



# Curriculum review Guidelines paper

Version 1.0

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## Amendment history

Date	Version	Comment
February 2021	1.0	<p>This document defines the design specifications for the elements of the F–10 Australian Curriculum and provides guidelines for curriculum review teams undertaking ACARA’s review of the F–10 Australian Curriculum commencing in June 2020.</p> <p>Approved by the ACARA Board on 19 February 2021.</p>

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## Introduction

In June 2020, the Education Council tasked ACARA to undertake a review of the Australian Curriculum for Foundation – Year 10 (F–10) (the Review), to ensure it is meeting the needs of students and is providing clear guidance for teachers.

All eight learning areas from Foundation to Year 10 will be reviewed by the end of 2021 and, subject to ministerial approval, the next version of the Australian Curriculum will be published on the improved [Australian Curriculum website](#) by the start of 2022.

This document defines the revised design specifications for the elements of the F–10 Australian Curriculum. It updates the design specifications for some curriculum elements originally described in the [Curriculum Design Paper \(version 3.1, 2013\)](#). It also provides the guidelines that the curriculum review teams used to undertake ACARA's review of the F–10 Australian Curriculum, commencing in June 2020.

This document evolved during the review process, taking into account feedback from reference groups, review teams, and other stakeholders involved in the Review.

This document should be read in conjunction with other key documents, namely:

- [Alice Springs \(Mparntwe\) Education Declaration \(2019\)](#)
- [The Shape of the Australian Curriculum \(version 5.0, June 2020\)](#)
- [Terms of Reference – Review of the Australian Curriculum F–10 \(June 2020\)](#)
- [Curriculum Design Paper \(version 3.1, 2013\)](#)
- [Curriculum Review Process Paper \(version 1.0, August 2020\)](#).

## Design specifications and review guidelines for the introductory sections of the curriculum

### Background

The F–10 Australian Curriculum comprises eight learning areas:

1. English
2. Mathematics
3. Science
4. Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) (F–6/7 Humanities and Social Sciences, 7–10 History, 7–10 Geography, 7–10 Civics and Citizenship, 7–10 Economics and Business)
5. The Arts (Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music, Visual Arts)
6. Languages (Arabic, Auslan, Chinese, Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages, Framework for Classical Languages, French, German, Hindi, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Modern Greek, Spanish, Turkish, Vietnamese)
7. Technologies (Design and Technologies, Digital Technologies)
8. Health and Physical Education.

The review of all eight learning areas will be completed by the end of 2021, noting that the 16 Languages subjects will be completed in stages, with Chinese, French, Italian and Japanese completed first, by the end of 2021, and the other languages completed by 2023.

The Australian Curriculum provides an introductory section for each learning area, including:

- Rationale
- Aims
- Organisation of the learning area
- Key connections
- Key considerations
- Glossary.

This section outlines the agreed design specifications for each of these elements of the Australian Curriculum and the guidelines curriculum review teams used to review and revise individual elements as necessary during the Review.

### Rationale

#### *Design specifications*

A rationale clarifies the value and importance of each learning area, its distinctiveness, and how students will benefit from its study. A rationale introduces each F–10 learning area (7–10 for Languages) and should be no more than 300 words.

Learning areas with more than one subject include a rationale for each subject in addition to the learning area rationale.

### *Guidelines for review*

- Review the existing rationale to check whether it still holds true as a statement of why the learning area/subject exists and how students will benefit from its study. In particular, review the alignment with identified core concepts.
- Ensure that, in learning areas with more than one subject, the subject rationale provides a subject-specific purpose statement to align with, rather than replicate, the learning area rationale.
- Take the opportunity to sharpen up rationales that exceed the 300 word limit.

## **Aims**

### *Design specifications*

Aims identify the major learning that students demonstrate as a result of being taught the content in each learning area.

The statement of aims for F–10 comprises a small number (4–6) of statements for the learning area. Learning areas with more than one subject include aims for each subject in addition to the learning area aims.

### *Guidelines for review*

- Review the existing aims to check whether they require refinement. In particular, review the alignment with identified core concepts.
- Ensure that, in learning areas with more than one subject, the subject aims provide subject-specific aims to align with, rather than replicate, learning area aims.

## **Organisation of the learning area**

This section outlines how the learning area is structured into strands and sub-strands and identifies the core concepts that underpin the learning area.

The organisation of each learning area varies to reflect specific needs and requirements, takes into account the sequence(s) of learning, and makes provision for flexible planning and programming.

### *Strands/sub-strands*

This section provides insight into the relationship between the strands, and between the strands and their sub-strands, where they exist.

### *Design specifications*

Structural units are organised as ‘strands’ and ‘sub-strands’. The largest structural unit is a strand. Strands may be divided into sub-strands.

Structural units in each learning area or subject are populated with ‘content descriptions’.

### *Guidelines for review*

- Check for consistency in the organisation of content across all learning areas/subjects with:
  - strands as the largest and main content organiser
  - sub-strands as a subsequent organiser of content within each strand, where relevant.
- Review the organisation of the learning area to check whether:
  - the current strands and sub-strands adequately capture the key elements of the learning area and the connections between those elements, including the development of core concepts
  - the current strands and sub-strands need to be modified in order to reduce unnecessary duplication or repetition, and improve clarity, consistency and coherence of content
  - there are opportunities to revise the learning area organisation for closer alignment to the organisation of other learning areas in F–6.

### *Core concepts*

This section identifies the core concepts for each learning area and explains:

- how the concepts help define the key knowledge, understandings and skills that are central to the learning area
- how the concepts inform and/or help organise the content.

### *Design specifications*

Core concepts are the big ideas, understandings, skills or processes that are central to a learning area or subject. They anchor a coherent curriculum and give clarity and direction about what matters. They also provide the basis for setting curriculum priorities to focus on the most meaningful content. Core concepts reflect expert understanding and help connect discrete knowledge and skills to a larger intellectual framework.

In the curriculum development process, core concepts help identify the essential content students should learn to develop a deep and increasingly sophisticated understanding of the learning area, across the years of schooling. Identifying core concepts ensures that the Review prioritises what is essential for students to learn in each learning area.

Core concepts provide a purpose and a way of determining the essential knowledge, skills and understandings to be included in the content descriptions and aligned in the achievement standard. They also help organise and link the content within the learning area.

Core concepts do not add another structural layer of the curriculum for teachers to understand. Content descriptions and achievement standards should remain the focus for teaching, learning, assessment and reporting.

### *Guidelines for review*

- Identify core concepts in each learning area to help determine content that should remain, content that should be removed, de-emphasised or emphasised, and content that is missing.

- Refine structural elements and organisation of content to ensure greater internal coherence and logic to the development of deep understanding in the learning area.

Note: See guidelines for the review of content descriptions on page 9 for more detail about the role core concepts can play in this process.

## Key connections

This is a new section. It replaces the current separate information sheets on general capabilities in each learning area and the learning area specific advice provided for each of the cross-curriculum priorities in the priorities section of the website.

### *Design specifications*

This section identifies the key relationship of the learning area to:

- general capabilities – specifically highlight general capabilities that have a natural home in the learning area, where the relationship is authentic and fit-for-purpose
- cross-curriculum priorities – specifically highlight cross-curriculum priorities that have a natural home in the learning area, where the relationship is authentic and fit-for-purpose
- important opportunities to connect with other learning area content.

### *Guidelines for review*

For general capability connections:

- review and revise existing general capability statements to ensure they are explicit and clear
- identify the general capabilities that are authentic to the learning area and include a rationale and illustration that showcases opportunities where the general capabilities can be developed in learning area content
- differentiate between general capabilities integral to the learning area and general capabilities where the connection is more general; do not overclaim and try to cover every general capability in the same way.

For cross-curriculum priority connections:

- review and revise existing statements to ensure they are explicit and clear
- identify the cross-curriculum priorities that are authentic to the learning area and include a rationale and illustration
- identify cross-curriculum priorities that provide the most authentic and meaningful contexts to add depth and richness to learning area content.

For learning area connections:

- identify key opportunities to integrate and connect content with other learning areas and describe the nature of the relationship.

## Key considerations

This section provides important information, specific to the learning area, that will help teachers gain a deeper understanding of the learning area and support them to plan for teaching and learning. It replaces the current section called 'key ideas'.

### *Design specifications*

Key considerations could include:

- additional information about key aspects that underpin the learning area, such as the proficiencies in Mathematics and the key propositions in Health and Physical Education
- statements about important safety advice when delivering the curriculum
- ethical considerations, including intellectual property guidelines
- recognition of jurisdictional guidelines and local contexts that should be considered when planning teaching and learning.

### *Guidelines for review*

- Remove anything in the current 'key ideas' section that is related to core concepts; this is located in the organisation of the learning area section.
- Retain any important support material that is not provided elsewhere to help teachers to better understand the learning area; for example, information on texts in English, propositions in Health and Physical Education, safety considerations in Technologies and animal ethics in Science.

## Design specifications and review guidelines for the curriculum content of the learning area

### Background

Curriculum content for each learning area is presented in a sequence, by year or two-year bands, that guides teaching and learning. The key elements of that content for each learning area are:

- year/band level descriptions
- achievement standards
- content descriptions
- content elaborations.

This section outlines the agreed design specifications for each of these elements of the Australian Curriculum and the guidelines that curriculum review teams used to review and revise each section as necessary during the Review.

### Year/band level descriptions

#### *Design specifications*

Year/band level descriptions provide an overview statement or narrative about the learning students experience at the year/band level. They highlight connections between the content in the year/band level and describe the place of the year/band level content in the broader scope and sequence of the learning area.

Depending on the learning area, the year/band level description can also assist in highlighting at the specific year/band level:

- the interrelationship of the strands and/or sub-strands
- core concepts of most relevance and their relationship to the content
- specific opportunities and contexts students should experience in the learning area/subject
- content decisions that teachers can make
- key opportunities to connect to other learning areas.

#### *Guidelines for review*

Year/band level descriptions vary in their presentation across learning areas, however, they should:

- have internal coherence, logic and consistency in their presentation across the year/band levels within the learning area/subject
- be specific to the year/band level; not repeat generic statements about the organisation and key considerations of the learning area that already appear in the introductory sections of the curriculum.

## Achievement standards

### *Design specifications*

Achievement standards describe the expected quality or standard of learning students should typically demonstrate by the end of the year/band level. They describe what students are typically able to know, understand and do as they progress through the years of schooling.

The achievement standard at each year/band level aligns with the essential content that teachers are expected to teach, and students are expected to learn, as described in the content descriptions.

The content descriptions and achievements standards are not independent; they should be read together.

Achievement standards:

- describe the expected quality of the learning required by the content descriptions by the end of the year/band
- emphasise the increasing depth of conceptual understanding and sophistication of skills required by the content descriptions across the years/bands
- do not repeat the content descriptions; the achievements standards should be read in context, and with the knowledge of, what is to be taught in that year/band
- comply with the following writing specifications:
  - use the stem '*By the end of Year X students ...*' and follow with a verb
  - write to a length that indicates the relative amount of content that is to be taught in that year/band
  - present in one or more paragraphs when appropriate, as long as there is internal coherence that matches the structure of the learning area/subject and consistency in presentation across year/band levels
  - avoid the use of examples
  - use direct language and remove unnecessary words like 'is able to'
  - do not use dot points or headings
- accompany portfolios of annotated student work samples to provide teachers with support material that illustrates the achievement standard.

### *Guidelines for review*

Achievement standards should be reviewed concurrently and in alignment with the review of the content descriptions.

Review terms of reference <sup>1</sup>	Guidelines for review
<p>Improve the quality of achievement standards to ensure the description of what students know, understand and can do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is central to the achievement standard</li> <li>• aligns with the essential content students are expected to be taught as described in the content descriptions</li> </ul>	<p>Check the achievement standard can be demonstrated in evidence and performances of student learning; look at the content description and ask, “How would you know if the student learnt that content?”</p> <p>Ensure that the achievement standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• align with the essential knowledge, understanding and skills as described in the content descriptions</li> <li>• provide a clear indication of the expected quality of what students should typically know, understand and do.</li> </ul>
<p>Strengthen the cognitive alignment between achievement standards and content descriptions across learning areas by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• drawing on existing evidence from assessment and validated work sample programs across the jurisdictions</li> <li>• considering new evidence or research into student learning pathways</li> </ul>	<p>Check that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the achievement standards reflect evidence of student learning as described in the research, or evidenced in existing work samples</li> <li>• the cognitive demand of the achievement standard matches the required content and the conceptual readiness of students at the year/band level, and is consistent across the year/band levels</li> <li>• the achievement standards represent a developmental progression from the previous year/band.</li> </ul> <p>It should be noted that the alignment of cognitive demand is also about the relationship between the conceptual complexity of the content and the application of the verb being used in the achievement standard.</p>
<p>Improve the consistency and clarity of language used in the achievement standards across all learning areas</p>	<p>Ensure that the achievement standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are clear and coherent statements for teachers as to the expected quality of the learning required by the content descriptions</li> <li>• use language that is consistent across year/band levels and learning areas, where possible</li> <li>• do not repeat the content descriptions; the achievement standards should be read in the context, and with the knowledge of, what is to be taught in that year/band.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2020, *Terms of reference: Review of the Australian Curriculum F–10*, pp. 3–4.

## Content descriptions

### *Design specifications*

Content descriptions specify the essential knowledge, understanding and skills that young people are expected to learn, and teachers are expected to teach, across the years of schooling in each learning area or subject. They present a scope and sequence of essential content across the years of schooling.

Content descriptions:

- are underpinned by the core concepts of the learning area
- provide the basis for the quality of learning described in the achievement standards
- ensure that learning is appropriately ordered and clear to teachers
- are designed so that the content can be covered comfortably in the indicative time and facilitate depth rather than breadth of learning
- are arranged by stands and/or sub-strands
- should not rely on the content elaborations to make it clear to teachers what students should be learning
- comply with the following writing specifications:
  - use the stem '*Students will learn to/about ...*' Note that the use of 'learn to' or 'learn about' may differ across strands in a learning area, as long as an internal coherence is maintained for each strand to remain consistent in its presentation across year/band levels
  - ensure consistency and clarity of language across the year/band
  - avoid unnecessary ambiguity
  - avoid unnecessary repetition of content in other learning areas
  - write in plain English; recognise that learning area-specific terms are important to use to develop student metalanguage and ensure, where possible, that key language terms hold a shared meaning across learning areas
- are accompanied by content elaborations to provide teachers with optional support material that illustrates and suggests ways to approach learning area/subject content.

### *Guidelines for review*

Review terms of reference <sup>2</sup>	Guidelines for review
<b>Improve the quality of content descriptions:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• remove ambiguity and ensure the meaning is clear to teachers</li> </ul>	Ensure the content descriptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are written in clear and unambiguous language</li> <li>• reflect the organising strand or sub-strand intent</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), June 2020, *Terms of reference: Review of the Australian Curriculum F–10*, p. 3.

Review terms of reference <sup>2</sup>	Guidelines for review
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>stand alone and do not rely on the content elaborations to make sense of what students need to learn</li> <li>make authentic references to the general capabilities or cross-curriculum priorities only where appropriate and fit-for-purpose.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remove unnecessary duplication and repetition within the learning area and across learning areas</li> </ul>	Identify any content duplication or repetition within and across learning areas/subjects, and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>agree on best fit to limit repetition; identify the best fit 'home' learning area and do not repeat content in the other learning area/s</li> <li>only retain content in a second learning area where the content intention is different.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure consistency and clarity of language across each year level and across all learning areas</li> </ul>	Ensure the content descriptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are clear and coherent statements for teachers as to what should be taught</li> <li>use language that is consistent across year/band levels and learning areas, where possible.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>align the cognitive and performance demand of content descriptions within and across learning areas and year levels</li> </ul>	Check: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>that the cognitive and performance demand of the content descriptions align across the year/band levels within the learning area</li> <li>the relationship between the rigour demanded by the content description and the expected quality in the achievement standard.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reflect new evidence and research developments in the learning area</li> </ul>	Determine the need for new, revised or reordered content to address gaps, reflect current priorities or align with research insights and assessment evidence on student learning.  Ensure any additional content is essential for students to learn and aligns with the core concepts of the learning area.
<b>Reduce the amount of curriculum content across the F–10 Australian Curriculum:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify 'core concepts' of the learning area or subject to:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>prioritise what is essential for students to learn in each learning area/subject</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Define core concepts for the learning area/subject; draw on existing concepts, recent research and other curriculum models.  Map the current Australian Curriculum content of the learning area to agreed core concepts to identify gaps, refine concepts, and flag content that does not map to any agreed concepts within the learning area/subject.

Review terms of reference <sup>2</sup>	Guidelines for review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ provide opportunities for students to transfer and apply their increasingly deep understandings to a variety of meaningful contexts</li> </ul>	<p>Determine if the content will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• retained as is or revised because it is fit-for-purpose, central to building core concepts, and/or culturally, historically or politically significant, e.g. aligned to cross-curriculum priorities</li> <li>• emphasised because it has become more essential for life and work and is crucial in building core concepts in a meaningful way</li> <li>• de-emphasised because it has become less essential for life and work, is over emphasised in the curriculum, or is not a significant step in the progression of learning</li> <li>• removed because it belongs/is a better natural fit in the content of another learning area, is not essential for building conceptual understanding, is really an elaboration for other content, is unnecessarily repetitious of other identified content, and/or is of a lower priority in terms of the overall amount of content that is able to be taught in the time available.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focus on the Foundation to Year 6 curriculum to improve manageability, coherence and alignment of content descriptions across the learning areas in the primary years</li> </ul>	<p>Review and refine aspects of the F–6 year/band structure that are currently inconsistent, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• write content for Foundation level in The Arts, Technologies and Languages.</li> </ul> <p>Make decisions about removing overlap and duplication of content across F–6 using the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• content should not be duplicated across learning areas except where necessary or intentional</li> <li>• content should align across learning areas at a given year/band level, where appropriate</li> <li>• skills developed in one learning area can be applied in the contexts of other learning areas</li> <li>• where possible, key language terms should hold a shared meaning across learning areas</li> <li>• learning area-specific terms are important to use to develop student metalanguage.</li> </ul> <p>Review the demands of the Foundation year across all learning areas based on the priorities for learning in the</p>

Review terms of reference <sup>2</sup>	Guidelines for review
	<p>early years to ensure content in Foundation builds on the Early Years Learning Framework.</p> <p>Refer to the core concepts in each learning area to help identify opportunities for greater alignment.</p>

## Content elaborations

### *Design specifications*

Content elaborations accompany content descriptions and are optional elements of the Australian Curriculum. They are not intended to be indicators of achievement or a set of complete or comprehensive content points that all students need to be taught.

Content elaborations are support material only and provide teachers with suggestions and illustrations of ways to approach the learning area content. They also illustrate authentic ways to develop the general capabilities through the learning area content and to add richness to the learning area content through the context of the cross-curriculum priorities.

Content elaborations:

- illustrate and exemplify content descriptions with a diverse but manageable range of examples for ways to teach the content descriptions
- provide authentic and meaningful opportunities to develop a general capability (where they exist because they connect to a general capability)
- provide authentic and meaningful contexts from a cross-curriculum priority to add depth and richness to the learning area content (where they exist because they connect to a cross-curriculum priority)
- comply with the following writing specifications:
  - use the stem '*This may involve students ...*' and follow with a verb in the present continuous tense (for example, identifying, exploring, describing)
  - are written in plain English.

### *Guidelines for review*

Review terms of reference <sup>3</sup>	Guidelines for review
Reduce the number of content elaborations by removing unnecessary repetition and duplication with the content descriptions	<p>Ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there is no unnecessary duplication or repetition across the content elaborations, or between the content elaboration and the content descriptions</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), June 2020, *Terms of reference: Review of the Australian Curriculum F–10*, p. 4.

Review terms of reference <sup>3</sup>	Guidelines for review
Improve the quality of content elaborations ensuring they are fit for purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the content elaborations provide illustrations and suggestions of how to program and teach the content rather than repeat the content description. Consider using the metalanguage of the content description to write the elaboration; this may help with clarity and connection</li> <li>the content elaborations reflect the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities in learning areas only where it is authentic to do so and fit-for-purpose, where it is seen as a 'natural home'</li> <li>the link to the general capability and cross-curriculum priority in the elaboration is clear and unambiguous; it should illustrate and be clear as to the opportunity to enrich the learning area content through a focus on the general capability or cross-curriculum priority opportunity</li> <li>a content elaboration is specific to a cross-curriculum priority or general capability, where possible.</li> </ul>
Improve the quality of content elaborations by only embedding the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities explicitly in content elaborations where it is most authentic to do so	

## Glossary

### *Design specifications*

The glossary provides a clear explanation of the key terms and concepts used in the Australian Curriculum. It supports teachers to develop a consistent understanding of the curriculum. A glossary is provided for each learning area/subject, general capability and cross-curriculum priority.

The glossary entry for each key term or concept includes:

- A clear and brief definition or explanation of the key term or concept. This is preferably one sentence. A diagram or illustration can be used, if applicable.
- An example or support sentence, if required, to give clarity. This is preferably one sentence.

The key terms or concepts used in the year/band level descriptions and in the content descriptions are glossed. Key terms or concepts in the achievement standards are not glossed. New terms or concepts should not appear in the achievement standard if they have not been used in the content descriptions. The verbs (or command terms) in the achievement standards are not glossed.

The terms or concepts in the elaborations that are glossed will relate to general capabilities or cross-curriculum priority content. There may also be new terms specific to learning area content in the elaborations that need to be glossed, but these should be minimal given key terms and concepts should be introduced in the content descriptions.

There are some common terms or concepts that appear across learning areas. When all the learning area glossaries are developed, common terms will be identified and compared, to determine where it is possible to have one agreed definition or explanation across learning areas, and where the learning area context does necessitate a variation.

#### *Guidelines for review*

Review the existing learning area glossary terms and concepts to ensure:

- Specificity – do not include general terms or concepts. The glossary is designed to support all teachers to understand the learning area specific terms and concepts.
- Clarity of definition or explanation – do not introduce or use another technical term in the definition or explanation, or the example. The aim is to ensure all teachers understand the terms and concepts, regardless of their level of expertise in the learning area.
- Accuracy – be mindful of any contention in the definition of the term or concept.
- Brevity – one sentence is the preferred length for the definition or explanation, and one sentence for the example. The inclusion of a diagram or illustration may assist clarity.
- Cultural sensitivity – the example or support sentence must be culturally sensitive.
- Inclusion or deletion as a result of the revisions to the curriculum – there may be new terms or concepts introduced in the revised curriculum. Add new terms and delete old terms as required.

## Design specifications and review guidelines for the general capabilities

### Background

The F–10 Australian Curriculum includes seven general capabilities:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Critical and Creative Thinking
- Digital Literacy (formerly ICT capability)
- Personal and Social Capability
- Ethical Understanding
- Intercultural Understanding.

In the Australian Curriculum, the general capabilities are addressed through the content of the learning areas. Discipline-based content knowledge is important for the development of general capabilities. General capabilities are developed drawing on the content of the learning area curriculum, rather than as isolated generic skills. Teaching learning area content is strengthened by the application of relevant general capabilities, as is the development of the general capabilities through appropriate learning area contexts.

Opportunities to develop general capabilities in learning area content vary. Some general capabilities are essential to, and best developed within specific learning areas; others support learning in any learning area. General capabilities are identified in content descriptions when they are developed or applied through learning area content. They are also identified in content elaborations when they offer opportunities to add depth and richness to student learning.

Literacy and numeracy are fundamental to all learning. While literacy and numeracy development are core to the curriculum in English and Mathematics, literacy and numeracy skills are required and applied in all learning areas.

Critical and creative thinking skills are integral to the process of gaining knowledge, problem-solving and making informed judgments within the particular context of each learning area. Digital literacy supports students to be successful learners in a technology-rich world and is important to learning within all learning areas, with key foundational knowledge and skills embedded in the content of the Digital Technologies curriculum.

The Personal and Social capability, Ethical Understanding and Intercultural Understanding support students to develop ways of being, behaving and learning to live with others, and while primarily a focus for development in Health and Physical Education, the Humanities and Social Sciences and Languages, these capabilities can be further developed and applied in all learning areas.

#### *Design specifications*

Each general capability has an introduction that provides a description of the capability and a rationale for its inclusion in the Australian Curriculum.

Each general capability is presented as either a learning continuum or a learning progression and is structured around elements and sub-elements.

A learning continuum has been developed for five of the seven general capabilities, and describes the knowledge, skills and behaviours that students can reasonably be expected to develop from Foundation to Year 10. The continua map common paths for the development of knowledge, skills and behaviours in each of the elements and sub-elements across six levels for Critical and Creative Thinking, Digital Literacy, Personal and Social capability, Ethical Understanding and Intercultural Understanding.

For the Literacy and Numeracy capabilities, more detailed learning progressions have been developed to describe the learning pathway(s) along which students typically progress regardless of age or year level. The National Literacy and Numeracy Learning Progressions describe the skills, understandings and capabilities students typically acquire as their proficiency increases in a particular aspect of the curriculum over time, and help teachers ascertain the stage of learning reached, identify any gaps in skills and knowledge, and plan for the next step to progress learning.

#### *Guidelines for review*

Review terms of reference <sup>4</sup>	Guidelines for review
Revisit, and improve where necessary, the learning continua for the general capabilities with reference to current research	<p>Review recent developments, insights or feedback that might suggest the need to revise the elements or sub-elements of the continua.</p> <p>Review the sequence in the continua:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the sequence from level 1 to level 6 describe changes in behaviour from novice to expert?</li> <li>• Does the description of a skill maintain coherence from level 1 to level 6?</li> <li>• Do the levels for each sub-element adequately describe a progression of skill development?</li> <li>• Does the collection of knowledge, skills and behaviours within a level effectively describe a learner at that stage of schooling?</li> </ul> <p>Review the scope of the continua:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the sub-elements the 'best fit' for the element?</li> <li>• Are the elements and sub-elements named in the most accurate and clear way?</li> <li>• Are there other sub-elements that might be more appropriate or relevant?</li> </ul>
Declutter the content of the Australian Curriculum by improving the relationship of the general capabilities to learning area content and removing any repetition of content between	<p>Review existing content in each learning area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What content descriptions and elaborations exist in each learning area for the general capability?</li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup> Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), June 2020, *Terms of reference: Review of the Australian Curriculum F–10*, p. 4.

Review terms of reference <sup>4</sup>	Guidelines for review
the general capabilities and the learning areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the existing content descriptions and elaborations show an authentic connection to developing the general capability?</li> </ul> <p>Review against proposed revisions to content descriptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there content elaborations that no longer have a link back to a content description and should be removed or revised?</li> </ul>

## Design specifications and review guidelines for the cross-curriculum priorities

### Background

The F–10 Australian Curriculum contains three cross-curriculum priorities that are addressed through the content of the learning areas in the Australian Curriculum, where appropriate:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures
- Asia and Australia’s Engagement with Asia
- Sustainability.

Cross-curriculum priorities are incorporated through learning area content; they are not separate learning areas or subjects. They provide opportunities to enrich the content of the learning areas, where most appropriate and authentic to do so, allowing students to engage with and better understand their world.

Opportunities to apply cross-curriculum priorities to learning area content vary. Cross-curriculum priorities are embedded in content descriptions where the development of knowledge, understanding and skills relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures, Asia and Australia’s Engagement with Asia and Sustainability are core to the delivery of the learning area content. They are also identified in content elaborations where they offer opportunities to add depth and richness to student learning.

#### *Design specifications*

Each cross-curriculum priority has:

- an overview statement that provides a description of the cross-curriculum priority and a rationale for its inclusion in the Australian Curriculum
- a number of organising ideas that provide a scaffold for developing the knowledge, understanding and skills of the cross-curriculum priority and promoting connections between the priority and learning area content.

#### *Guidelines for review*

Review terms of reference <sup>5</sup>	Guidelines for review
Revisit, and improve if necessary, the organising frameworks for the cross-curriculum priorities with reference to current research	Check: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is the organising framework still current?</li> <li>• are there any recent developments or insights from feedback that suggest the revision of the organising ideas?</li> <li>• what needs to be revised?</li> </ul>
Declutter the content of the Australian Curriculum by improving the relationship of the cross-curriculum priorities to learning area content, removing	Review existing content in each learning area to identify:

<sup>5</sup> Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), June 2020, *Terms of reference: Review of the Australian Curriculum F–10*, p. 5.

Review terms of reference <sup>5</sup>	Guidelines for review
<p>any repetition of content between the cross-curriculum priorities and the learning areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the content descriptions and elaborations that exist in each learning area for the cross-curriculum priority</li> <li>• whether the existing content descriptions and elaborations provide authentic and meaningful cross-curriculum priority contexts</li> <li>• the content elaborations that no longer have a link back to a content description and should be removed or revised.</li> </ul> <p>Ensure the content elaborations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• align to the organising idea/s for the cross-curriculum priority</li> <li>• give clear suggestions of how the relevant context of the cross-curriculum priority allows the student to develop the required knowledge and skills required by the content description.</li> </ul> <p>In relation to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority, ensure the content elaborations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide meaningful and appropriate national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contexts</li> <li>• give clear suggestions of how culturally relevant context allows students to develop the required knowledge and skills in the content description</li> <li>• are generic in nature to enable and encourage local contextualisation in collaboration with community</li> <li>• support educators to reveal and showcase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, providing opportunities to enrich the curriculum content of the learning areas, and allowing students to engage with and better understand their world.</li> </ul>

## Key considerations to support student diversity

### Background

This section provides key considerations for review teams when revising the content of the content descriptions, achievements standards and content elaborations to ensure the Australian Curriculum continues to provide for the educational needs of every child.

Overall, curriculum review teams need to take account of:

- the nature of the learner and the growth and development of young people across the years of schooling, and how the relative emphasis given to each of the eight learning areas varies across the stages of schooling, as described in [The Shape of the Australian Curriculum \(version 5.0, June 2020\)](#)
- the whole curriculum and how the Australian Curriculum content for any learning area should be able to be taught within the indicative time allocation that ACARA set for its curriculum writers, as outlined in the [Curriculum Design Paper \(version 3.1, 2013\)](#).

### Guidelines for review

Ensure that:	For example:
Curriculum content is able to be taught to, and accessed by, all students and is intended to expand their knowledge, understanding and skills using age equivalent content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use verbs that can be interpreted flexibly and that allow for multiple ways of representation; inclusive curriculum design should pre-empt and reduce the need for reasonable adjustments for individual students, e.g. where appropriate use inclusive verbs like <i>create</i> or <i>illustrate</i> in place of restrictive verbs such as <i>write</i> or <i>list</i></li> <li>• use 'person with disability' if content requires a reference to a person with one or more disabilities.</li> </ul>
There is content in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people with disability, people from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, and people with EAL/D are made visible and represented fairly and accurately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use language that focuses on the strengths, abilities, knowledge and capacities of people or groups rather than on deficiencies or supposed failings</li> <li>• use the content elaborations to reflect diversity and model diversity content.</li> </ul> <p>For content linked to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority, pay particular attention to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the use of accurate 'factual' statements; do not perpetuate stereotypical viewpoints, e.g. avoid use of phrases such as 'vast empty unused land', 'wilderness', 'lost culture'</li> <li>• the use of appropriate and preferred terminology and language</li> </ul>

Ensure that:	For example:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• avoid language that implies that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are without power and agency in efforts to address historic disadvantage</li> <li>• awareness of tense, e.g. does the elaboration assume that all Torres Strait Islander people and Aboriginal people live in the past?</li> <li>• not to oversimplify, generalise or homogenise, e.g. generalisations such as “Aboriginal people hunted kangaroos with spears” ignore the diversity of Aboriginal cultures and Torres Strait Islander cultures.</li> </ul>
Curriculum content acknowledges and values the cultures, backgrounds and experiences of all students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use content to acknowledge different lived experiences, e.g. different experiences of drought</li> <li>• include content that allows all students, regardless of their cultural background, to draw on their life experiences as they learn, e.g. different concepts of family</li> <li>• include real world cases, problems and tasks in the curriculum, e.g. consider the impact of war and natural disasters across multiple countries.</li> </ul>
The differences in English language levels are recognised and the development of all students’ language skills is supported to meet curriculum requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide opportunities for students to practise and develop (subject-specific) literacy skills</li> <li>• provide multiple opportunities for students to develop and reflect on their literacy skills across all subjects</li> <li>• provide opportunities for students to use oral English across all learning areas.</li> </ul>
The curriculum and curriculum resources provide fair and equitable access for all learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide work samples and illustrations of practice to support teachers in delivering the curriculum to all students.</li> </ul>