



CULTURAL STUDIES

COURSE FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION

Course Frameworks provide the essential basis for the development and accreditation of any course within a broad subject area and provide a common basis for the assessment, moderation and reporting of student outcomes in courses based on the Framework.

This Framework replaces previously endorsed Frameworks in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Australian Studies and Asian Studies. The advantages of having an overarching Cultural Studies Framework for these subjects include:

- professional networking related to course development, teaching strategies and assessment
- comparability of intended student outcomes and standards across small subject areas.

The Cultural Studies Framework facilitates the construction of coherent courses of study which:

- draw on different disciplines, primarily those of the social sciences and the humanities, to develop an in-depth study of a particular society/culture or a group of societies/cultures such as those of Australia or Asia
- promote a greater understanding of Australian society and students' own cultures and values in the context of the focus of study.

The Cultural Studies Course Framework has been informed by the ACT Curriculum Framework in Studies of Society and Environment and Across Curriculum Perspective Statements.

RATIONALE

“Australia’s future depends upon each citizen having the necessary knowledge, understanding, skills and values for a productive and rewarding life in an educated, just and open society.” (*Preamble to the National Goals of Schooling for the 21st Century*)

The Cultural Studies Framework offers a coherent approach to analysing and comprehending the social, historical, geographical, political and economic factors that have influenced and continue to influence the development of specific cultures. Through studying courses based on this Framework, students learn to make sense of the world they live in and to exercise judgement and responsibility as participants in that

world. Students gain perspectives and understandings that help them appreciate social and cultural complexity, respect difference and act in informed and ethical ways.

Courses based on this Framework develop students' cognitive skills in asking meaningful questions, presenting arguments and in sifting, analysing and evaluating evidence. Such courses enable students to develop skills in investigation, interpretation and communication. Courses under this Framework also provide an excellent opportunity for the development of generic skills such as those identified in the Key Competencies, as currently endorsed by the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies.

Courses developed under the Cultural Studies Framework promote both critical and cultural literacy. Students critically assess sources of information and learn to interpret texts (forms of written, spoken, visual or multimedia communication) in relation to their cultural contexts and frames of reference.

Overall, the approach of the Cultural Studies Framework provides an opportunity to develop coherent, enriching and relevant educational experiences for students. This approach enables students to see how specific disciplines contribute to broader understandings and helps them to integrate knowledge and strategies from their studies into both their current experience and their future working and personal lives.

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 subject area. They are **intended student outcomes**.

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

- acquire knowledge and understanding of the forces and influences that have shaped and continue to shape cultures
- appreciate distinctive features of the cultures being studied
- explore and critically reflect upon their own values, attitudes and beliefs
- understand the cultural diversity of Australian society
- demonstrate effective research skills using appropriate methodologies
- demonstrate effective communication skills using appropriate technologies
- recognise attitudes and values leading to respect for others and social responsibility
- recognise and apply perspectives from different disciplines in their understanding of the cultures being studied.

In developing courses based on this Framework, developers need to apply these goals to the specific societies and cultures being studied.

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 (M, A or T), 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

Concepts

Essential and interrelated concepts in courses developed under the Cultural Studies Framework, include:

- culture
- identity
- continuity and change in cultures
- cross-cultural communication.

All courses will address these essential concepts and skills but different courses may give more emphasis to particular dimensions of culture. These dimensions include beliefs and value systems, power structures including ideologies, politics and government, economy, technology, art and architecture, writing and literature, social structures, and education. For example, an Australian Studies course may emphasise government structures, citizenship and social issues, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander course may emphasise history, cultural identity and contemporary issues and an Asian Studies course may emphasise history and international relations.

Skills

Essential skills in courses developed under the Cultural Studies Framework, include:

- investigation and independent research
- the skills of critical literacy
- the use of primary and secondary sources
- analytical and creative thinking
- sharing ideas and tasks
- distinguishing between fact, theory and opinion including the detection of bias
- arguing and communicating according to the conventions of the appropriate discipline
- using appropriate technology in research and communication.

VOCATIONAL COURSES

There are currently no vocational courses under this Course Framework.

RELATIONSHIP TO KEY COMPETENCIES

A number of work-related competencies have been accepted at national level as being important for all young Australians.

These are:

- Collecting and analysing information (KC1)
- Communicating ideas and information (KC2)
- Planning and organizing activities (KC3)
- Working with others in teams (KC4)
- Using mathematical ideas and techniques (KC5)
- Solving problems (KC6)
- Using technology (KC7)

Teachers are encouraged to incorporate these competencies into their courses.

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>.

PEDAGOGY

Learning Principles

The following *Learning Principles* have been developed by the BSSS Secretariat to support ACT senior secondary curriculum.

Learning is a complex process of constructing and applying knowledge and of developing and applying skills. This set of learning principles is premised on the belief that learning is a partnership between students and teachers, that all students are able to learn and that teachers are responsible for advancing student learning.

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*)

Teaching Strategies

Course developers are encouraged to outline teaching strategies that are grounded in the Learning Principles. It is important for teachers to build on students' knowledge and experiences and to use a **variety** of strategies that will engage all students in their learning.

Teaching strategies that are particularly relevant and effective in courses based on this framework are those that:

- Enable students to have an authentic and empathetic understanding of the cultures being studied through strategies such as:
 - the use of authentic texts from the culture, including indigenous texts from the culture (including biography, fiction, non-fiction, art, music)
 - the use of speakers and performers from the relevant cultures
 - establishing links with individuals or groups from the cultures, for example through the use of online technologies
 - fieldwork, for example interviews, oral histories, collaborative projects, conferencing
 - inviting creative/critical responses that demonstrate empathy and judgement
 - visits to cultural sites and communities
 - simulations, including role plays.
- Explicitly integrate knowledge and skills from contributing disciplines through strategies such as:
 - explicit teaching of the language and methodologies of different disciplines
 - student reflection on perspectives from relevant disciplines and how they illuminate key thematic issues
 - integration of discipline-based knowledge and skills through project work.
- Develop students' skills in the investigation and interpretation of evidence, including:
 - analysis of primary sources and secondary sources
 - document studies
 - use of statistical data, eg maps, charts, graphs, databases
 - research techniques including the use of information technologies
- Develop student skills in communication and collaboration, including:
 - use of class discussion, oral presentations, debates and seminars
 - group work.

ASSESSMENT

Advice on assessment in courses under the Cultural Studies Framework

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

The Cultural Studies Framework uses four assessment task types (research assignments; document studies and analysis of source material; tests; and creative/critical responses) and three broad assessment criteria (investigation, interpretation, communication) to elicit evidence of student achievement. All of the goals may be assessed through any of the assessment tasks, but some tasks will relate more closely to some goals than to others.

In each semester unit (or two 0.5 units over a semester) students should communicate their learning through a variety of modes: written, oral and multi-modal. This must include at least one piece of extended analytical writing and either an oral or multi-modal presentation.

The following table shows the relationship between the Task Types and the communication mode, giving examples of each task type.

Assessment Task Types A Courses

Task Type / Communication Mode	Written	Oral	Other modes	Weightings
Research Assignment such as:	Extended Writing. Short Answer. Descriptive or analytical essay.	Oral presentation of research.	Powerpoint presentation with speakers' notes. Research report with accompanying textual material.	20 - 40%
Document Study / Analysis of source material such as:	Review: eg film, literature, non-fiction material, photographic collection, art. Analysis: eg of cartoons, posters, propaganda, artworks, photographs, websites, articles, documentaries. Analysis of statistics, graphical material, maps.		Photographic essay.	20 - 40%
Test such as:	In-class essay. Short answer constructed response.		Map test. Graph analysis. Test using visual texts.	20 - 40%
Creative / critical response such as:	Fieldwork eg taking interviews, gathering oral histories. Creative writing. Journals. Empathetic response.	Oral presentation Debate.	Performance eg role play. Display eg gallery, artifacts.	20 - 40%

Assessment Task Types T Courses

Task Type / Communication Mode	Written	Oral	Other modes	Weightings
Research Assignment such as:	Extended Writing. Short Answer. Analytical essay eg 1000-1500 words. Research report.	Seminar presentation of research.	Powerpoint presentation with speakers' notes. Research report with accompanying textual material.	20 - 40%
Document Study / Analysis of source material such as:	Review: eg film, literature, non-fiction material, photographic collection, art. Analysis: eg of cartoons, posters, propaganda, artworks, photographs, websites, articles, documentaries. Analysis of statistics, graphical material, maps.		Photographic essay.	20 - 40%
Test such as:	In-class essay. Short answer constructed response.		Map test. Graph analysis. Test using visual texts.	20 - 40%
Creative / critical response such as:	Fieldwork eg taking interviews, gathering oral histories. Creative writing. Journals. Empathetic response.	Oral presentation. Debate.	Performance eg role play. Display eg gallery, artifacts.	20 – 40%

Assessment Criteria

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

Investigation

- accuracy, thoroughness, comprehension and appreciation of perspective in locating, selecting, recording and acknowledging relevant data from sources
- accuracy, thoroughness and comprehension in the classification, analysis and evaluation of information.

Interpretation

- accuracy, thoroughness and comprehension in detecting bias and drawing conclusions from sources
- imagination, independence and discipline in hypothesising, synthesising, constructing arguments and testing assumptions against the available evidence
- consideration of alternative approaches and explanations
- critical appreciation of cultural attitudes and beliefs and facility in responding empathically to specific questions.

Communication

- fluency, clarity and literacy using the language and conventions of the appropriate disciplines
- competence and imagination in the use of a variety of media such as writing, oral presentation, role play, debate, music, film, models, statistics
- the capacity to exchange and defend ideas, share tasks and consult with others in examining cultural issues.

Assessment Rubrics

For particular task types under the Cultural Studies Framework will be developed in the future.

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 sound understanding of essential concepts. • Makes apt and thoughtful application of information from sources. • Appreciates differences in values and perspectives. • Argues a case or is imaginative where appropriate. • Communicates coherently and confidently.
A student who achieves the grade B typically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accesses relevant information from obvious sources. • Shows comprehension of key concepts, issues and values. • Recognising differences in perspective. • Communicates effectively.
A student who achieves the grade C typically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under guidance, produces outcomes, which are heavily reliant on a single source. • Shows some understanding of different values. • Is generally coherent in simple analysis or response.
A student who achieves the grade D typically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responds to sources and concepts with variable accuracy. • Limited comprehension of values and concepts. • Reflecting some use of relevant materials. • Communicates adequately in structured or guided forms.
A student who achieves the grade E typically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accesses relevant sources when assisted. • Records and repeats given information in a structured form. • Shows limited comprehension of values and key concepts.

Unit Grade Descriptors for T courses

Grade	Descriptor
A student who achieves the grade A typically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays confidence, flexibility and initiative in selection and use of sources. • Shows insight and a critical awareness of alternative perspectives in resolving complex issues. • Expresses a sophisticated grasp of content, values and cultures. • Communicates findings with clarity, vitality and imagination.
A student who achieves the grade B typically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is accurate, analytical and attentive to detail, identifying the key features of essential sources in arguing a case. • Perceiving the significance of key values. Is thoughtful and articulate in communication, demonstrating a sense of audience and purpose and a firm grasp of content.
A student who achieves the grade C typically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selects appropriate information derived from obvious sources. • Identifies significant differences in values. • Shows comprehension of key issues in simple analysis. • Is coherent and competent in communication.
A student who achieves the grade D typically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produces responses to tasks which are descriptive rather than analytical. • Dealing with events rather than concepts. • Partially identifying different values. • Demonstrates limited coherence in communication. • A limited grasp of content.
A student who achieves the grade E typically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accesses relevant sources only when assisted. • Records and repeats given information. • Shows limited comprehension of values and key concepts.

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 M, A and T course offered by the school, the Semester 2 assessment portfolios of a sample of Year 11 students, each typical of the required Unit Grade Descriptor, are sent to the ACTBSSS 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; and
- 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.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

References for Curriculum Development

Key documents for course development are:

Guidelines for the Development of T and A Courses (current edition), BSSS.

<http://www.decs.act.gov.au/bsss/Publications/guidelines2004.pdf>

ACT Curriculum Frameworks and Across Curriculum Perspectives, 1993, ACT Department of Education and Training.

<http://www.decs.act.gov.au/bsss/publications/guidelines2004.pdf>

It should be noted that the ACT Curriculum Frameworks and Across Curriculum Perspectives are under review from 2004.

The BSSS website also provides the following links:

BSSS Course Frameworks

<http://www.decs.act.gov.au/bsss/frameworks.htm>

Other state and territory sites and related information

<http://www.decs.act.gov.au/bsss/sites.htm>

Teacher References

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Human rights explained: a guide to human rights in Australia in a global context 2001, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, Sydney, N.S.W.

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Le A, and Poynton C, 2000, Culture and Text: Discourse and Methodology in Social Research and Cultural Studies, Allen and Unwin, Australia.

Milner A, and Quilty M, 1996, Australia in Asia: Comparing Cultures, Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

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Vervoon A, 1998, Re-orient: Change in Asian Societies, Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

White P, and White C, 2003, Crossing the East-West Divide, Asia Education Teachers' Association, Sydney.

Websites

The following links were accurate as at June 2004.

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Netlinks studies links
<http://netlinks.slq.qld.gov.au/at.htm>

Aboriginal Studies Webquest
<http://www.teachers.ash.org.au/wattle/abstuds/index.htm>

Access Asia
<http://www.curriculum.edu.au/accessasia/index.htm>

Ask Asia
<http://www.askasia.org>

Australia 2030 Education Kit
http://www.australia2030.gov.au/educationkit_pg/edukit.html

Australian Aboriginal Studies - Directory of Online Resources
<http://www.academicinfo.net/ausab.html>

Torres Strait Regional Authority
<http://www.tsra.gov.au/www/index.cfm>

Australian Cultural Network
<http://www.acn.net.au>

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
<http://www.aiatsis.gov.au>

Australian Popular Culture
<http://www.mcc.murdoch.edu.au/ReadingRoom/film/Snowy.html>

Citizenship and Australian democracy
<http://www4.gu.edu.au/ext/civics/cv02/civ02main.htm>

Culture and recreation
<http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/culture/>

Discovering democracy
<http://www.curriculum.edu.au/democracy>

Edmund Rice Centre: Social Justice issues
http://www.erc.org.au/schools/justice_issues/index.shtml

Global Education (AusAid)
<http://www.globaleducation.edna.edu.au/globaled/page1.html>

Internet Guide to Aboriginal Studies
<http://www.ciolek.com/WWWVL-Aboriginal.html>

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Website
<http://www.natsiew.nexus.edu.au>

NSW Professional Curriculum Support (Human Society in its Environment)

<http://www.curriculumsupport.nsw.edu.au/hsie>

Online Australia Cultural Festival

<http://www.culture.com.au/exhibition/eindex.htm>

Social Justice: What is a fair thing?

<http://www.erc.org.au/issues/text/sj00.htm>

Teaching resources: Human Society

http://www.peta.edu.au/resource/pub/Human_Society/more2.html

The Asia Pacific Media Network

<http://www.asiamedia.ucla.edu>

The Australia Council

<http://www.ozco.gov.au>

The good citizen – Australian democracy and citizenship

<http://www.abc.net.au/ola/citizen/>

COURSE FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT GROUP

2004 Course Framework Development Group

Margaret Bromley	Copland College
Beth Craddy	Dickson College
Rae Everett	Canberra Institute of Technology
Lynne McInnes	Canberra Girls Grammar Schools
Carol McKenny	BSSS Secretariat
Meg Sekavs	Dickson College

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