



**Shape of ACT Senior Secondary Curriculum:
Pathways to Work and Learning A/M/V**

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The Shape of ACT Senior Secondary Curriculum: *Pathways to Work and Learning* will guide the writing of the *Pathways to Work and Learning A/M/V* course.
- 1.2 This paper has been prepared following the deliberations of the Pathways to Work and Learning writing team, and also in consultation with Dr Kathy Mann of the University of Canberra Faculty of Education.
- 1.3 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 *Pathways to Work and Learning A/M/V* course will be the basis of planning, teaching, learning and assessment in ACT senior secondary schools.
- 2.2 The course makes provision for qualifications or a Statement of Attainment from the Foundation Skills Training Package (FSK). Refer to training.gov.au for details of the Training Package.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies is reviewing the *Pathways to Work and Learning* course in the five-year course development cycle of improvement and renewal.
- 3.2 *Pathways for Work and Learning A/M/V* is a subject that develops significant skills, knowledge and understandings, as well as a range of general capabilities, to pursue a range of future occupations and life aspirations. In its updated form, this course will be contemporary and highly relevant to senior secondary students in the 21st Century.

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.

- 3.3 The *Pathways to Work and Learning* course is to be redeveloped under the *Integrated Learning Framework* as it engages with evidence and methodologies from several disciplines, such as health, social analysis, vocational education, career planning, work-skills development, literacy and numeracy. Drawing on the definitions of Alexander Refsum Jensenius, this course is interdisciplinary in that students learn how to assess and apply evidence from different disciplines to inform their thinking and draw conclusions. It is multidisciplinary in that the epistemological focus of units will shift as students connect their learning to different areas of their life. The course is transdisciplinary in that the course aims to provide the opportunity for students to connect different learnings and understandings drawn from their studies to improving their quality of life. (Jensenius, A. R, 2012) The course will engage with changes in technology and society that challenge students' learning and fulfilment, and it will build skills applicable to life, learning, community and workplaces.
- 3.4 This is in keeping with the *Integrated Learning Framework* that states:

“Advances in technology, coupled with political, economic, and social shifts both nationally and globally have transformed the nature of work and learning. Students are required to demonstrate a range of capabilities. They are required to apply concepts, methods, and language of more than one discipline to explore topics, design research questions, develop skills and solve problems

Courses written under this framework promote interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches. Students will learn how to transfer capabilities such as

the research process, information management, critical thinking, creativity, effective teambuilding, leadership, collaborative decision making and communicate with a diverse range of people.

Students complete an inquiry that has a purpose, product or outcome. They develop the ability to engage with a process, question sources of information, make effective decisions, consider ethical implications, evaluate their own progress, be innovative and solve problems.

Courses written under this framework are suited for students with diverse abilities and learning styles, including students preparing to enter the workforce, as well as for further study.”

(BSSS, [Integrated Learning Framework](#), 2017, p. 4.)

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

- analyse and evaluate ideas, methodologies, concepts, issues and knowledge
- apply ethical frameworks that underpin relevant disciplines
- plan and develop research projects
- reflect on the learning process
- demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills
- build on and connect, concepts and skills from diverse disciplines
- use inquiry and research methods from diverse disciplines to identify problems and to research solutions
- use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse methodologies and insights from a variety of disciplines
- demonstrate collaboration and build mentoring relationships within the community
- apply creative and innovative solutions to real life contexts.

Courses developed under the [Integrated Learning 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.

3.6 Concepts, knowledge and skills from the *Integrated Learning Framework*

Concepts and knowledge

- multidisciplinary, transdisciplinary, interdisciplinary approaches
- models for research and inquiry (proposing, designing, initiating, planning, producing and reviewing)
- problem finding
- information and data management
- information and communication technologies
- personal and social capability
- ethical understanding
- collaborative and global understanding
- nature of creativity and innovation
- entrepreneurial enterprise

- consultation with community.

Skills

- creating and producing
- communication
- critical review
- creative thinking
- modelling
- evaluation, analysis, assessing
- selecting primary and secondary sources
- decision making
- teamwork, collaboration
- project management (including time management/organisation)
- metacognition (including reflecting on the process).

3.7 All courses of study for the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate should enable students to develop essential capabilities for twenty-first century learners as proposed by the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration* (2019) “to prepare young people to thrive in a time of rapid social and technological change, and complex environmental, social and economic challenges” (2019, p. 3). This is in part developed in all ACT BSSS course through the Australian Curriculum General Capabilities, which comprise an integrated and interconnected set of knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions. (ACARA, 2016) The course will help students to develop consciously the clusters of skills and dispositions that they can transfer from role to role as they adapt to a rapidly changing world and work context. (Snow, A, 2019)

Pathways to Work and Learning provides opportunities to develop capabilities in ‘Personal and Social Capability’, ‘ICT’, ‘Literacy’, and ‘Numeracy’ in particular, as this has been identified by research and by teachers in the ACT as aiding transitions between levels of schooling and supporting movement into the world. In addition, students will develop capability in ‘Intercultural Understanding’ in understanding the existing social and work environment. (ACARA, 2016)

Students develop personal and social capability as they learn to understand themselves and others, and manage their relationships, lives, work and learning more effectively. Personal and social 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.

The full reference can be found [here](#).

In the Australian Curriculum, 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 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.

The full reference can be found [here](#).

In the Australian Curriculum, 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 encompasses the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that students need to use mathematics in a wide range of situations. It involves students recognising and understanding the role of mathematics in the world and having the dispositions and capacities to use mathematical knowledge and skills purposefully.

The full reference can be found [here](#).

In the Australian Curriculum, students develop Information and Communication Technology (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. ICT capability involves students 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. To participate in a knowledge-based economy and to be empowered within a technologically sophisticated society now and into the future, students need the knowledge, skills and confidence to make ICT work for them at school, at home, at work and in their communities.

The full reference can be found [here](#).

- 3.8** 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.

<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, respectful and contributing 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, a *Pathways to Work and Learning* course should include:

- a student-centred pedagogical approach
- an interdisciplinary approach
- the educational needs of young people with respect to developing pathways for further learning and work opportunities
- the Integrated Learning Framework and Achievement Standards
- the needs of different schools and sectors (government and non-government)
- acquiring multiple practices of studying and working effectively and successfully
- learning how to learn and learning about the opportunities and practices for studying and working
- opportunities to apply learning and skills through engagement with the world outside school
- understanding the regulations available to protect human rights and maintain safety

5. AIMS OF THE PATHWAYS TO WORK AND LEARNING CURRICULUM

5.1 This course makes provision for students to develop skills as lifelong learners. They develop understanding of themselves as learners, workers and people, so that they may be confident in adapting to change and take up those opportunities. As young adults they are engaged in building for productive and meaningful lives. (Nielsen, 2007; 2013)

Students develop the enterprise skills necessary to futureproof their working lives by being open to learning and to identifying and taking advantage of opportunities. (FFYA, 2017)
Students develop understanding of social, legal and industrial codes, and how to navigate them so they can plan for their future lives.

5.2 In *Pathways to Work and Learning*, students are provided with the opportunity to develop skills, knowledge and understandings in regard to:

- becoming a lifelong learner
- literacy and numeracy skills necessary to access and realise most opportunities
- learning how to learn and research to realise opportunities
- information technology skills and digital literacy necessary to meet most workplace and study requirements
- personal and interpersonal skills and dispositions necessary to build effective relationships in professional contexts
- cultivate teamwork and collaboration skills necessary for most contexts
- communication and presentation skills necessary to take advantage of opportunities

- using critical and creative thinking skills and practical capacity to solve problems
- enterprise skills and an entrepreneurial disposition

6. STRUCTURE OF THE PATHWAYS TO WORK AND LEARNING COURSE

The principles underpinning the structure of this course is Big Ideas. The theory of the use of Big Ideas in the curriculum was developed by JayMcTighe and Grant Wiggins. Big ideas are what we want students to understand by the end of their study. The course writers have been supported in their understanding of this area of learning by Dr Kathy Mann of the Faculty of Education at the University of Canberra.

Rationale
<p><i>Pathways to Work and Learning</i> provides students with opportunities to acquire knowledge, understanding and skills that provide access to further studies and employment. The course also provides the opportunity to develop transferable skills, develop a career mindset, understand and apply workplace practices, identify opportunities. The course supports the acquisition of enterprise skills, such as communication, presentation, digital and teamwork that give access to a wide range of occupations and allows students to acquire new and emerging skills sets. It offers the opportunity to learn about how to engage with a complex world of study and work.</p>
Units
<p>The Career Mindset</p> <p>Students develop the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to build a career mindset. Students investigate the changing world at a local, national and global level, and set goals to address the challenges and take advantage of opportunities. Students explore the practices, methods and dispositions useful for work and learning. They identify learning required to prepare for a planned career. They acquire the clusters of 21st Century skills to empower them as lifelong and adaptive learners and workers. Students understand the value of their existing skills and knowledge, their transferability to a wide range of settings, and reflect on areas for further development.</p>
<p>Workplace Practices</p> <p>This unit focuses on the expectations of workers, 21st century skills, and relational skills utilised in a variety of diverse workplace environments. They analyze and understand workplace practices such as digital processes, communication protocols, behavioral expectations, workplace rights and obligations, and workplace health and safety expectations. Students understand social, legal and industrial codes, and how to navigate them so they can plan for their future lives as they work with others.</p>
<p>Enterprise Skills</p> <p>Students develop and apply transferable skills that allow them to be enterprising, so they can navigate careers across a range of industries and professions. They understand, develop and refine enterprise skills: problem solving, communication skills, digital literacy, teamwork skills, presentation skills, critical thinking, creativity, and financial literacy. Students appraise their personal capacities, become aware of their existing skills, and identify and redress gaps.</p>

Creating Workplace Opportunities

Students apply their understanding and skills to develop their own ideas, build supports and networks, to plan for opportunities for their future. They work collaboratively and independently to be creative, solve problems, and present their ideas. Students develop and use project management skills to bring their innovations and ideas to action. They identify sources of reliable information, advice and support to implement entrepreneurial ideas. Students investigate opportunities and learn to how to research workplace contexts, assess risk and develop and implement a plan.

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

To equip students to engage in their future, they should examine their themselves, the processes and systems at work in their world, how to learn, and how to respond to change. This intention follows the aims enunciated in the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration*:

"The skills and knowledge that young people acquire are critical to their success and happiness. The scale and pace of change in society and the economy mean that now more than ever, the ability to learn and grow beyond the compulsory years of education and training is essential. Skills, knowledge and capabilities will need to be renewed and updated throughout life." (Commonwealth Education Council, 2019, p. 10)

In addition, the intention of this course also follows the ACT's *Future of Education* plan.

"The Strategy is about developing capable adults who have learnt to learn, live productively in society, think, create and work in an increasingly digital future... The Strategy also recognises that learning environments are places that bring people together as a community and enable relationships to form between people and services." (Berry, 2018)

Both the future orientations of the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration* and the ACT's *Future of Education* plan find a presence in the purpose of this course in that it build the capacity to engage with future changes and adversity, and the skills to build a meaningful life.

7.2 Pathways to Work and Learning course

Pathways to Work and Learning retains an important place in ACT senior secondary curriculum. The curriculum fosters learning, intrapersonal and interpersonal understanding, intercultural understanding, and communication skills that equip students to take an active part in their community as people, citizens and workers.

7.3 Equity and opportunity

The *Pathways to Work and Learning* course provide flexibility and choice for teachers and students. Teachers will design programs of learning to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills

outlined in the course. The factors that influence those programs include school and community contexts, local community learning opportunities, contemporary and local issues and available learning resources.

This course is intended to provide a means to redress inequities in students' access to good information. It attempts to broaden access to information, dispositions and habits that will enable better engagement with society.

7.4 Connections to other learning areas

Pathways to Work and Learning is an inherently interdisciplinary course. The curriculum for courses will identify where there are links or opportunities to build cross curriculum learning. The connections arise naturally out of the curriculum.

7.5 Role of digital technologies

Students and teachers integrate a growing range of online information, tools and applications into teaching and learning in this course. These include a range of online resources including databases, reference works and indexes to library holdings. Students will develop skills for lifelong learning through digital resources.

Pathways to Work and Learning students will examine their place in the digital world and how to use it for their own benefit. They will examine questions raised by the digital environment and develop their own solutions for living well and safely.

7.6 Clarity of curriculum

The curriculum is substantial 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. The curriculum document is expressed clearly in terms that are accessible to a new teacher, while allowing all teachers to enhance it 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 Accredited (A) and Modified (M) levels of study, as well as providing for Vocational (V) pathways.

7.9 General capabilities

Skills and understanding related to thinking skills and creativity, self-management, teamwork, intercultural understandings are further developed and used in *Pathways to Work and Learning*. In addition, capabilities such as ICT and ethical awareness are represented in the courses in ways appropriate to that area.

7.10 Cross-curriculum perspectives

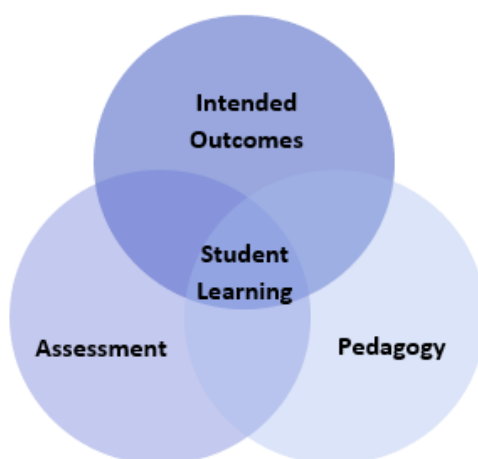
Each of these perspectives, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures, Australian's Engagement with Asia, and, sustainability, are represented in the courses in ways appropriate to that area. Curriculum documents are explicit as to how the perspectives are dealt with in each course and how links can be made between learning areas.

8. PEDAGOGY AND ASSESSMENT

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

Underpinning beliefs

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



Learning Principles

1. Learning builds on existing knowledge, understandings and skills.
(Prior knowledge)
2. When learning is organised around major concepts, principles and significant real world issues, within and across disciplines, it helps students make connections and build knowledge structures.
(Deep knowledge and connectedness)
3. Learning is facilitated when students actively monitor their own learning and consciously develop ways of organising and applying knowledge within and across contexts.
(Metacognition)
4. Learners' sense of self and motivation to learn 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 *Pathways to Work and Learning* course is to be developed under the *Integrated Learning* framework. The course promotes critical and creative thinking and personal and social capabilities, equipping young citizens for the demands and challenges of the 21st Century globalised world. *Pathways to Work and Learning* equips students to analyse how to build pathways for themselves in achieve their study and work goals.

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