

ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies

Public Consultation Report

Religious Studies Course 2020

- This report has been prepared following public consultation.
- All feedback submitted as part of the consultation process has been recorded and analysed.
- The responses to the feedback have been compiled following the deliberations of the Course writing team.
- Amendments to the Course have been made where required, as a result of the consultation process.

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Survey Feedback and Response Religious Studies 2020

Topic	Comment	Response
<p>Q3 COURSE RATIONALE</p> <p>The rationale provides clarity about the scope of the course, its distinctive nature, and outcomes for students.</p>	<p>There is no inclusion of the transcendent - Religious Studies courses would historically have this as a theological question for discussion (not just a philosophical or cultural one). Most major world religions engage in theology - but this word does not even appear in the rationale. A major deficiency.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments. This is not a theology course, and as such, does not allow for a systematic exploration of theologies in themselves. Analysing theological thinking within religions will arise from the examination of chosen case studies.</p> <p>It is expected that notions such as the “transcendent” would be critically analysed along with other Religious concepts and ideas in particular in ‘Expressions of Faith and Spirit’ and ‘Exploring Meaning’</p>
<p>Q4 COURSE GOALS</p> <p>The course goals are clear about the intended learning but allow flexibility.</p>	<p>Reflect on own thinking and learning - could be expanded to include reflection on their own spirituality</p>	<p>Questions of spirituality and the spiritual experience are raised by the content descriptions and will be raised by the themes and case studies through which the content descriptions are explored. As such, students will reflect on their own thinking and learning about spirituality and their own spiritual response to the learning. That approach allows and encourages students to be introspective as well as empathise with others’ points of view.</p>
<p>Q5 Unit Title:</p> <p>Expressions of Faith and Spirit</p> <p>The unit description clearly describes the focus and scope for this unit and informs in the planning of the program of learning.</p>	<p>The description forces schools to study at least two different religions. Can this be changed to one or more to allow schools greater freedom in their delivery of the content? Or perhaps can this be changed to one with comparisons made to other faiths and traditions?</p>	<p>The course was written under the Humanities and Social Sciences framework. This is an academic discipline. As such, it is important that religion is problematised and that students encounter other religions practiced in Australia and in the world.</p> <p>Expert advice indicates that Religions and Spiritual Traditions should be studied in their own right, not as comparisons which would tend to inadvertently reinforce cultural divisions.</p>

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Topic	Comment	Response
<p>Q6 Unit Title: Expressions of Faith and Spirit The specific unit goals are clearly outlined and appropriate to the unit.</p>	<p>Amend the second goal to read: • critically analyse the impact of cultural, historical, political, social and theological contexts on religious traditions and spiritualities, shaping beliefs, values and expressions of faith</p>	<p>This is not Theology course, and as such, does not allow for a systematic exploration of theologies in themselves. Analysing theological thinking within religions will arise from the examination of chosen case studies.</p>
<p>Q7 Unit Title: Expressions of Faith and Spirit The content descriptions clearly elaborate on the unit description and the specific unit goals.</p>	<p>Content Description: 'evaluate the impact of religious and spiritual creative expressions on individuals and society' - how would you do this? Communication Content descriptions: 9. this is way too many.</p>	<p>Studying the impact of a significant religious text or artwork is a straightforward exploration of a historical and cultural phenomena.</p> <p>There are five communication Content Descriptions. These encompass both what should be produced by students, but also the disposition they will adopt in encountering diverse religions. Given the complexity of describing those things, five seems appropriate to the panel.</p> <p>The four additional content description on Reflection as in response to best practice in pedagogy which indicates that reflecting on learning enhances learning. Also expert advice indicated that reflective and reflexive practice in this contentious and sensitive area of study is important for developing intercultural understanding and promoting peaceful interactions between sometimes hostile groups.</p>

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<p>Q8 Unit Title: Expressions of Faith and Spirit</p> <p>The content descriptions allow flexibility for a teacher to plan a program of learning that addresses the learning needs and interests of their students.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are too many content descriptions (especially when the 9 communication requirements are included) - this goes to the breadth/depth argument. If a teacher is expected to address so many content descriptions in their teaching programme then a limit is placed on the depth to which they can go in any one area. Especially given that these are semester based units. Consider core content and options. 2. There are an overwhelming number of descriptions which appears more prescriptive rather than flexible. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teachers will choose a focus. Not all content descriptions are equal, and teachers will develop Programs of Learning that focus on the most significant elements through the chosen case studies. 2. They are prescriptive to reflect the complex and nuanced nature of the area of study. All content descriptions will be taught and assessed. However, teachers will choose a focus. Not all content descriptions are equal, and teachers will develop Programs of Learning that focus on the most significant elements through the chosen case studies.
<p>Q9 Unit Title: A Good Life</p> <p>The unit description clearly describes the focus and scope for this unit and informs in the planning of the program of learning.</p>	<p>The description forces schools to study at least two different religions. Can this be changed to one or more to allow schools greater freedom in their delivery of the content? Or perhaps can this be changed to one with comparisons made to other faiths and traditions?</p>	<p>We appreciate that this course is a disjunction with the past and that it requires change.</p> <p>The course was written under the Humanities and Social Sciences framework and reflects the norms of that learning area. This is an academic discipline, not an enfaithing course. As such, it is an underlying principle of the course and or expert scholars in the teaching of religious studies consulted in the writing of this course, it is important that religion is problematised and that students encounter different religions practiced in Australia in the world.</p> <p>The expert advice indicates that Religions and Spiritual Traditions should be studied in their own right, not as comparisons which would tend to inadvertently reinforce cultural divisions.</p>

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Topic	Comment	Response
<p>Q10 Unit Title: A Good Life</p> <p>The specific unit goals are clearly outlined and appropriate.</p>	<p>1. -</p>	
<p>Q11 Unit Title: A Good Life</p> <p>The content descriptions clearly elaborate on the unit description and the specific unit goals.</p>	<p>Mostly, yes they do elaborate on the unit description. However, some language is a bit unclear as to what is specifically being called for. E.g. reflect on lines of difference, holding our deepest differences, even our religious differences not in isolation but in relationship to one another. How does one "hold" a difference in relation to another?</p>	<p>To "hold" is a commonly used idiomatic verb in relation to beliefs and ideas. Difference is an idea/belief like any other</p>
<p>Q12 Unit Title: A Good Life</p> <p>The content descriptions allow flexibility for a teacher to plan a program of learning that addresses the learning needs and interests of their students.</p>	<p>1. There are too many content descriptions - this goes to the breadth/depth argument. If a teacher is expected to address so many content descriptions in their teaching programme then a limit is placed on the depth to which they can go in any one area. Especially given that these are semester based units. Consider core content and options. This unit places greater emphasis on applied ethics than the previous unit which is more on normative ethics. Simply a comment.</p> <p>2. There are an overwhelming number of descriptions which appears more prescriptive rather than flexible.</p>	<p>1. All content descriptions will be taught and assessed. However, teachers will choose a focus. Not all content descriptions are equal, and teachers will develop Programs of Learning that focus on the most significant elements through the chosen case studies.</p> <p>The comment is noted. It is envisaged that applications of learning can occur.</p> <p>2. They are prescriptive to reflect the complex and nuanced nature of the area of study. All content descriptions will be taught and assessed. However, teachers will choose a focus. Not all content descriptions are equal, and teachers will develop Programs of Learning that focus on the most significant elements through the chosen case studies.</p>

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<p>Q13 Unit Title: Exploring Meaning The unit description clearly describes the focus and scope for this unit and informs in the planning of the program of learning.</p>	<p>The description forces schools to study at least two different religions. Can this be changed to one or more to allow schools greater freedom in their delivery of the content? Or perhaps can this be changed to one with comparisons made to other faiths and traditions?</p>	<p>We appreciate that this course is a disjunction with the past and that it requires change.</p> <p>The course was written under the Humanities and Social Sciences framework and reflects the norms of that learning area. This is an academic discipline. As such, it is an underlying principle of the course and or expert scholars in the teaching of religious studies consulted in the writing of this course, it is important that religion is problematised and that students encounter different religions practiced in Australia in the world.</p> <p>Expert advice indicates that Religions and Spiritual Traditions should be studied in their own right, not as comparisons which would tend to other people and inculcate cultural divisions rather than work against them.</p>
<p>Q14 Unit Title: Exploring Meaning The specific unit goals are clearly outlined and appropriate.</p>	<p>Amend the second goal to read: critically analyse the origin and meaning of religious, mystical, spiritual or transformative experiences and theological teachings, and the impact of these on human experience</p>	<p>This is not Theology course, and as such, does not allow for a systematic exploration of theologies in themselves. Analysing theological thinking within religions will arise from the examination of chosen case studies</p>
<p>Q15 Unit Title: Exploring Meaning The content descriptions clearly elaborate on the unit description and the specific unit goals.</p>	<p>Yes - though way too many.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Teachers will choose a focus. Not all content descriptions are equal, and teachers will develop Programs of Learning that focus on the most significant elements through the chosen case studies.</p>

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<p>Q16 Unit Title: Exploring Meaning</p> <p>The content descriptions allow flexibility for a teacher to plan a program of learning that addresses the learning needs and interests of their students.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Again, there are too many content descriptions - this goes to the breadth/depth argument. If a teacher is expected to address so many content descriptions in their teaching programme then a limit is placed on the depth to which they can go in any one area. Especially given that these are semester based units. Consider core content and options. 2. There are an overwhelming number of descriptions which appears more prescriptive rather than flexible. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teachers will choose a focus. Not all content descriptions are equal, and teachers will develop Programs of Learning that focus on the most significant elements through the chosen case studies. 2. They are prescriptive to reflect the complex and nuanced nature of the area of study. All content descriptions will be taught and assessed. However, teachers will choose a focus. Not all content descriptions are equal, and teachers will develop Programs of Learning that focus on the most significant elements through the chosen case studies.
<p>Q17 Unit Title: Continuity, Change and Diversity</p> <p>The unit description clearly describes the focus and scope for this unit and informs in the planning of the program of learning.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The description forces schools to study at least two different religions. Can this be changed to one or more to allow schools greater freedom in their delivery of the content? Or perhaps can this be changed to one with comparisons made to other faiths and traditions? 	<p>We appreciate that this course is a disjunction with the past and that it requires change.</p> <p>The course was written under the Humanities and Social Sciences framework and reflects the norms of that learning area. This is an academic discipline, not an enfaithing course. As such, it is an underlying principle of the course and or expert scholars in the teaching of religious studies consulted in the writing of this course, it is important that religion is problematised and that students encounter other religions practiced in Australia in the world.</p> <p>Expert advice indicates that Religions and Spiritual Traditions should be studied in their own right, not as comparisons which would tend to other people and inculcate cultural divisions rather than work against them.</p>

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<p>Q18 Unit Title: Continuity, Change and Diversity The specific unit goals are clearly outlined and appropriate.</p>	<p>1. -</p>	
<p>Q19 Unit Title: Continuity, Change and Diversity The content descriptions clearly elaborate on the unit description and the specific unit goals.</p>	<p>1. evaluate how religious and spiritual beliefs and practices have adapted to technological innovation - can an example be given of a belief that has changed or adapted to technological innovation?</p> <p>2. Mostly they do elaborate clearly on the unit description. However, some language is difficult to understand. E.g. critically analyse how religious beliefs, values and traditions have adapted to emerging knowledge and innovation. What is meant by innovation here and how is it that religious beliefs adapt to these?</p>	<p>1. This will be rephrased in the course to provide more clarity as to intent: “responded” to” rather than “adapted”.</p> <p>2. Noted</p> <p>Teachers will engage in valuable and enriching discussion to develop Programs of Learning that focus on the most significant elements through the chosen case studies.</p> <p>The panel invites the respondent to consider the knowledge currently taught in the Religion and Science unit. The most obvious historical example is Catholicism and realisation of the heliocentric solar system, religion and Evolution, Religion and the changed understanding of relationships and rights.</p>

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<p>Q20 Unit Title: Continuity, Change and Diversity</p> <p>The content descriptions allow flexibility for a teacher to plan a program of learning that addresses the learning needs and interests of their students.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Again, there are too many content descriptions - this goes to the breadth/depth argument. If a teacher is expected to address so many content descriptions in their teaching programme then a limit is placed on the depth to which they can go in any one area. Especially given that these are semester based units. Consider core content and options. 2. There are an overwhelming number of descriptions which appears more prescriptive rather than flexible. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They are prescriptive to reflect the complex and nuanced nature of the area of study. All content descriptions will be taught and assessed. However, teachers will choose a focus. Not all content descriptions are equal, and teachers will develop Programs of Learning that focus on the most significant elements through the chosen case studies. 2. They are prescriptive to reflect the complex and nuanced nature of the area of study. All content descriptions will be taught and assessed. However, teachers will choose a focus. Not all content descriptions are equal, and teachers will develop Programs of Learning that focus on the most significant elements through the chosen case studies.
<p>Q21 Unit Title: Negotiated Study</p> <p>The unit description clearly explains the purpose of a negotiated study.</p>	<p>The description forces schools to study at least two different religions. Can this be changed to one or more to allow schools greater freedom in their delivery of the content? Or perhaps can this be changed to one with comparisons made to other faiths and traditions?</p>	<p>We appreciate that this course is a disjunction with the past and that it requires change.</p> <p>The course was written under the Humanities and Social Sciences framework and reflects the norms of that learning area. This is an academic discipline, not an enfaithing course. As such, it is an underlying principle of the course and or expert scholars in the teaching of religious studies consulted in the writing of this course, it is important that religion is problematised and that students encounter a variety of religions practiced in Australia in the world.</p> <p>Expert advice indicates that Religions and Spiritual Traditions should be studied in their own right, not as comparisons which would tend to other people and inculcate cultural divisions rather than work against them.</p>

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<p>Q22 Unit Title: Negotiated Study</p> <p>The specific unit goals are clearly outlined sufficiently flexible for developing a negotiated study.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Q23 Unit Title: Negotiated Study</p> <p>The content descriptions clearly elaborate on the unit description and the specific unit goals for developing a negotiated study.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Q24 Unit Title: Negotiated Study</p> <p>The content descriptions allow flexibility and sufficient guidance about what is to be taught.</p>	<p>There are an overwhelming number of descriptions which appears more prescriptive rather than flexible.</p>	<p>They are prescriptive to reflect the complex and nuanced nature of the area of study. All content descriptions will be taught and assessed. However, teachers will choose a focus. Not all content descriptions are equal, and teachers will develop Programs of Learning that focus on the most significant elements through the chosen case studies.</p>
<p>Q25 Unit Title: Negotiated Study</p> <p>The content descriptions allow flexibility for a teacher to plan a program of learning that addresses the learning needs and interests of their students.</p>	<p>Will students completing this individually have opportunities to develop skills in dialogue?</p>	<p>Dialogue is a skill that needs to be developed and can mean students are in dialogue with authors, broadcasters and adherents of different religious and spiritual traditions, not just dialogue with other class members. Students need to be provided with the essential components of dialogue. Guidelines for students engaging in the Negotiated study will be provided with programs of learning.</p>

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<p>Q26 Are the units in this course distinct and different from the Religious Studies course.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. I need to have a closer look at the World Religions course before commenting.2. The main concern for our context is having enough units across both courses to establish minors and majors for our students. We run half units across a semester with 9 lines / class all of which are composite Year 11/12 and A/T.3. However, I wonder why they need to be divided into two separate courses.	<p>Noted</p> <p>This is a school matter.</p> <p>Units from the two courses can be combined to make a Studies in Religion Major. Two courses reflect the nature of the academic discipline beyond the ACT.</p>
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