

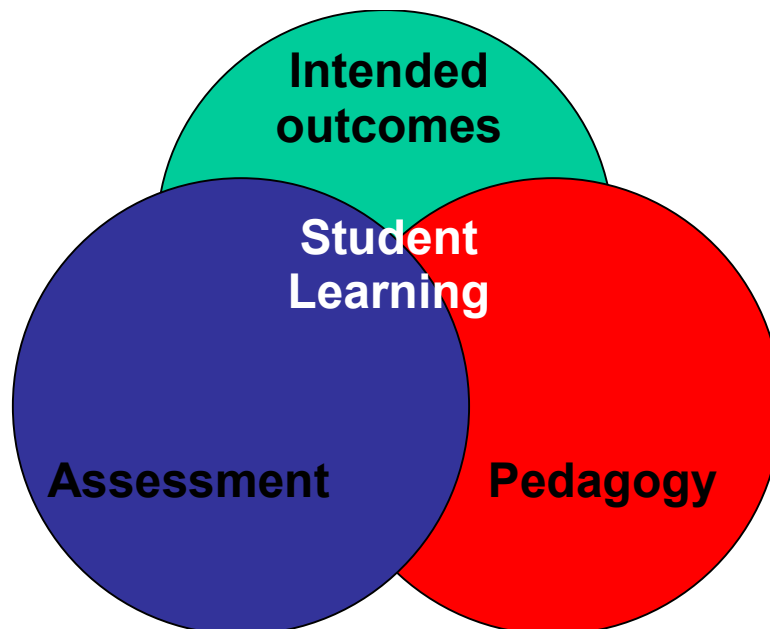
CONTEMPORARY TRANSITIONS

COURSE FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION

The Contemporary Transitions Course Framework provides the basis for the development and accreditation of a range of courses designed to develop life skills and employability skills from a cross-curriculum, community-based learning model.

Course Frameworks support a model of learning that integrates intended student outcomes, pedagogy and assessment. This model is underpinned by a set of beliefs and a set of learning principles.



Underpinning beliefs

- all students are able to learn
- learning is a partnership between students and teachers
- teachers are responsible for advancing student learning.

Learning principles

1. Learning builds on existing knowledge, understandings and skills.
(*Prior knowledge*)
2. When learning is organised around major concepts, principles and significant real world issues, within and across disciplines, it helps students make connections and build knowledge structures.
(*Deep knowledge and connectedness*)
3. Learning is facilitated when students actively monitor their own learning and consciously develop ways of organising and applying knowledge within and across contexts.
(*Metacognition*)
4. Learners' sense of self and motivation to learn affect learning.
(*Self-concept*)
5. Learning needs to take place in a context of high expectations.
(*High expectations*)
6. Learners learn in different ways and at different rates.
(*Individual differences*)
7. Different cultural environments, including the use of language, shape learners' understandings and the way they learn.
(*Socio-cultural effects*)
8. Learning is a social and collaborative function as well as an individual one.
(*Collaborative learning*)
9. Learning is strengthened when learning outcomes and criteria for judging learning are made explicit and when students receive frequent feedback on their progress.
(*Explicit expectations and feedback*)

RATIONALE

Courses written under the Contemporary Transitions Course Framework provide opportunities for students to gain the skills necessary to make a smooth transition to post school options and to participate in society in a meaningful and effective manner.

The challenges facing young people in their transition from school to post-school training, further education and employment have increased. As tertiary institutions and employers refine their recruiting procedures in response to the changing labour market, they are seeking a range of skills, competencies, and attributes, developed through community and work-related experiences.¹

¹ Community Studies Curriculum Statement 2003 SSABSA, Wayville SA

The Employability Skills Framework² that has recently been endorsed by all Australian Ministers of Education details a set of generic skills that include communication, team work, problem-solving, initiative and enterprise, planning and organising, self-management, learning and technology skills. Courses under this Framework will promote the development of these skills for all students, through active engagement in the community and workplace experiences.

The vocational education and training (VET) sector also recommends that wherever possible students should gain competencies that are accepted nationally. In addition to the development of generic workplace skills some courses under this framework may specifically deliver nationally recognised competencies that support students' transition to employment.

Learning experiences offered within courses under the Contemporary Transitions Framework encourage personal growth and involvement and provide opportunities for students to develop responsibility and achieve success through positive planning and action. Opportunities for students to gain and practice their skills in the community are an important element of such courses.

Contemporary Transitions courses include provision for students who require specific guidance and extended learning experiences to develop living skills and competence in problem solving. Courses under this framework are grounded in the Learning Principles (see introduction). They build on students' past experiences, present skills, knowledge and understanding and emphasise inclusivity, student negotiated curriculum and assessment, individualised learning agreements/strategies and flexible delivery.

These strategies encourage student engagement and provide relevant and significant educational experiences for students with a range of learning styles and life circumstances. These experiences support students' achievement in other school subjects and prepare students for their future lives as individuals, workers and community members. Students progress towards independence and self-reliance and understand that learning is a lifelong experience.

GOALS

Course Framework Goals focus on the essential things that students should know and be able to do as a result of studying any course in this area. They are **intended student outcomes**.

All courses based on this Course Framework should enable students to:

- set challenging personal goals and provide evidence of their progress towards achieving these goals
- make informed decisions and act on issues related to their lifestyle and post-school options
- understand their complex interrelationships with other people, their community, and the world in which they live
- be involved in, and apply their learning to actively engage in their community in some way
- demonstrate their literacy and numeracy skills, including ICT in everyday contexts

² <http://www.allenconsult.com.au/employabilityskills/>

- communicate appropriately in a range of situations
- use equipment and technology effectively in different situations.

GUIDE TO THE SELECTION OF CONTENT

Courses developed under this Framework will provide details of course content through the component units of the course. While This content will differ according to the particular course classification (A or M, including vocational programs), all content will be chosen to enable students to work towards the achievement of the common and agreed goals of the Framework.

Essential concepts and skills

Essential concepts that need to be addressed in any course under this Framework are:

- the individual in society
and/or
- the nature of work.

The related concepts of self, self and others and self in the world may be useful organisers for content in some courses under this framework.

Essential skills to be addressed in any course under this Framework are:

- information gathering and appraisal
- decision making
- taking action and applying learning
- literacy and communication skills.

Courses should also encompass the skills defined in the Employability Skills Framework and the Key Competencies which the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies encourages all developers to include in their courses. Employability skills should be applied in contexts that are related to both employment and the students lives, and community (including the school community).

Vocational Courses

Colleges with Registered Training Organization status (RTO) are eligible to develop and deliver vocational courses, based on relevant Training Packages, and this Framework.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KEY COMPETENCIES AND EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

Key Competencies

- Collecting and analysing information
- Communicating ideas and information
- Planning and organizing activities
- Working with others in teams
- Using mathematical ideas and techniques
- Solving problems
- Using technology

Employability Skills

- Communication
- Team Work
- Problem Solving
- Initiative and Enterprise
- Planning and Organising
- Self Management
- Learning
- Technology

It should be noted that Employability Skills and the Key Competencies may be approached differently in future. Course developers should check the latest Board policy in this area.

Across Curriculum Perspectives

Nine Across Curriculum Perspectives have been identified by the Department of Education and Training as important societal and educational issues which cross curriculum boundaries. The Board has adopted these perspectives for inclusion where possible in courses of study at senior secondary level. These perspectives are:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
- Australian Education
- Environment Education
- Gender Equity
- Information Access
- Language for Understanding
- Multicultural Education
- Special Needs Education
- Work Education

Details about the Across Curriculum Perspectives and advice on how to use them are available at <http://www.decs.act.gov.au/publicat/acpframeworks.htm>.

It should be noted that Across Curriculum Perspectives will be approached differently in future, following the review of P-10 curriculum, *Every Chance to Learn*. Course developers should check the latest Board policy in this area.

PEDAGOGY

Teaching strategies

Course developers are encouraged to outline teaching strategies that are grounded in the Learning Principles. Examples of teaching strategies that are particularly relevant and effective in the Contemporary Transitions Framework include:

- be varied, to cater for individual differences and learning styles
- include individualised learning agreements
- involve negotiation of elements of content and assessment within the parameters of the course document
- use community and workplace resources and learning opportunities as much as possible.

Strategies should help students:

- gain confidence through building new learning on what they already know and can do
- connect their personal worlds with their experiences at school, in the community and in workplaces
- understand their own strengths and weaknesses and how they learn most effectively
- take responsibility through planning and action
- develop practical skills through community and work-related experiences
- increase their competence in the application of technologies
- work effectively with others.

Teaching strategies that are particularly effective in courses developed under this Framework include:

- planning activities – process of planning, implementing and evaluating negotiated activities
- breaking down learning into manageable steps
- explicit (clear and concise) instructions and examples
- questioning and reinforcement of skills and knowledge
- use of learning technologies
- regular reviews to consolidate learning
- formative assessment and frequent feedback
- reflection on effectiveness of activities.

ASSESSMENT

The purpose of including assessment task types (with examples of tasks) and assessment criteria in Course Frameworks is to provide a common and agreed basis for the collection of evidence of student achievement. This collection of evidence enables a comparison of achievement within and across colleges, through moderation processes. This enables valid, fair and equitable reporting of student achievement on the Year 12 Certificate.

Assessment tasks elicit responses that demonstrate the degree to which students have achieved the goals of a unit (and the course as a whole).

Assessment Task Types (with **weightings**) group assessment tasks in ways that reflect agreed shared practice in the subject area and facilitate the comparison of student work across different assessment tasks.

Assessment Criteria (the dimensions of quality that teachers look for in evaluating student work) provide a common and agreed basis for judgement of performance against unit and course goals, within and across colleges. Over a course, teachers use all of these criteria to assess students' performance, but do not necessarily use all criteria on each task. Assessment criteria are to be used holistically on a given task and in determining the unit grade.

Assessment Rubrics draw on the general course framework criteria to develop assessment criteria for a task type and a continuum, which indicates levels of student performance against each criterion.

Assessment Task Types

Learning Record	Assignments/ Projects	Fieldwork/Work Experience	Interactive tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • diary (journal) • evidence portfolio • tests • learning/contract agreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leaflets • models • posters • videos • tapes • reports • creative writing • oral presentation • panel presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • research • data collection • work experience • observations • community visits, consultations • community involvement • community learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discussions • recording feedback • presentations • role play • group work • structured interview • panel presentation
15-40%	15-40%	15-40%	15-40%

The Assessment Task Types provide flexibility to meet individual student needs. Teacher are also referred to the BSSS publication *Equitable Assessment and Special Consideration in Assessment in Years 11 and 12*.

(<http://www.decs.act.gov.au/bsss/Publications/teachers.pdf>)

The Board recommends 4-6 summative assessment tasks across a standard unit (1.0) and 2- 3 assessment tasks for a half standard unit (0.5). A minimum of 1 item should be taken from each of the assessment task types. Items from each column could be combined into a major project. Formative assessment and feedback should be used as milestones towards summative assessment tasks.

Assessment Criteria

Students will be assessed on the degree to which they demonstrate:

Information gathering and appraisal

For example:

- identification of information sources
- accuracy and relevance in information gathering
- integration and synthesis of information gathered.

Goal-setting and decision-making

For example:

- ability to identify appropriate goals and monitor own progress
- use of appropriate decision-making strategies
- recognition of a number of possible actions in any situation
- understanding of different points of view
- understanding of consequences
- choice of appropriate action.

Application and action

For example:

- implementation of action
- effective expression of choices and opinions, in the school and wider community
- effective decisions in the school and wider community
- effective justification of choices, decisions and opinions in the school and wider community.

Workplace skills

For example:

- application of employability skills
- application of learning outcomes to a particular industry

Literacy, numeracy and communication skills

For example:

- understanding of purpose and meaning of a range of written, aural and multi-modal material, including online material
- appropriate choice of media to communicate ideas and information
- communication appropriate to the chosen audience and context.

Relating Assessment Task Types And Assessment Criteria To The Course Framework Goals

The congruence between goals, assessment task types (the evidence) and the assessment criteria (the basis for judging the evidence) is vital in teaching and learning. The following table(s) show these relationships.

GOALS	ASSESSMENT TASKS Bold indicates most effective task types	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Bold indicates most effective criteria
Set challenging personal goals and provide evidence of their progress towards achieving these goals	Learning record Assignments/projects Fieldwork/work experience Interactive task	Information gathering and appraisal Goal-setting and decision-making Application and action Workplace skills Literacy and communication skills
Make informed decisions and act on issues related to their lifestyle and post-school options	Learning record Assignments/projects Fieldwork/work experience Interactive tasks	Information gathering and appraisal Goal-setting and decision-making Application and action Workplace skills Literacy and communication skills
Understand their complex interrelationships with other people, their community, and the world in which they live	Learning record Assignments/projects Fieldwork/work experience Interactive tasks	Information gathering and appraisal Goal-setting and decision-making Application and action Workplace skills Literacy and communication skills
Be involved in, and apply their learning to improve aspects of their community in some way	Learning record Fieldwork/work experience	Information gathering and appraisal Goal-setting and decision-making Application and action Workplace skills Literacy and communication skills
Demonstrate literacy and numeracy skills, including information literacy	Learning record Assignments/projects Fieldwork/work experience Interactive tasks	Information gathering and appraisal Application and action Workplace skills Literacy and communication skills
Communicate appropriately in a range of situations	Learning record Assignments/projects Fieldwork/work experience Interactive tasks	Workplace skills Literacy and communication skills
Use equipment and technology effectively in different situations	Learning record Assignments/projects Fieldwork/work experience Interactive tasks	Information gathering and appraisal Application and action Workplace skills

Assessment Rubrics

Assessment rubrics will be developed in the future for specific tasks under the Contemporary Transitions Framework using the above dot points.

ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS

Grade descriptors provide a guide for teacher judgement of students' achievement, based on the assessment criteria, over a unit of work in this subject. Grades are organized on an A-E basis and represent standards of achievement.

Grades are awarded on the proviso that the assessment requirements have been met. Teachers will consider, when allocating grades, the degree to which students demonstrate their ability to complete and submit tasks within a specified time frame.

The following descriptors are consistent with the **system grade descriptors** which describe generic standards of student achievement across all courses.

Unit Grade Descriptors for A Courses

Grade	Descriptor
A student who achieves the grade A typically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrates independence, initiative and sound decision making • identifies, clarifies and solves problems, making good use of information and resources • communicates effectively, demonstrating strong literacy and numeracy skills and innovative use of technologies in all contexts • applies learning in ways that enables active and successful engagement in a community or workplace
A student who achieves the grade B typically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrates some independence and initiative and appropriate decision making • identifies problems and develops strategies to help solve them, using information and resources effectively • communicates effectively, demonstrating good literacy, numeracy and technological skills in most contexts • applies learning in ways that enables active engagement in a community or workplace
A student who achieves the grade C typically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • with limited direction, demonstrates some initiative and decision making skills • develops strategies to help solve problems, making use of relevant information and resources • communicates effectively within familiar situations, demonstrating sound literacy, numeracy and technological skills in known contexts • applies learning in ways that enables participation in some tasks within a community or workplace
A student who achieves the grade D typically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • with assistance, takes decisions related to personal goals and practical tasks • develops some problem-solving strategies, making limited use of relevant information and resources • within familiar situations, speaks and uses technology effectively but demonstrates limited control of literacy and numeracy • participates in tasks within a community or workplace within familiar situations
A student who achieves the grade E typically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrates limited decision making skills in structured situations with assistance • develops some problem-solving strategies, making very limited use of relevant information and resources • uses some communication skills within familiar situations • participates in limited tasks within a community or workplace within familiar situations

MODERATION

Moderation is a system designed and implemented to:

- provide comparability in the system of school-based assessment
- form the basis for valid and reliable assessment in senior secondary schools
- involve the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies and colleges in cooperation and partnership
- maintain the quality of school-based assessment and the credibility, validity and acceptability of Board certificates.

Moderation commences within individual colleges. Teachers develop assessment programs and instruments, apply assessment criteria, and allocate Unit Grades, according to the relevant Course Framework. Teachers within course teaching groups conduct consensus discussions to moderate marking or grading of individual assessment instruments and unit grade decisions.

The Moderation Model

Moderation within the ACT encompasses structured, consensus-based peer review of Unit Grade Descriptors for all accredited courses, as well as statistical moderation of course scores, including small group procedures, for T courses.

Moderation by Structured, Consensus-based Peer Review

Review is a subcategory of moderation, comprising the review of standards and the validation of Unit Grades. In the review process, Unit Grades, determined for Year 11 and Year 12 student assessment portfolios that have been assessed in schools by teachers under accredited courses, are moderated by peer review against system wide criteria and standards. This is done by matching student performance with the criteria and standards outlined in the Unit Grade Descriptors as stated in the Course Framework. Advice is then given to colleges to assist teachers with, and/or reassure them on, their judgments.

Preparation for Structured, Consensus-based Peer Review

Towards the end of each year, for each A, T and M course offered by the school, the Semester 2 assessment portfolios of a sample of Year 11 students which, after the ordinary application of criteria, is each typical of a required Unit Grade Descriptor, is sent to the ACT BSSS Secretariat. This material is considered at the first moderation day in March of the following year.

Towards the end of semester 1 each year, the same requirement applies for the Semester 1 assessment portfolios of a sample of Year 12 students. This material is considered at the second moderation day in August of the same year.

The College Course Presentation

The package of materials (College Course Presentation) presented by a college for review on moderation days in each course area will comprise the following:

- A folder containing supporting documentation as requested by the Board Secretariat through memoranda to colleges.

- A set of student portfolios containing marked and/or graded written and non-written assessment responses and completed criteria and standards feedback forms. Evidence of all assessment responses on which the unit grade decision has been made is to be included in the student review portfolios. Specific requirements for subject areas and types of evidence to be presented for each moderation day will be outlined by the Board Secretariat through memoranda and Information Papers.

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<http://www.allenconsult.com.au/employabilityskills/>

Employability Skills for the Future
http://www.acci.asn.au/text_files/reports/Employability_Skills.pdf

MyRead – Strategies for Teaching Reading in the Middle Years, Glenda Raison
<http://www.myread.org/>

These were accurate at time of publication.

Teacher References

Teachers are expected to use the reference from the identified framework in the course being modified.

Teacher Guide: Equitable assessment and special consideration in assessment in Years 11 and 12

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