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The Shape of the

ACT Senior Secondary Curriculum

Board endorsed 2016

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The Shape of the ACT Senior Secondary Curriculum

Key terms

Learning areas are broad areas of the curriculum, including English, mathematics, science, the arts, languages, health and physical education.

A **subject** is a discrete area of study that is part of a learning area. There may be one or more subjects in a single learning area.

Frameworks are system documents for years 11 and 12 which provide the basis for the development and accreditation of any course within a designated learning area. In addition, frameworks provide a common basis for assessment, moderation and reporting of student outcomes in courses based on the framework.

The **course** sets out the requirements for the implementation of a subject. Key elements of a course include the rationale, goals, content descriptions, assessment, and achievement standards as designated by the framework.

BSSS courses will be organised into **units**. A unit is a distinct focus of study within a course. A standard 1.0 unit is delivered for a minimum of 55 hours generally over one semester.

Core units are foundational units that provide students with the breadth of the subject.

Additional units are avenues of learning that cannot be provided for within the four core 1.0 standard units by an adjustment to the program of learning.

A negotiated study unit makes provision for students, classes, groups or individuals to negotiate the program of learning based on the specific unit goals, content descriptions, assessment and achievement standards of the course.

An **elective** is a lens for demonstrating the content descriptions within a standard 1.0 or half standard 0.5 unit.

A **lens** is a particular focus or viewpoint within a broader study.

Content descriptions refer to the subject-based knowledge, understanding and skills to be taught and learned.
A **program of learning** is what a college develops to implement the course for a subject and to ensure that the content descriptions are taught and learned.

Achievement standards provide an indication of typical performance at five different levels (corresponding to grades A to E) following completion of study of senior secondary course content for units in a subject.

ACT senior secondary system **curriculum** comprises all BSSS approved courses of study.

Purpose

1.   The Shape of the ACT Senior Secondary Curriculum provides background to the development of and for the implementation of BSSS learning areas and courses.

Preamble

2.   The Shape of the ACT Senior Secondary Curriculum builds on:

   a.   Recommendations from the Review of the ACT Year 12 Certificate, 2014

   b.   The Shape of the Australian Curriculum, May 2009

   c.   Curriculum Design Paper Version 3.1, June 2013.

Vision and principles for ACT senior secondary curriculum

Vision

3.   The Board is committed to a curriculum that:

   - promotes quality teaching and learning

   - is flexible by enabling ACT colleges and teachers to determine how best to plan, teach and assess students according to the needs of those students

   - inspires young adults to learn and become confident, creative, active and informed citizens who make a valuable contribution to society

   - reflects coherence and cohesion.

Principles

4.   The Board is committed to a curriculum that:

   - provides a platform for high quality learning

   - upholds high expectations for achievement of all young adults and makes provision for diverse learners

   - is rigorous and displays consistency, purpose, and quality design

   - is responsive to community expectations and developed collaboratively

   - provides opportunities for all young adults to develop ethical and intercultural understandings

   - ensures multiple pathways for all young adults to attain work and life skills including functional literacy and numeracy.

Curriculum development

5.   Curriculum is developed collaboratively. The BSSS, in collaboration with colleges will lead the development of curriculum (i.e. frameworks and courses). Curriculum development comprises three phases: review, development and consultation. Course development is a joint college responsibility. Proposals for learning areas and courses may be submitted at any time in the course development cycle.

Guidelines for development

6. The development of ACT senior secondary curriculum is shaped by the following guidelines for development:

    a. The curriculum must make clear to teachers what is to be taught, what students should learn and what achievement standards are expected of them. This means that curriculum documents will be explicit about knowledge, understanding and skills, and that they will provide a clear foundation for the development of a teaching program.

    b. Every student can learn and every student matters. The curriculum sets high standards acknowledging the different rates at which students develop.

    c. The curriculum must connect with and build on years 7-10 curricula.

    d. The curriculum must help prepare all students to become fulfilled and competent citizens and workers. It should build firm and meaningful foundational skills as well as provide the basis for developing expertise for those who move on to specialised advanced studies in academic disciplines, professions and technical trades.

    e. The curriculum must provide students with an understanding of the past that has shaped the society, culture and environment in which they are growing and developing, and with knowledge, understandings and skills that will help them in their futures.

    f. The curriculum must be feasible, taking account of the time and resources available to teachers and students, and the time it typically takes to learn complex concepts and ideas.

    g. The primary audience for ACT senior secondary curriculum documents should be classroom teachers. Documents should be concise and expressed in plain language which nevertheless preserves a complexity in ideas appropriate for professional practitioners. Documents should be recognisably similar across learning areas in language, structure and length.

    h. The curriculum must allow colleges to implement it in a way that values teachers' professional knowledge and that reflects the needs and interests evident in their contexts, as it will be teachers who decide how best to organise learning for students.

    i. The curriculum must be established on a strong evidence base related to learning, pedagogy and what works in professional practice, and it should encourage teachers to analyse and evaluate their practices systematically.

Curriculum content

7. The curriculum content, presented as content descriptions, specifies the knowledge, understanding and skills that young people are expected to learn and that teachers are expected to teach for a particular learning area/subject. The content descriptions may be accompanied by 'content elaborations' which, as support material, will provide illustrations and/or examples of the content descriptions.

Knowledge, understanding and skills

8. The Board recognises the entitlement of students to a core of knowledge, skills, understandings and values that will provide a foundation for their future contribution to Australia's society. This learning will provide the basis for success at and beyond school, and help young people continue their learning after they have left school.

9. The National Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians identifies three broad categories of outcomes that the curriculum should deliver for students (see Box 1).

Box 1: Intended educational outcomes for young Australians

A solid foundation in knowledge, understanding, skills and values on which further learning and adult life can be built

*   The curriculum will include a strong focus on literacy and numeracy skills. It will also enable students to build social and emotional intelligence, and nurture student wellbeing through health and physical education in particular. The curriculum will support students to relate well to others and foster an understanding of Australian society, citizenship and national values, including through the study of civics and citizenship. As a foundation for further learning and adult life the curriculum will include practical knowledge and skills development in areas such as ICT and design and technology, which are central to Australia's skilled economy and provide crucial pathways to post-school success.

Deep knowledge, understanding, skills and values that will enable advanced learning and an ability to create new ideas and translate them into practical applications

*   The curriculum will enable students to develop knowledge in the disciplines of English, mathematics, science, languages, humanities and the arts; to understand the spiritual, moral and aesthetic dimensions of life; and open up new ways of thinking. It will also support the development of deep knowledge within a discipline, which provides the foundation for inter-disciplinary approaches to innovation and complex problem-solving.

General capabilities that underpin flexible and analytical thinking, a capacity to work with others and an ability to move across subject disciplines to develop new expertise

*   The curriculum will support young people to develop a range of generic and employability skills that have particular application to the world of work and further education and training, such as planning and organising, the ability to think flexibly, to communicate well and to work in teams. Young people also need to develop the capacity to think creatively, innovate, solve problems and engage with new disciplines.

Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, *National Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, December 2008, p.13.

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10. The curriculum will provide the settings in which students can develop increasingly deep knowledge and skills. In the selection of content for particular learning areas, the Board will take account of the rapid expansion in bodies of knowledge and of the challenges this presents to curriculum development.

11. The Board will develop a curriculum that provides for rigorous study, preferring depth to breadth wherever a choice needs to be made, with consideration also being given to the teaching and learning time available.

12. The ACT senior secondary curriculum will always try to deliver a balance between knowledge and process that reflects what is known about the development of expertise in a learning area.

13. In each learning area, the curriculum will provide a rationale for the choice of curriculum content. This rationale will make clear to teachers and students why the content chosen is important for students, and will outline the broad scope of learning. The rationale will make clear how certain choices were made — whether they were based on 'big ideas' that are essential to deep understanding of a domain of knowledge; learning that is essential for particular further learning; or other important considerations such as the students' developing sense of personal identity, geographical and historical context.

General capabilities

14. Not all learning is contained in the learning areas into which the school curriculum has traditionally been divided. Reflections on the nature of work in the 21st century typically identify important general capabilities, and many people argue that schools should help students develop them. As shown in Box 1, the National Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians sees these as including 'planning and organising, the ability to think flexibly, to communicate well and to work in teams - the capacity to think creatively, innovate, solve problems and engage with new disciplines'.

15. Curriculum documents will indicate how learning in a particular area will contribute to the goals in the national declaration, how connections can be made between the discipline areas and how particular general capabilities will be explicitly dealt with in each area.

16. Each capability will be represented in each course in ways appropriate to that subject. Some will be included because they need to be developed and applied in the particular learning area. Others can be taught and learned by students in any learning area; their development will depend on teachers' choices of classroom activities.

17. Course developers will specifically cover the following general capabilities.

Literacy

18. Students become literate as they develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions to interpret and use language confidently for learning and communicating in and out of school and for participating effectively in society. Literacy involves students in listening to, reading, viewing, speaking, writing and creating oral, print, visual and digital texts, and using and modifying language for different purposes in a range of contexts.

Numeracy

19. Students become numerate as they develop the knowledge and skills to use mathematics confidently across other learning areas at school and in their lives more broadly. Numeracy involves students in recognising and understanding the role of mathematics in the world and having the dispositions and capacities to use mathematical knowledge and skills purposefully.

Information communication technology (ICT) capability

20. Students develop ICT capability as they learn to use ICT effectively and appropriately to access, create and communicate information and ideas, solve problems and work collaboratively in all learning areas at school, and in their lives beyond school. The capability involves students in learning to make the most of the digital technologies available to them, adapting to new ways of doing things as technologies evolve and limiting the risks to themselves and others in a digital environment.

Critical and creative thinking

21. Students develop capability in critical and creative thinking as they learn to generate and evaluate knowledge, clarify concepts and ideas, seek possibilities, consider alternatives and solve problems. Critical and creative thinking are integral to activities that require students to think broadly and deeply using skills, behaviours and dispositions such as reason, logic, resourcefulness, imagination and innovation in all learning areas at school and in their lives beyond school.

Personal and social capability

22. Students develop personal and social capability as they learn to understand themselves and others, and manage their relationships, learning, lives and work more effectively. The capability involves students in a range of practices including recognising and regulating emotions, developing empathy for others and understanding relationships, establishing and building positive relationships, making responsible decisions, working effectively in teams, handling challenging situations constructively and developing leadership skills.

Ethical understanding

23. Students develop ethical understanding as they identify and investigate the nature of ethical concepts, values and character traits, and understand how reasoning can assist ethical judgment. Ethical understanding involves students in building a strong personal and socially oriented ethical outlook that helps them to manage context, conflict and uncertainty, and to develop an awareness of the influence that their values and behaviour have on others.

Intercultural understanding

24. Students develop intercultural understanding as they learn to value their own cultures, languages and beliefs, and those of others. They come to understand how personal, group and national identities are shaped, and the variable and changing nature of culture. The capability involves students in learning about and engaging with diverse cultures in ways that recognise commonalities and differences, create connections with others and cultivate mutual respect.

Cross-curriculum priorities

25. The ACT Senior Secondary Curriculum is designed to meet the needs of students by delivering a relevant, contemporary and engaging curriculum that build on the educational goals of the Melbourne Declaration. The Melbourne Declaration identifies three key areas that need to be addressed for the benefit of both individuals and Australia as a whole. In the curriculum these have become priorities that provide students with the tools and language to engage with and better understand their world at a range of levels. The priorities provide dimensions which will enrich the curriculum through development of considered and focused content that fits naturally within learning areas. They enable the delivery of course content at the same time as developing knowledge, understanding and skills relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia or Sustainability. Incorporation of the priorities will encourage conversations between learning areas and between students, teachers and the wider community. The cross-curriculum priorities to be included in the curriculum are:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures
- Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia
- Sustainability.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

26. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures priority provides opportunities for all learners to deepen their knowledge of Australia by engaging with the world's oldest continuous living cultures. Students will understand that contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are strong, resilient, rich and diverse. The knowledge and understanding gained through this priority will enhance the ability of all young people to participate positively in the ongoing development of Australia.

Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia

27. The Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia priority will ensure that students learn about and recognise the diversity within and between the countries of the Asia region. They will develop knowledge and understanding of Asian societies, cultures, beliefs and environments, and the connections between the peoples of Asia, Australia, and the rest of the world. Asia literacy provides students with the skills to communicate and engage with the peoples of Asia so they can effectively live, work and learn in the region.

Sustainability

28. The Sustainability priority will allow young Australians to develop the knowledge, skills, values and world views necessary for them to act in ways that contribute to more sustainable patterns of living. It will enable individuals and communities to reflect on ways of interpreting and engaging with the world. The Sustainability priority is futures-oriented, focusing on protecting environments and creating a more ecologically and socially just world through informed action. Actions that support more sustainable patterns of living require consideration of environmental, social, cultural and economic systems and their interdependence.

Achievement standards

29. Achievement standards (formerly grade descriptors) will be for a learning area. Achievement standards describe the quality of student learning. Achievement standards describe five levels of achievement with these levels labelled as A-E.

Pedagogy

30. It is clear that pedagogy and curriculum content and processes cannot be treated entirely discretely, and that best current pedagogy and practice must be used when constructing curriculum documents.

Nature of the learner and learning

31. Teachers understand the developmental diversity of the students they teach and are responsible for organising learning opportunities to meet individual learning needs. Courses should not predetermine the instructional approach to be taken by teachers and should provide some flexibility for them to accommodate different levels of student development and achievement and approaches to learning.

The diversity of learners

32. BSSS is committed to the development of a high-quality curriculum for all students that promotes excellence and equity in education.

33. All students are entitled to rigorous, relevant and engaging learning programs drawn from a challenging curriculum that addresses their individual learning needs. The ACT senior secondary curriculum recognises that the needs of all students encompass cognitive, affective, physical, social and aesthetic curriculum experiences.

34. The three-dimensional design of the ACT senior secondary curriculum, comprising learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities, provides teachers with flexibility to cater for the diverse needs of students across the ACT and to personalise their learning.

35. BSSS acknowledges that many students with disability are able to achieve educational standards commensurate with their peers, with reasonable adjustments made as appropriate.

36. Teachers can enrich student learning by providing students with opportunities to work with learning area content in more depth or breadth; emphasising specific aspects of the general capabilities learning continua (for example, the higher order cognitive skills of the Critical and creative thinking capability); and/or focusing on cross-curriculum priorities.

Inclusivity

37. BSSS curriculum will contribute to achieving the goals of the Melbourne Declaration, including the promotion of equity and excellence in education. The curriculum must value and build on students' prior learning, experiences and goals. Examples used in the curriculum should reflect the diversity of knowledge, experience and cultural values of students. Particular consideration should be given to visible and positive ways of representing groups that might otherwise be vulnerable to exclusionary pressures.

Design Specifications for Courses

Background

The design specifications for the senior secondary courses build on:

a)   the *Senior Secondary Years Position Paper* that was subject to national consultation in the last quarter of 2009

b)   discussion on senior secondary curriculum in *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum* v4.0, which included reference to overall characteristics of the senior secondary Australian Curriculum.

Key terms

Courses will detail what teachers are expected to teach and students are expected to learn for year 11 and 12. They will describe the knowledge, understanding and skills that students will be expected to develop for each learning area across the years of schooling.

Learning areas are broad areas of the curriculum, including English, mathematics, science, the arts, languages, health and physical education.

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Additional units are avenues of learning that cannot be provided for within the four core 1.0 standard units by an adjustment to the program of learning.

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ACT senior secondary system **curriculum** comprises all BSSS approved courses of study.

Overview of design specifications for courses

1. The senior secondary course design specifications include:
   a) key elements:
      - administrative requirements (refer to template)
      - subject rationale and goals
      - unit goals
      - unit content descriptions
      - achievement standards

   b) information that:
      - outlines the purpose of each unit in relation to the overall rationale and aims
      - explains the structure of, and connection between, the units
      - explains connections between the F-10 curriculum in the learning area
      - identifies any assumptions about prior learning

Courses classifications

2. A course may have any combination of A, T, V and M. A/T, A/M or A/T/M courses must be clearly differentiated to reflect the classification. Differentiation may occur by adjustment of the cognitive demand, content or skills. The differentiation between A, T and M must align with their respective achievement standard.

Units

Format

3. Each unit begins with a short description that outlines the purpose and nature of the unit which provides a brief overview of the broad content or focus of the unit.

Core units

4. The foundation of a course comprises a minimum of four core 1.0 standard units. Core units provide students with the breadth of the subject. Units 1-4 may not necessarily be sequential and may not necessarily have prerequisites. Content descriptions which state specific subject-based knowledge, understanding and skills may be identical and/or different for units 1-4. The point of difference between core units will be defined in the unit description.

Additional units

5. It is at the discretion of developers to include a negotiated study unit as a fifth unit.

    Additional units must be supported by an educational rationale. The rationale must address all of the following guidelines:

    - units make provision for authentic pathways for students (further study or work related)
    - units must be distinct in either content or focus of study
    - evidence that the learning cannot be provided for within the four core 1.0 standard units by an adjustment to the program of learning.

6. It is at the discretion of the BSSS Director acting on the advice of the course accreditation panel to determine accreditation of additional units.

Negotiated study units

7. A negotiated 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. A negotiated study unit is decided upon by a class, group(s) or individual student in consultation with the teacher and with the principal's approval. The program of learning for a negotiated study unit must meet all the content descriptions as appears in the course.

8. *Guidelines for writing a negotiated study unit*
    - It is at the course developers' discretion to include a negotiated unit.
    - Parameters for a negotiated unit should be clearly explained in the course document. Content descriptions must be generic to accommodate different foci and align with the achievement standards.

9. *Guidelines for delivering a negotiated study unit*
    - Specific unit goals, content descriptions and assessment criteria outlined in the negotiated unit are mandatory.

- A student can only study a maximum of one negotiated unit in each subject.
- A negotiated study unit must meet Board policy (Refer to section 3.2.9.2)
- Pre-requisites for a negotiated unit are that students have completed at least two standard units of the course.
- There must be procedures and documentation that clearly outline decisions made as a result of the negotiation process. It is expected that decisions would be agreed within two weeks of the commencement of a unit of work and be published in the Unit Outline (Refer to section 4.3.6.1 Unit Outline). This then becomes the document from which students and teacher operate for that unit. Any further negotiation would be of a minor kind e.g. due dates of assessment tasks.

Structure

10. All course structures include the following elements: a unit title, unit description, specific unit goals and content descriptions. BSSS courses may differ in the way in which these elements are organised.
11. Courses may be organised where content descriptions differ across units in a course. For example, the English T course integrating Australian Curriculum.
12. Courses may be organised where the content descriptions are identical across units in a course. The point of difference between units is reflected by electives within each unit.
13. The organisation of elements within a standard 1.0 will be influenced by the subject. It is at the discretion of the BSSS Director and accreditation panel to determine how elements within standard units are organised.

Administrative arrangements for units

14. Each standard 1.0 unit makes provision for two half standard units. The half standard units appear on the course adoption form but are not explicitly documented in courses.
15. The purpose of a half standard 0.5 unit is twofold. Firstly, the provision for half standard units are for administrative purposes (i.e. early exist/late entry of a student. Secondly, the provision of half standard units enables colleges to deliver courses to accommodate their structure, physical resources or align with other curriculum.
16. It is at the discretion of the college principal to split a standard 1.0 unit into two half standard units. There is no provision to combine half standard units unless the college structure features three sessions and three reporting periods in one year. Colleges are required to adopt the half standard 0.5 units. However, colleges are not required to submit explicit documentation outlining their half standard 0.5 units to the Office of the Board of Senior Secondary Studies.
17. It is the responsibility of the college principal to ensure that all content is delivered in units approved by the Board.
18. Each standard 1.0 unit will be designed to be taught in about half a 'school year' (approximately 55–60 hours duration including assessment and examinations) of senior secondary studies.

19. BSSS units will include assumptions about prior learning. These assumptions will be implicit in the unit content. Additional information about assumed prior learning may be provided as appropriate.

Developing Modified courses for Accreditation

20. Modified (M) courses are for students who satisfy Disability Criteria. They are for students with a mild to moderate intellectual disability.
21. Courses deemed appropriate for students with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities will make provision for Modified courses. The provision of modified courses is at the discretion of the accreditation panel and the BSSS Director.
22. M courses will be developed for the group; they are not an individual learning plan (ILP). Ensure that the specific unit goals are appropriate for M classification.

Course Rationale

23. The rationale will:
    - describe the nature of the subject in general terms and provide an outline of how learning in this course relates to the contemporary world and current practice
    - explain the place and purpose of the subject, how learning in the subject is valuable and how it contributes to meeting the national goals of schooling
    - be consistent with the F–10 learning area rationale
    - be approximately 200 words.

Course Goals

24. The goals will present high-level statements of the major purpose of the subject and the intended developments in student learning.

    The goals will:

    contain a small number of statements for the subject (approximately 2–4)

    apply across the five units of the subject.

Specific unit goals

25. The specific unit goals will describe in broad terms what a student is expected to have learned as a result of studying the specified content. Specific unit goals will describe the major dimensions of content, namely the knowledge, understanding and skills required by the subject. Four to six goals will be written for each unit; some will focus on knowledge and understanding and some on skills.

Content descriptions

26. Content descriptions will state the specific subject-based knowledge, understanding and skills to be taught and learned.
27. Content descriptions will be written for each unit. Together with specific unit goals and levels of achievement, they will provide sufficient detail for teachers and students to know what is expected to be taught and learned. Content descriptions will incorporate the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities that naturally align with the subject.
28. Content descriptions:
    - consist of a lead statement about conceptual focus, with further detail exemplified by a series of sub-points where necessary to describe the breadth and depth of the knowledge, understanding and skills
    - describe knowledge and understanding without the use of active verbs
    - describe skills using active verbs
    - use examples within the description to elaborate content as necessary
    - are organised by subheadings drawing from knowledge, understanding and skills outlined in the Achievement standards.
    - The content descriptions may be accompanied by 'content elaborations' which, as support material, will provide illustrations and/or examples of the content descriptions.

A guide to reading and implementing content descriptions

29. 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. The lens which the teacher uses to demonstrate the content descriptions may be either guided through provision of electives within each unit or determined by the teacher when developing their program of learning.
30. A program of learning is what a college provides to implement the course for a subject. It is at the discretion of the teacher to emphasise some content descriptions over others. The teacher may teach additional (not listed) content provided that it meets the specific unit goals. This will be informed by the student needs and interests.

Electives

31. An elective is a lens for demonstrating the content descriptions within a standard 1.0 or half standard 0.5 unit.
32. Electives across units in a course will be grouped according to theme, event or time period. An elective must align with content descriptions in the standard 1.0 unit. Knowledge, understandings and skills articulated in the Achievement standards will inform the stems for each sentence when writing electives. The structure of each elective must be identical. It is at the discretion of the course developers and accreditation panel to determine the number of electives if any, in a unit.
33. Electives are grouped to makes provision for students to engage with all aspects of the discipline.

Inclusivity

34. BSSS courses will provide flexibility for teachers to take into account the different rates at which students develop and a diverse range of learning and assessment needs.

35. Teachers understand the diversity in the students they teach and are responsible for organising learning opportunities to meet individual learning needs. Teachers, schools and school authorities have a primary role in dealing with these differences. For example, for students with intellectual disabilities, individual education plans are developed to determine which adjustments should be made to the curriculum to best meet the needs of the individual student.

36. The senior secondary Australian Curriculum will be designed with the needs of the full range of students in mind. Consideration will be given to making each senior secondary Australian Curriculum subject accessible to as many students as possible, across and within course frameworks and will provide for a range of interests and capabilities.

37. BSSS courses promote excellence and equity in education. BSSS courses are based on the assumptions that each student can learn and that the needs of every student are important. It enables high expectations to be set for each student as teachers account for the current levels of learning of individual students and the different rates at which students develop. Students in classrooms have multiple, diverse, and changing needs that are shaped by individual learning histories and abilities as well as cultural, language backgrounds and socioeconomic factors.

Guidelines to assist writers address inclusivity

38. Specific guidelines to assist writers address inclusivity will include questions, such as those that follow.

Language

- Does the course acknowledge that students bring a diverse range of language resources and that these need to be recognised, used and extended?

- Has care been taken to ensure that language used is not exclusive and that terms selected are not negative?

- Is the student's language acknowledged as an important learning resource? For example, are students encouraged to explore concepts using their home language when appropriate?

Stereotypes

- Are any groups ascribed characteristics that are more negative or positive than other groups? In what context?

- Are connections made to a variety of skills, knowledge and careers in non-stereotyped ways?

Bias

- Is there evidence of bias in the language being used, such as different language being used to describe the same idea or experience for various groups, with pejorative connotations?

- Is a particular view or situation portrayed as 'natural' rather than one of many?

Context for learning

- Does the curriculum value and use what students bring to the class from their own background and life experiences?

- Does the content/context cater for different levels of ability?

- Does the content/context cater for different socioeconomic situations and/or geographic locations?

- Are examples appropriate to different learning contexts, learners and learning styles? The curriculum writing process will involve advice and review of documents by advisory group.

Course delivery

39. Colleges are responsible for selecting the most appropriate strategies for the delivery of units taking into account issues such as access, availability of relevant resources and teacher expertise. These strategies could include all or a mix of timetabled classes, scheduled contact times, flexible on-line learning1. Where these activities are delivered outside a timetabled class environment, procedures must be in place to monitor student participation and progress.

Design Specifications for Frameworks

Background

Framework design specifications build on:
a)   BSSS Policy and Procedures Manual Last Updated January 2016
b)   the Senior Secondary Years Position Paper that was subject to national consultation in the last quarter of 2009
c)   discussion on senior secondary curriculum in The Shape of the Australian Curriculum v4.0, which included reference to overall characteristics of the senior secondary Australian Curriculum.

Overview of design specifications for frameworks

The design specifications for frameworks include:
- rationale and goals
- goals
- concepts, knowledge and skills
- assessment
- moderation
- achievement standards
- common curriculum elements

Key terms

Learning areas are broad areas of the curriculum, including English, mathematics, science, the arts, languages, health and physical education.

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Content descriptions refer to the subject-based knowledge, understanding and skills to be taught and learned.

A **program of learning** is what a college develops to implement the course for a subject and to ensure that the content descriptions are taught and learned.

Achievement standards provide an indication of typical performance at five different levels (corresponding to grades A to E) following completion of study of senior secondary course content for units in a subject.

ACT senior secondary system curriculum comprises all BSSS approved courses of study.

Framework rationale
1. The rationale will
   - describe the nature and scope of the learning area and makes explicit the reasons for its place in the curriculum.
   - be approximately 200 words.

Framework goals
2. The goals will present high-level statements of the intended learning outcomes. Learning outcomes will describe the major dimensions of content, namely the knowledge, understanding and skills required by the learning area. Four to six learning outcomes will be written for each unit; some will focus on knowledge and understanding and some on skills.

Concepts, knowledge and skills
3. Concepts, knowledge and skills will state the specific subject-based knowledge, understanding and skills to be taught and learned.

Common Curriculum Elements
4. This section lists the Common Curriculum Elements (CCE) approved by the Board for inclusion in ACT courses. The CCE are listed in Appendix 2.

Assessment
5. Assessment includes a table that of Assessment Task Types, with examples of tasks that provide evidence of student achievement of the goals of the course and Assessment Criteria (the dimensions of quality that teachers look for in evaluating student work). This section also provides additional assessment advice, as appropriate.

Achievement standards
6. These design specifications for achievement standards are based on ACARA design specifications for achievement standards.

Overview
7. Achievement standards will be written to be of direct equivalence across subjects.

Purpose

8. Achievement standards will provide an indication of typical performance at five different levels (corresponding to grades A to E) following the completion of study of ACT senior secondary content.

Principles

9. The Achievement standards will be designed and written:
   a) to provide an ordered sequence of descriptions of the achievement evident within the population of students completing a 1.0 standard or 0.5 half standard unit
   b) to describe the qualities typical in the knowledge, understanding and skill displayed by students at five levels
   c) to be challenging and reflective of the course classification
   d) to inform assessment and standard setting processes
   e) to provide a basis for making evidence based judgements about the quality of student learning in courses
   f) to provide an indication of typical performance at each level and thus capture what the average student at a given level has demonstrated

Structure

10. Achievement standards are likely to be of greater practical utility if they are structured to reflect key dimensions of the content of the relevant learning area. Dimensions can be general, such as:
    - knowledge and conceptual understanding
    - problem solving and skills application
    - identifying, analysing and organising information
    - communicating ideas.

11. The ACT Achievement standards are structured to consistently reflect the key dimensions of knowledge and understanding: and skills or processes.

Length

12. Achievement standards are likely to have greater practical utility if they are succinct. Achievement standards extending over many lines of text are likely to be treated as checklists rather than as generalised, holistic descriptions of a given level or quality of achievement. Higher levels are likely to require more extended description than lower levels.

Terminology

13. Terms such as 'analyse' and 'describe' can have everyday meanings that are quite general. When creating achievement standards they must be associated with specific meanings that are drawn from the Common Curriculum Elements and the glossary of verbs (Appendix A) to ensure consistency.

Syntax
14. Common syntax ensures a complete specification of an intended standard. A useful guide is as follows:
    a)   Given a specific content (context)
    b)   With a defined level of consistency/accuracy (consistency/accuracy)
    c)   Students perform a specified action (action)
    d)   Using specified materials (object) and of a given level of complexity (object difficulty)
    e)   With a response having the following characteristics (quality)

15. So a sentence from the achievement standard could be deconstructed as follows:

Syntactical element	Element of standard
context	For each biological system studied
consistency/accuracy	
action	selects and applies
object/object difficulty	theories and models of systems and processes
quality	to make plausible predictions, explain new phenomena and solve complex problems

16. The analysis reveals that some elements of the full syntax have not been addressed. In some circumstances this is appropriate, but in others it may result in uncertainty regarding the actual standard required. Note that this is a guide and not a rule.

Relationship between Year 11 and 12 Achievement Standards
17. Achievement standards are developed for each year level and classification (A/T). Year 12 achievement standard are differentiated from year 11 by adjusting the cognitive demands and expectations.

18. A single achievement standard is developed for Years 11 and 12 modified courses.

Moderation
19. The Framework describes the system of moderation in place under the ACT system of senior secondary education.

References
20. The Framework includes a list of references that have informed its development.

Framework development group
21. The Framework includes an acknowledgement of people who have worked on the Framework document.

Other information

22. The specifications based on ACARA senior secondary design specifications will also include:
    - generic text about the general capabilities, with subject-specific text about those capabilities represented strongly
    - generic text about the cross-curriculum priorities, with subject-specific text about those priorities represented strongly;
    - a glossary of key terms used in the subject; subject specific terms that are considered essential for students to know and be able to use are defined and referenced to acknowledged sources.

General capabilities

23. The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians identifies essential skills for twenty-first century learners – in literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT), thinking, creativity, teamwork and communication. It describes individuals who can manage their own wellbeing, relate well to others, make informed decisions about their lives, become citizens who behave with ethical integrity, relate to and communicate across cultures, work for the common good and act with responsibility at local, regional and global levels. In BSSS courses these skills are primarily addressed through the general capabilities.

24. 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. They are addressed through the frameworks and are identified wherever they are developed or applied in content descriptions. They are also identified where they offer opportunities to add depth and richness to student learning in content elaborations.

25. Curriculum documents show how the general capabilities are addressed in each learning area. Each capability will be represented in each learning area in ways appropriate to that area. For some they will be included because they need to be developed and applied in the particular learning area. For others they can be taught and learned by students in any learning area – their development will depend on teachers' choices of classroom activities.

BSSS courses specifically cover the following general capabilities:

Literacy

26. Students become literate as they develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions to interpret and use language confidently for learning and communicating in and out of school and for participating effectively in society. Literacy involves students in listening to, reading, viewing, speaking, writing and creating oral, print, visual and digital texts, and using and modifying language for different purposes in a range of contexts.

Numeracy

27. Students become numerate as they develop the knowledge and skills to use mathematics confidently across all frameworks at school and in their lives more broadly. Numeracy involves students in recognising and understanding the role of mathematics in the world and having the dispositions and capacities to use mathematical knowledge and skills purposefully.

Information and communication technology (ICT) capability

28. Students develop ICT capability as they learn to use ICT effectively and appropriately to access, create and communicate information and ideas, solve problems and work collaboratively at school, and in their lives beyond school. The capability involves students in learning to make the most of the digital technologies available to them, adapting to new ways of doing things as technologies evolve and limiting the risks to themselves and others in a digital environment.

Critical and creative thinking

29. Students develop capability in critical and creative thinking as they learn to generate and evaluate knowledge, clarify concepts and ideas, seek possibilities, consider alternatives and solve problems. Critical and creative thinking are integral to activities that require students to think broadly and deeply using skills, behaviours and dispositions such as reason, logic, resourcefulness, imagination and innovation in the lives beyond school.

Personal and social capability

30. Students develop personal and social capability as they learn to understand themselves and others, and manage their relationships, lives, work and learning more effectively. The capability involves students in a range of practices including recognising and regulating emotions, developing empathy for and understanding of others, establishing positive relationships, making responsible decisions, working effectively in teams and handling challenging situations constructively.

Ethical behaviour

31. Students develop capability in learning to behave ethically as they identify and investigate the nature of ethical concepts, values, character traits and principles, and understand how reasoning can assist ethical judgment. Ethical behaviour involves students in building a strong personal and socially oriented ethical outlook that helps them to manage context, conflict and uncertainty, and to develop an awareness of the influence that their values and behaviour have on others.

Intercultural understanding

32. Students develop intercultural understanding as they learn to value their own cultures, languages and beliefs, and those of others. They come to understand how personal, group and national identities are shaped, and the variable and changing nature of culture. The capability involves students in learning about and engaging with diverse cultures in ways that recognise commonalities and differences, create connections with others and cultivate mutual respect.

11. Cross-curriculum priorities

33. There are other cross-curriculum matters that can be thought of as priorities rather than capabilities. BSSS courses, through development of curriculum documents will address three cross-curriculum priorities.

34. BSSS courses have been written to equip young Australians with the knowledge, understanding and skills that will enable them to engage effectively with and prosper in a globalised world. Students will gain personal and social benefits, be better equipped to make sense of the world in which they live and make an important contribution to building the social, intellectual and creative capital of our nation.

35. Accordingly, the BSSS courses must be both relevant to the lives of students and address the contemporary issues they face. With these considerations and the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians in mind, BSSS courses give special attention to these three priorities:

36. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, to ensure that all young Australians will be given the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, their significance for Australia and the impact these have had, and continue to have, on our world

37. Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia, to reflect the importance of young people knowing about Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia, because as they develop a better understanding of the countries and cultures of the Asia region, they will come to appreciate the economic, political and cultural interconnections that Australia has with the region

38. Sustainability, to allow young people to develop an appreciation of the need for more sustainable patterns of living, and to build capacities for thinking, valuing and acting necessary to create a more sustainable future.

39. Cross-curriculum priorities are represented in all curriculum documents. They will have a strong but varying presence depending on their relevance to the course. For each of the cross-curriculum priorities, a set of organising ideas has been developed. These are consistent across the curriculum. At the commencement of the shaping process, the writers will determine which of the cross-curriculum priorities organising ideas are taken to be inherent to learning in the area and which ones could also be developed with an appropriate choice of activities by the teacher. These are then confirmed at the beginning of the writing process.