved by the ACARA Board and will be provided to the Education Council in September 2015 for endorsement.

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