



K–10 Curriculum Framework

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1 Introduction

The K–10 Curriculum Framework establishes parameters for Board of Studies NSW curriculum for the compulsory years of schooling. It identifies the learning essential for all students and guides the evaluation and revision of individual syllabuses. The framework draws on an understanding of contemporary teaching and learning that emphasises outcomes and standards.

The primary focus of the K–10 Curriculum Framework is to ensure that the curriculum is coherent, challenging and allows for developmental continuity.

The framework promotes consistency and coherence across stages and between syllabuses. Application of the framework will assist the Board to avoid unnecessary overlap and overcrowding of the curriculum. The needs of students will be met by ensuring that syllabuses recognise students' previous learning and provide the basis for further learning.

Syllabuses developed through the framework will appropriately challenge students to meet high but realistic expectations as they move through their schooling guided by professional pedagogy. The syllabuses will clearly articulate standards that show what students are expected to know and be able to do at each stage from Kindergarten to Year 10. This provides the context for realistic assessment and meaningful reporting of student achievement.

This document provides the principal elements of the standards-based K–10 Curriculum Framework. These are:

- a clear understanding of the purpose for learning
- the broad learning outcomes essential for all students
- the principles guiding the development of Board curriculum requirements and syllabuses
- standards in the K–10 curriculum
- the process and criteria for the development of quality syllabuses
- curriculum requirements for Years K–10

The K–10 Curriculum Framework acknowledges that school communities and school systems have responsibility for the total schooling of their students, for the ways in which syllabuses are implemented and for those educational experiences that are provided beyond the Board's syllabuses. It enables teachers, schools and school authorities to decide how to maximise their students' learning. It does this by providing a flexible structure within which schools and teachers can develop programs, structures and teaching practices that meet their students' educational needs.

2 Purpose, Outcomes and Principles for Board of Studies K–10 Curriculum

2.1 A Purpose for Learning

The Board of Studies NSW K–10 syllabuses and curriculum requirements are designed to support quality teaching and learning and the pursuit of excellence by students. They provide educational opportunities that:

- engage and challenge all students to maximise their individual talents and capabilities for lifelong learning
- enable all students to develop positive self-concepts and their capacity to establish and maintain safe, healthy and rewarding lives
- prepare all students for effective and responsible participation in their society, taking account of moral, ethical and spiritual considerations
- encourage and enable all students to enjoy learning, and to be self-motivated, reflective, competent learners who will be able to take part in further study, work or training
- promote a fair and just society that values diversity
- promote continuity and coherence of learning and facilitate transition between primary and secondary schooling.

2.2 Broad Learning Outcomes

The knowledge, skills, understanding, values and attitudes essential for all students who are to succeed in and beyond their schooling are summarised by the broad learning outcomes set out below.

These outcomes will be achieved by the student through the learning opportunities provided in the mandatory curriculum, and through Board syllabuses. They are not assessed directly, but rather through measurement of the student's achievement of syllabus outcomes in particular key learning areas and subjects.

Each Board syllabus will describe how learning in the key learning area/subject will contribute to the purpose of the K–10 curriculum, and how the syllabus content and outcomes will contribute to the student's achievement of the broad learning outcomes.

Students will:

- understand, develop and communicate ideas and information
- access, analyse, evaluate and use information from a variety of sources
- work collaboratively with others to achieve individual and collective broad learning outcomes
- possess the knowledge and skills necessary to maintain a safe and healthy lifestyle
- understand and appreciate the physical, biological and technological world and make responsible and informed decisions about it
- understand and appreciate diverse social, cultural, linguistic, political, geographical and historical contexts and participate as active and informed citizens
- express themselves through creative activity and engage with the artistic, cultural and intellectual work of others
- understand and apply a variety of analytical, creative and management techniques to solve problems and to meet needs and opportunities
- understand, interpret and apply concepts related to numerical and spatial patterns, structures and relationships
- be productive, creative, discriminating and confident in the development and use of a range of technologies, understanding the implications of technology for society and the environment
- understand the work environment and have the knowledge, skills and understanding to evaluate potential career options and pathways
- develop a system of personal values based on their understanding of moral, ethical and spiritual matters.

2.3 Principles to Guide the Development and Implementation of Syllabuses

These principles guide the development of Board of Studies curriculum requirements and syllabuses. They can also guide the implementation of syllabuses by schools and school authorities.

1 All students must be able to engage in, take responsibility for, and continue their own learning. This principle recognises that:

- learning occurs at different rates and in different ways
- learning and teaching need to take place in a context of high expectations
- learners use their current understanding to discover, construct and incorporate new knowledge, skills and understanding
- strategies for learning are taught, learned and refined in a range of contexts
- students need sufficient time to explore, experiment and engage with the concepts and principles underpinning what they learn
- teachers' instruction and assessment influence students' learning and the learning process
- students can develop and use a range of strategies to actively monitor and evaluate their learning and their learning strategies
- frequent feedback from teachers enables students to map their progress relative to defined standards, and to gain insight into their own learning.

2 All students are entitled to a core of knowledge, skills, understanding and values. This principle recognises that:

- Board of Studies syllabuses clearly identify the essential knowledge, skills and understanding, values and attitudes that will make up the core
- essential knowledge, skills, understanding, values and attitudes enable students to respond positively to the opportunities and challenges of their rapidly changing world
- curriculum requirements and syllabuses enable students to acquire the essential knowledge, skills, understanding, values and attitudes, and to acquire additional knowledge, skills, understanding, values and attitudes in order to maximise their achievement
- the knowledge, skills, understanding, values and attitudes are organised within key learning areas and subjects, although it is possible for them to be delivered in other ways.

- 3 Explicit standards are established that allow recognition of student achievement and planning for further learning. This principle recognises that:**
- syllabus outcomes, indicators, content, stage statements, work samples and performance descriptions all contribute to an understanding of expected standards
 - realistic assessment of the achievement of standards provides information to improve teaching and learning and to set targets for improvement
 - providing meaningful feedback to students about their achievement against standards engages and challenges them in the learning process.
- 4 Education must be inclusive of all students attending schools in New South Wales. This principle assumes that:**
- the essential knowledge, skills, understanding, values and attitudes described in Board syllabuses will take into account the diverse needs of all students
 - the Board’s curriculum provides for equitable access, participation and outcomes for all students
 - the Board’s curriculum enables schools to provide programs that challenge and engage each student according to their backgrounds, needs and interests
 - the Board’s curriculum allows the full range of students to demonstrate achievement.
- 5 Teachers, schools and school authorities will decide how to maximise student learning. This principle assumes that:**
- school communities and teachers require flexibility to develop programs, structures and pedagogical practices that meet the educational needs of their students and which challenge and extend students
 - the assessment of student achievement will guide decisions on how learning can be improved.

3 The K–10 Standards Framework

A K–10 Standards Framework helps schools and teachers to plan for and then assess and report on the extent and quality of student learning in the compulsory years of schooling.

The K–10 Curriculum Framework provides for a K–10 standards framework.

3.1 What is the K–10 Standards Framework?

The Board’s syllabuses indicate the continuity and developmental sequence of learning in a subject. They state the aims and objectives of the course and link these to the syllabus outcomes and content. The knowledge, skills and understanding that students are expected to acquire at each stage of the subject constitute the syllabus standards.

Syllabus standards provide focus and direction for teaching and learning. They do this by highlighting essential knowledge, skills and understanding that directly contribute to the broad learning outcomes described in the curriculum framework. Syllabuses also describe additional knowledge, skills and understanding that will deepen or broaden students’ learning.

Performance standards describe levels of achievement. The descriptions are holistic in nature and are firmly based on syllabus outcomes and content. They are supported by work samples which enable teachers to recognise a particular level of achievement in practice, and how a standard might be demonstrated in response to a specific assessment task.

Assessment advice in Board syllabuses helps teachers to link the syllabus standards and performance standards. In this way, teaching, learning, assessment and reporting are clearly aligned.

Sample assessment tasks, work samples and performance descriptions will assist teachers to make overall judgements about each student’s level of performance. They will assist teachers to determine the level of achievement that each student has demonstrated.

3.2 Why is a standards framework necessary?

The K–10 Standards Framework will contribute to effective teaching and learning and will provide a common language for reporting.

3.2.1 Effective teaching and learning

Teachers will use clearly articulated standards to plan effectively and to integrate their teaching, learning and assessment. Students will know what is expected of them, helping them to reflect on their achievements and to set goals for further learning.

Teachers will be able to give students feedback based on standards that will help students gain insight into their learning and understanding, and enables them to map

their progress. Support materials show ways of giving meaningful information to students that will motivate and challenge them in their learning.

3.2.2 Common language for reporting

Standards establish a clear basis for reporting to parents and the wider community. A standards framework will enable schools to check that the necessary knowledge skills and understanding for successful future learning are being achieved. They may also choose to use the framework as a means to report to students and parents.

The standards framework will provide a common language for reporting. The language of standards will be jargon free. It will be as accessible as possible to all users, including students. A common language will provide schools with the basis for consistent and meaningful reporting when they communicate student achievement of standards to other teachers and to their communities.

Assessment advice in syllabuses will address the issues of consistency of teacher judgement and the comparability within and across schools about the achievement of standards. It will recommend realistic assessment strategies and will provide illustrations of student achievement of standards. Strategies will stress the value of on-balance professional judgement by teachers so that a consistent understanding will develop over time of what it means to achieve a standard.

3.2.3 Achieving standards

Decisions about what, when and how students learn will be driven by information gained from assessment and reporting of their achievement of standards, rather than relying solely on time spent.

The standards framework will make it easier to identify the standards that all students are expected to achieve by the end of the compulsory years of schooling. It will also make it easier to acknowledge students' achievement at the transition points between Years 6 and 7 and Years 10 and 11, maximising opportunities for continuity in learning.

Teachers will be able to set realistic yet challenging expectations for students as they progress through the compulsory years of schooling. Teachers will be able to identify levels of student achievement of the standards and adjust their time allocation or teaching methods accordingly. Students who achieve a standard ahead of other students will be encouraged and supported to work towards further achievement in some or all of their subjects. Other students may require more time or support to achieve the standard.

4 Providing Quality Syllabuses

4.1 The Board’s Syllabus Development Process

The Board's syllabus development process is based on principles of project management, and emphasises consultation and quality assurance. Syllabus development projects are designed in four phases.

1 Syllabus review

A review of the existing syllabus provision and a plan for its revision or development. For new syllabuses this phase will require development of a proposal for syllabus development.

2 Writing brief development

Development of a writing brief for the draft syllabus that takes account of the broad directions established during the syllabus review phase. The writing brief is disseminated widely for consultation to schools, to interested groups and to individuals.

3 Syllabus development

Development of a syllabus package as defined by the project plan. This phase includes a further period of extensive consultation.

4 Implementation

Implementation of a new or revised syllabus is conducted by schools. During the ‘life cycle’ of the syllabus the Board’s role is to collect data on the use of the syllabus.

This phase of the process leads, in turn, back to Phase 1.

To assist with monitoring and quality assurance, the Board establishes representative Board Curriculum Committees. These committees monitor the quality of material produced by project teams and ensure the integrity of the process as a whole. They report directly to the Board of Studies on whether the agreed processes have been followed; whether due attention has been given to the views identified during consultation; whether the syllabus design processes have been observed; and they advise on the quality of the syllabus package in relation to the original, approved writing brief.

Membership of Board Curriculum Committees includes representatives of key groups involved in education in New South Wales. They are appointed during the Syllabus Review Phase for the duration of a project.

4.2 Criteria for Approval of Board of Studies Syllabuses

All syllabuses for Kindergarten to Year 10 approved by the Board of Studies must meet the criteria established in this K–10 Curriculum Framework. This ensures that syllabuses for the compulsory years of schooling are relevant, contemporary and of the highest quality.

All syllabuses K–10 will be evaluated according to these criteria. As part of this evaluation, recommendations will be made to the Board of Studies about:

- whether there is justification for the continuation of the syllabus, and
- whether the syllabus requires revision in order to comply with the criteria.

When syllabuses are submitted to the Board of Studies for recommendation to the Minister, they will be accompanied by advice on how they meet the criteria.

Quality of K–10 syllabuses is assured through careful consideration of:

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| 1 the extent to which the syllabus meets the learning-centred principles in the K–10 Curriculum Framework | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>enabling all students to engage in, take responsibility for, and continue their own learning</i>• <i>establishing a core of knowledge, skills, understanding and values to which all students are entitled</i>• <i>establishing explicit standards that allow recognition of student achievement and planning for further learning</i>• <i>including all students attending schools in New South Wales</i>• <i>enabling teachers, schools and school authorities to decide how to maximise student learning</i> |
| 2 a clear rationale and statement of purpose | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>describing the nature of the learning area/subject and its relationship to the contemporary world and current practice</i>• <i>explaining how the syllabus contributes to the K–10 Curriculum Framework Purpose Statement and Broad Learning Outcomes</i> |
| 3 a review of national and international research and practice | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>accounting for recent developments in the learning area/subject</i>• <i>comparing contemporary national and international curriculum for the equivalent stage/s of schooling</i> |
| 4 its place in a K–12 continuum, including consideration of prior and subsequent learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>outlining knowledge, skills and understanding that prospective students already have</i>• <i>describing how prior learning will be built upon</i>• <i>indicating subsequent learning opportunities</i> |

- 5 the extent to which the aim, objectives, outcomes and content are linked and clearly expressed**
 - *illustrating how the objectives provide for the development and organisation of the outcomes and syllabus content*
 - *demonstrating that the syllabus outcomes and content are directly linked*
 - *providing a coherent explanation of the nature, scope and structure of the syllabus content*

- 6 what students will learn about and will learn to do in order to achieve the syllabus outcomes**
 - *clearly expressing the outcomes and content*
 - *ensuring that the outcomes and content at each stage are set at an appropriate standard*
 - *indicating content that is essential for all students of this learning area/subject*
 - *indicating content that is additional and will further broaden, extend and deepen student learning*
 - *incorporating relevant cross-curriculum content*
 - *ensuring that the outcomes and content are specific enough to measure and report on student achievement*
 - *ensuring that the essential outcomes and content can be realistically addressed in the indicative time*

- 7 ways in which student achievement of the syllabus outcomes can be assessed**
 - *using a standards-referenced approach*
 - *ensuring that assessment practices reflect the intentions of the learning area/subject*
 - *illustrating meaningful ways that student achievement can be measured*
 - *assisting reporting to teachers, students, parents and the wider community*

- 8 the relationship of the syllabus with the content of other syllabuses**
 - *identifying areas of equivalent content in other syllabuses and considering whether this overlap is reasonable*
 - *illustrating ways in which content of the syllabus complements content of other syllabuses*

- 9 actual or potential demand for the syllabus**
 - *providing current enrolment numbers*
 - *providing advice on likely future demand*

- 10 evidence that the syllabus can be taught within the time and resources reasonably expected to be available to schools**
 - *providing advice from teachers that the syllabus outcomes and content is appropriate for the indicative time allocation*
 - *describing the potential impact on school organisations and structures, such as time allocation, timetables, resourcing and staffing*
 - *advising on the availability of suitable resources*
 - *advising on the availability of suitably qualified teachers*

5 The Board of Studies Curriculum Requirements

The *Education Act 1990* (NSW) establishes minimum curriculum requirements for students attending New South Wales schools, and empowers the Board of Studies to establish guidelines for courses of study.

The Act also provides the basis for the Board of Studies to establish requirements for the award of the School Certificate.

School systems may prescribe additional requirements beyond the Board’s requirements.

5.1 Minimum Curriculum Requirements for Years K–6 and 7–10

The Education Act prescribes minimum curriculum requirements for Years K–6 and Years 7–10. In accordance with the Act, the Board of Studies develops minimum curriculum guidelines that provide additional description of the minimum curriculums.

School authorities determine whether schools will deliver curriculum that exceeds the minimum curriculum requirements.

The minimum curriculum requirements also apply to home education.

5.2 K–6 Syllabuses

The Board’s K–6 syllabuses will describe standards for Early Stage 1 and Stages 1 to 3.

The K–6 syllabuses will also provide advice on the number of hours of study that students would typically be expected to require to achieve the standards described in the syllabus.

5.3 School Certificate Requirements

5.3.1 Mandatory study Requirements

The Education Act describes key learning area/subject requirements for School Certificate candidates. These are listed below.

- (a) Courses of study in each of the eight key learning areas for secondary education are to be provided for each student.
- (b) Courses of study in the key learning areas of English, Mathematics, Science, and Human Society and its Environment are to be provided during each Year, but the courses of study in the other key learning areas need not be provided during each Year.
- (c) Courses of study in key learning areas are to be taught in accordance with a syllabus developed or endorsed by the Board and approved by the Minister.

Based on the Education Act requirements, the Board of Studies has determined that candidates for the School Certificate are required to study the following subjects:

- **English, in each of Years 7 to 10**
- **Mathematics, in each of Years 7 to 10**
- **Science, in each of Years 7 to 10**
- **Geography and /or History, in each of Years 7 to 10, with Australian Geography and Australian History studied in Years 9 and 10**
- **PDHPE, in each of Years 7 to 10**
- **Design and Technology**
- **Visual Arts**
- **Music**
- **Languages.**

Courses in each of these subjects will be based on Board of Studies syllabuses.

Schools delivering a School Certificate program can present other courses based on Board of Studies syllabuses or endorsed by the Board.

For English, Mathematics, Science, Geography, History and PDHPE, syllabuses will describe Stage 4 and Stage 5 standards. For Design and Technology, Visual Arts, Music, and Languages, the mandatory study requirement will be linked to Stage 4 standards, with elective study opportunities in these and other subjects linked to Stage 5 standards.

Using the standards framework, the Board of Studies will, for the School Certificate mandatory subjects, nominate the standards that all students will be expected to achieve by the end of Year 10.

5.3.2 Indicative hours

Board of Studies syllabuses will indicate the number of hours of study that students would typically need to achieve the standards described in the syllabus.

These indicative hours will provide the basis for timetabling and programming decisions. The Board acknowledges that some students may achieve the desired standard in fewer hours while some students may require additional time to achieve the standard.

The description of standards and the allocation of indicative hours provide the basis for system and school-level decision making about the allocation of time and the application of teaching programs.

5.3.3 Monitoring and reporting student achievement

The Board’s syllabuses and support materials establish a K–10 standards framework that provides a common basis and language for assessment and reporting student achievement to students, parents and other teachers.

School authorities and schools establish requirements and procedures for reporting student achievement to students and parents, and to other teachers.

5.3.4 Credentiaing student achievement in the School Certificate

The School Certificate will be awarded to all students who have fulfilled the School Certificate mandatory study requirements.

The performance standards achieved by students in courses undertaken during Years 9 and 10 will be reported as part of the School Certificate package.