



Shape of ACT Senior Secondary Curriculum

Social and Community Work A/T/M/V

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The *Shape of ACT Senior Secondary Curriculum: Social and Community Work* and *Early Childhood Studies* will guide the writing of the revised *Social and Community Work* and newly established *Early Childhood Studies* courses to renew the existing *Social and Community Work* Course.
- 1.2 The *BSSS Social and Community Work 2016-2020 Course* will be redeveloped as two courses, so there will be two shape papers. This shape paper is the *Shape of the ACT Senior Secondary Curriculum: Social and Community Work*. Both are currently available for consultation.
- 1.3 This paper has been prepared following consultation with Associate Professor Dr Joanna Zubrzycki of the Australian Catholic University, Véronique Gouneau, Head of Department for Community Work, Canberra Institute of Technology, Libby Bailey, Community Work teacher, Canberra Institute of Technology, and the deliberations of the ACT teachers on the *Social and Community Work* writing team.
- 1.4 The paper should be read in conjunction with *The Shape of the ACT Senior Secondary Curriculum* located at: http://www.bsss.act.edu.au/curriculum/bsss_course_development_consultation

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The *Social and Community Work* course will be the basis of planning, teaching, learning and assessment in ACT senior secondary schools.
- 2.2 The *Social and Community* course makes possible qualifications or a Statement of Attainment from the Community Services Training Package (CHC). Refer to training.gov.au: <https://training.gov.au/Training/Details/CHC>

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies is reviewing the *Social and Community Work* course in the five-year course development cycle of improvement and renewal.
- 3.2 The current *Social and Community Work* course provides access to a range of pathways for work and volunteering in the community services sectors. These are pathways that develop significant skills, knowledge, and understandings for day to day living, as well as a range of general capabilities to pursue future work and life aspirations.
- 3.3 In developing the new course, these pathways will be divided into two separate courses. In its updated forms, these courses will be contemporary and highly relevant to senior secondary students.
- 3.4 From 2016 to 2020 students have been enrolled in units in all aspects of the existing course, which indicates that students are interested in all the pathways provided by the current BSSS accredited *Social and Community Work (2016-2020)* course.
- 3.5 Most jurisdictions in Australia have discrete child focused and community sector focused courses, some of which are related to vocational packages, e.g. South Australia's *Child Studies* and *Community Studies*; NSW *Family and Community Studies* and *Exploring Early Childhood*. Some are purely through VET, and others offer courses that can be focused on a university pathway.
- 3.6 *Social and Community Work* and *Early Childhood Studies* will not duplicate content. While these courses will touch on similar theories to *Sociology* and *Psychology*, students will apply them to interdisciplinary and applied purposes, and particular contexts.
- 3.7 Students may undertake both courses, *Social and Community Work* and *Early Childhood Studies*.
- 3.8 All courses under development are required to meet Board design specifications and to align with Board requirements for senior secondary curriculum. These specifications align with ACARA course design specifications and provide teachers with flexibility to plan, teach and assess according to the needs and interests of their students.

3.9 The *Social and Community Work* course will be developed under the *Humanities and Social Sciences Framework* (HASS) as an A/T/M/V course, as the theories and data analysed and applied in this course have parallels to other courses under the HASS Framework. Further, students will engage in the analysis and applications of concepts from Humanities and Social Science subjects, such as Sociology, Geography, Philosophy, Politics, and History. The HASS Framework is located at: http://www.bsss.act.edu.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0017/437300/Humanities_and_Social_Sciences_Framework.pdf

The rationale for this framework describes Humanities and Social Sciences courses:

Humanities and Social Sciences is the study of how people process and document the human experience and their place in it. It empowers students to better understand humankind, society and culture and communicate ideas for the future. Humanities and Social Sciences examines what it means to be human and to ask questions about society and its institutions.

3.10 All courses based on this framework should enable students to:

- compare and contrast theories, concepts, and principles
- critically analyse concepts, principles, ideas, and change
- synthesise different interpretations, representations, and perspectives
- evaluate significance of information, processes, and concepts
- apply critical and creative thinking skills
- reflect on own thinking and learning
- communicate creatively and critically in a range of modes for a variety of purposes. organise resources and material to create quality products and services.

Courses developed under this Framework provide details of course content through the component units of the course. While this content will differ according to the particular course, all content will be chosen to enable students to work towards the achievement of the common and agreed goals of the Framework.

3.11 Concepts from the Humanities and Social Sciences Framework (page 6) build on ACARA's F-10 Humanities and Social Sciences curriculum:

- identity
- society
- change
- culture
- environment
- relationships
- empathy
- responsibility
- values.

3.12 All courses of study for the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate should enable students to develop essential capabilities for twenty-first century learners. The Australian Curriculum General Capabilities comprise an integrated and interconnected set of knowledge, skills, behaviours, and dispositions that students develop and use in their learning across the curriculum.

3.13 The importance of the senior years of schooling as a critical transition point for young people is highlighted in two extracts from the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration*:

All Australian Governments and the education community need to support students in their senior years by helping them acquire the cognitive and social skills necessary for life after school and equip students to remain engaged in learning throughout life.

Australian Governments commit to working with the education community to provide a senior secondary education that equips young people with the skills, knowledge, values, and capabilities to succeed in employment, personal and civic life.

The Alice Springs Mparntwe Declaration is located at:

<https://docs.education.gov.au/documents/alice-springs-mparntwe-education-declaration>

4. THE CONTEXT OF THE ACT

4.1 Courses of study for the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate:

- provide a variety of pathways, to meet different learning needs and encourage students to complete their secondary education
- enable students to develop the essential capabilities for twenty-first century learners
- empower students as active participants in their own learning
- engage students in contemporary issues relevant to their lives
- foster students' intellectual, social, and ethical development
- nurture students' wellbeing, and physical and spiritual development
- enable effective and respectful participation in a diverse society.

4.2 Each course of study:

- comprises an integrated and interconnected set of knowledge, skills, behaviours, and dispositions that students develop and use in their learning across the curriculum
- is based on a model of learning that integrates intended student outcomes, pedagogy, and assessment
- outlines teaching strategies which are grounded in learning principles and encompass quality teaching
- promotes intellectual quality, establish a rich learning environment, and generates relevant connections between learning and life experiences
- provides formal assessment and certification of students' achievements.

4.3 In consideration of the ACT context, and in response to contemporary research and literature, the Social and Community Work and Early Childhood Studies curriculums should include:

- a student-centred pedagogical approach
- the educational needs of young people with respect to understanding the evidentiary and theoretical underpinning of social and community work
- understanding about the nature and practices of social and community work
- working and communicating with others
- the Humanities and Social Sciences Framework Achievement Standards
- the needs of different schools and sectors (government and non-government)
- awareness of local, national, and global issues
- ethical, environmental and sustainability factors

5. AIMS OF THE SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY WORK CURRICULUM

In the *Social and Community Work* course, students explore the ways in which communities are shaped and operate. Contemporary society is characterised by rapid change. This course is designed to equip students with the knowledge, understanding and skills to participate in, and make a contribution to, the field of social and community work. Developing understanding about society and living in society provides insights for students interested in working with people and organizations to help others manage their lives. Consequently, Social and Community Work draws upon theories, concepts and ideas from science and the social sciences to understand society. This course builds a knowledge base and student capacity to engage in volunteering, employment, and further education. Students apply their understanding to programs intended to empower others.

The *Social and Community Work* course enables students to:

- understand ideas from sociology about power, social structures, and social interactions
- develop the conceptual tools to analyse their own lived experience and how that affects their perceptions of others
- understand psychological ideas that attempt to explain people's feelings, thoughts, and behaviours
- understand the challenges and opportunities faced by people at different stages of life
- develop intercultural understanding and awareness of the complexity and fluidity of cultural contexts
- develop an appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and communities
- understand the nature and work of community organisations and their potential to contribute to change
- develop critical thinking skills in the areas of human rights and social justice
- understand pathways for careers in Social and Community Work
- access VET assessment in CHC22015 Certificate II in Community Services and CHC24015 Certificate II in Active Volunteering
- develop academic research, analysis and writing skills using evidence-based practices
- develop communication, collaboration, and organisation skills for community work settings
- understand the impact of compassion, empathy, and self-reflection in social and community work
- reflect on learning about and ethical engagement with *Social and Community Work*

6. STRUCTURE OF THE SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY WORK CURRICULUM

These units take concepts and themes from the community services sector focused units of the existing Social and Community Work course. They have been reviewed in response to the opportunities offered by the inclusion of T accreditation, and the requirements of the course design specifications approved by the Board in 2016. They have also been revised using current research in this area, consultation with Dr Joanna Zubrzycki of the Australian Catholic University, Veronique Gouneau and Libby Bailey of the Canberra Institute of Technology, and the deliberations of the course writing group. These units will also allow students the opportunity to achieve VET Certification in Community Services, should the school choose to provide that pathway. Without VET, the course provides students with a knowledge base, skills, and understandings with which to pursue further studies in this area. Further, the demand for knowledgeable, capable, empathetic, and ethical workers in this area suggests the need for a contemporary and well-evidenced course.

RATIONALE

In *Social and Community Work*, students explore the ways in which communities are shaped and operate. Contemporary society is characterised by rapid change. This course is designed to equip students with the knowledge, understanding and skills to participate in, and make a contribution to, the field of social and community work. Consequently, *Social and Community Work* draws upon theories, concepts and ideas from the social sciences and science to understand society. Developing understanding and empathy about society and the lived experiences of different members of a society provides insights for students interested in working with people and organisations to empower others. Students develop an understanding of how individuals and groups might be enabled and empowered, and the importance of advocacy.

UNITS

The units have been drafted for discussion as follows:

Community Organisations

Students examine theories that explain the development and work of community-based organisations in contemporary communities and societies. They critically analyse the lived experience of diverse peoples and identify the origins, discourses and ideas that underlie the organisations developed to address need. They develop practical skills that will assist them in working in the community services sector.

Children and Young People

Students examine theories that explain the opportunities and challenges faced by children and young people in contemporary communities and societies. They critically analyse the lived experience of children and young people and identify the discourses that inform policy responses to their issues from government and non-government stakeholders. They develop practical skills that will assist them in working in the children and youth support sector.

Societies and Communities

Students examine theories that explain the opportunities and challenges faced by contemporary diverse communities and societies, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander groups. They critically analyse the lived experience of people and identify the discourses that inform policy responses from government and non-government stakeholders, including those with disabilities and culturally and linguistically diverse communities. They develop practical skills that will assist them in working in the community sector.

Contemporary Ageing

Students examine theories that explain the opportunities and challenges faced by older people in contemporary and diverse communities and societies. They critically analyse the lived experience of older people and identify the discourses that inform policy responses from government and non-government stakeholders. Students develop practical skills that will assist them in working in the aged care sector.

Independent Study

An Independent study unit has an important place in senior secondary courses. It is a valuable pedagogical approach that empowers students to make decisions about their own learning. An Independent study unit must be proposed by an individual student for their own study and negotiated with their teacher. An Independent study unit requires the principal's written approval. The program of learning for an Independent study unit must meet all the content descriptions as appears in the course. Independent study units are only available to individual students in Year 12. Pre-requisites for an Independent study unit are that students have completed at least **THREE** standard 1.0 units from a course.

7. CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 Incorporating a futures orientation

The Future of Education and Skills Education 2030 stresses the importance of being future focused in the development of curriculum for schools. The *Social and Community Work* course has a futures orientation in addressing the growing need for young people to be innovative, responsible, and aware:

To prepare for 2030, people should be able to think creatively, develop new products and services, new jobs, new processes and methods, new ways of thinking and living, new enterprises, new sectors, new business models and new social models. Increasingly, innovation springs not from individuals thinking and working alone, but through cooperation and collaboration with others to draw on existing knowledge to create new knowledge. The constructs that underpin the competency include adaptability, creativity, curiosity, and open-mindedness.

[http://www.oecd.org/education/2030-project/contact/E2030_Position_Paper_\(05.04.2018\).pdf](http://www.oecd.org/education/2030-project/contact/E2030_Position_Paper_(05.04.2018).pdf)

The course does more than prepare students for the world of work. It enables students to develop the essential capabilities for twenty-first century learners:

Education has a vital role to play in developing the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that enable people to contribute to and benefit from an inclusive and sustainable future. Learning to form clear and purposeful goals, work with others with different perspectives, find untapped opportunities and identify multiple solutions to big problems will be essential in the coming years. Education needs to aim to do more than prepare young people for the world of work; it needs to equip students with the skills they need to become active, responsible, and engaged citizens.

[http://www.oecd.org/education/2030-project/contact/E2030_Position_Paper_\(05.04.2018\).pdf](http://www.oecd.org/education/2030-project/contact/E2030_Position_Paper_(05.04.2018).pdf)

7.2 Social and Community Work curriculum

The *Social and Community Work* course has an important place in ACT senior secondary curriculum. The curriculum promotes social analysis and ethical awareness, and in creating students that are active participants in their own community. Students are challenged to think about and respond to contemporary social issues relevant to their lives. Their personal and social development is fostered through working independently and collaboratively, and in the development of communication skills and intercultural awareness.

7.3 Equity and opportunity

The *Social and Community Work* course is inclusive of students' needs and interests. It provides flexibility and choice for teachers and students. The factors that influence this choice include school and community contexts, local community learning opportunities, contemporary and local issues, and available learning resources.

7.4 Connections to other learning areas

The *Social and Community Work* course builds on knowledge skills and understanding from students' previous studies of Australian Curriculum courses. The course builds on the Technologies learning area developed in the Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences F – 10, in its focus on understanding individuals and societies.

The course analyses and applies ideas from Psychology, Sociology and History to practical settings aimed at the community sector and bringing about social change and support. The particular practical focus of this course on the community services sector provides a clear distinction from other courses.

Students learn about individuals and societies in Humanities and Social Sciences subjects from P to 10. This course builds on that knowledge base about social dynamics and the individual's relationship with society.

7.5 Role of digital technologies

Students and teachers integrate a growing range of online information, tools, and applications. These include digitised online materials such as historical documents, books, newspapers, images and organisational websites, policy documents and curriculum documents, as well as other online resources including databases, reference works and indexes to library holdings.

7.6 Clarity of curriculum

The curriculum is rigorous and flexible. It is sufficiently rich and descriptive to guide teachers with limited experience but avoids excessive prescription that would hamper experienced teachers from exercising their skills and knowledge. The curriculum document is expressed clearly in terms that are accessible to a new teacher, whilst allowing all teachers to enhance the program of learning with their interests and expertise.

7.7 Breadth and depth of study

Content descriptions specify the knowledge, understanding and skills that students are expected to learn and that teachers are expected to teach. Teachers are required to develop a program of learning that allows students to demonstrate all the content descriptions.

A program of learning is what a college provides to implement the course for a subject meeting students' needs and interests. It is at the discretion of the teacher to emphasis some content descriptions over others. The teacher may teach additional (not listed) content if it meets the specific unit goals providing that it does not duplicate content in other units.

7.8 The nature of the learner

The courses address the needs of diverse learners and cater for Tertiary (T), Accredited (A) and Modified (M) levels of study. There is opportunity also to pursue vocational competencies.

7.9 General capabilities

Skills and understanding related to numeracy, literacy and ICT are further developed and used in *Social and Community Work* studies, as are problem solving and creativity. Critical and creative thinking are developed when students explore problems, develop innovative ideas, generate solutions, and evaluate and refine their ideas. They develop personal and social capability while working collaboratively and independently and build on self-management skills. They develop intercultural understanding as they engage with diverse cultures in ways that recognise commonalities and differences.

7.10 Cross curriculum perspectives

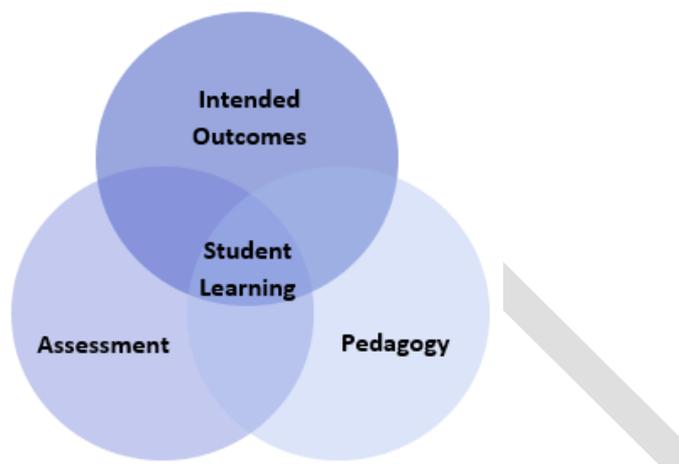
Each of the perspectives, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia, and Sustainability are represented in ways that are appropriate to in the course.

8. PEDAGOGY AND ASSESSMENT

The underpinning beliefs and learning principles for the development of ACT Board of Senior Secondary School curriculum as are follows:

8.1 Underpinning beliefs

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



8.2 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 affects 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).*

9. CONCLUSION

The *Social and Community Work* course is to be developed under the *Humanities and Social Sciences Framework*. Students develop an understanding of the nature and work within community services sector and settings. They learn to analyse, problem solve, and create solutions. The course equips students to engage confidently with appropriate technologies and to communicate appropriately to different audiences in a range of mediums. Students work both independently and collaboratively and develop interpersonal and intrapersonal skills suitable for volunteering, employment and further education and training.

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