

WHAT HAS CHANGED AND WHY?

Proposed revisions to the Foundation – Year 10 (F–10) Australian Curriculum: The Arts

Overview

This document summarises the proposed revisions to the F–10 Australian Curriculum: The Arts presented in the consultation version and provides an explanation for the changes.

The proposed revisions make clear the essential arts knowledge, understanding and skills students need to be confident and creative individuals, successful lifelong learners and active, informed members of the community. These revisions also ensure our curriculum remains world class.

The current F–10 Australian Curriculum: The Arts was first published in 2015. It includes curriculum for five subjects: Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music and Visual Arts. Jurisdictions and schools determine how the curriculum will be implemented. Monitoring reports indicate great variability in the ways The Arts is implemented in schools across Australia.

The Australian Curriculum: The Arts compares well with international Arts curricula through provision of five Arts subjects, which gives schools flexibility to focus on single Arts subjects or to offer programs that draw on multiple subjects such as performing arts programs. The issues identified through ACARA's research program, and in consultation with teachers and jurisdictions, indicated that the F–10 Australian Curriculum: The Arts was in need of improvement, primarily in relation to its structural coherence and clarity of direction for teachers through the content descriptions and achievements standards.

Providing a curriculum that can be delivered within indicative teaching time has been a key focus for the Review of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts, particularly across the primary school years. The Review did not find a need to reduce the required content of The Arts curriculum, rather, it identified a need to declutter the content through improving the clarity of the structure and refining the content descriptions and achievement standards.

An important change in the Australian Curriculum: The Arts is the identification of content for the Foundation year, separate from Years 1–2. This provides a clear set of expectations for Foundation year and allows for alignment of content with all the other learning areas. Four content descriptions are provided at Foundation, which can be implemented through each of The Arts subjects or through an integrated approach.

The key ideas in the current curriculum – learning by making and responding, and learning as artist and as audience – have been retained and strengthened in the consultation version. They have been identified as the interrelated core concepts that underpin all Arts learning. This approach is consistent with international curricula emphasising that students learn as artists and as audiences through the interrelated artistic and creative practices of making and responding.

The threads used to organise the existing curriculum have been renamed and repositioned as strands to organise the content explicitly and coherently. The new four strands are: *exploring and connecting; developing skills, practice and ideas; creating; and sharing and communicating*. Each involves making and responding and allows students to learn as artist and as audience. Content descriptions now have a consistent organisation under these four strands in each of the five Arts subjects.

The articulation of the four new strands has also supported the development of clearer achievement standards. In addition, the achievement standards have been improved with the replacement of ‘and’ with ‘or’ in many cases so that students are not required to demonstrate achievement of very similar learning across multiple contexts. Both revisions clarify for teachers what is expected of students by the end of the band and support them to develop Arts programs where student learning is deeper.

To enhance flexibility for implementation in subject-specific or integrated contexts, lists of elements have been minimised in the content descriptions. A revised glossary and updated examples of knowledge and skills will be provided in the finalised curriculum to provide guidance about how essential content can be developed sequentially across the bands.

Content descriptions focusing on connections between The Arts and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority have been introduced in each band. This content replaces phrases in the current curriculum such as ‘including dances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples’. Improved content descriptions provide clear guidance for teachers regarding what is to be taught in this area of the curriculum. Updated content elaborations are also included, which provide suggestions for approaches to teaching this content.

The consultation version of the F–10 Australian Curriculum: The Arts does not include:

- the glossary, examples of knowledge and skills, student work samples and other support resources – these materials will be revised once the consultation process has been completed
- ‘tagging’ to show where general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities are incorporated in the content descriptions and elaborations – these connections will be made explicit when the updated curriculum is published on the website.

The terms of reference for the Australian Curriculum Review also directed ACARA to improve the digital presentation of the Australian Curriculum in line with agreed revisions and teachers’ user experience. In parallel with the content review process, ACARA is undertaking a redesign to improve the functionality of the current [Australian Curriculum website](#). The aim is for the updated version of the F–10 Australian Curriculum to be available on a new Australian Curriculum website for the start of 2022. The current Australian Curriculum website will also remain live to support jurisdictions and teachers to plan for transition to the updated curriculum.

Proposed revisions to the introductory sections of the F–10 Australian Curriculum: The Arts

	Nature of the revision	Rationale for the revision
Rationale	The rationales for the learning area and each subject have been revised.	The rationales have been updated to align with changes to the organisation of the learning area and to recognise the strong connection to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority.
Aims	Minor changes.	Minor changes have been made to improve clarity and strengthen the intent.
Organisation of the learning area	<p>This section describes how the curriculum is structured.</p> <p>The strands used to organise the content are now named, aligning presentation of The Arts with the format used in all other learning areas.</p>	<p>As in the current curriculum, content in each strand is designed to be taught in an integrated manner. Like the threads in the current curriculum, the revised strands reflect stages of a creative or artistic process. Each involves aspects of making and responding, and provides opportunities for learning as an artist and as an audience.</p> <p>The four strands proposed in the consultation version are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>exploring and connecting</i> • <i>developing skills, practice and ideas</i> • <i>creating</i> • <i>sharing and communicating.</i>
	<p>This section also includes an overview of the learning area core concepts – those big ideas, understandings, skills or processes central to The Arts curriculum. The core concepts are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learning by making and responding • learning as artist and as audience. 	<p>The terms of reference for the Review required ACARA to refine and reduce content by identifying core concepts. The core concepts that underpin content in the Australian Curriculum: The Arts are drawn from the key ideas that underpin the current curriculum.</p> <p>Feedback from the Teacher Reference Group indicated that teachers may find it useful to have access to this information to understand the core concepts underpinning The Arts curriculum.</p>
Key connections	This is a new section in the introduction. It replaces the learning area-specific information sheets on general capabilities and the learning area-specific advice	This new section makes transparent the connection across the three dimensions of the Australian Curriculum. It provides teachers with clear information as to the key relationships of The Arts subjects to the general capabilities

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	<p>for the cross-curriculum priorities, currently published separately from The Arts curriculum.</p> <p>This section also outlines key connections to other learning areas.</p>	<p>and the cross-curriculum priorities – specifically highlighting those that have the most authentic fit and provide meaningful learning through the learning area content. It also highlights opportunities to connect The Arts with other learning areas’ content, which will be particularly useful for primary teachers.</p>
Key considerations	<p>This section contains information from the ‘key ideas’ and ‘structure’ sections in the current introduction to the curriculum.</p>	<p>This section has been retitled to more accurately reflect the information contained in the section. It is about the key aspects teachers should consider when planning for and teaching the curriculum.</p> <p>In The Arts, the key considerations relate to learning in and through the continuing and emerging practices of The Arts subjects. Use of Viewpoints as a critical inquiry tool is also described.</p>

Proposed revisions to the curriculum content of the F–10 Australian Curriculum: The Arts

	Nature of the revision	Rationale for the revision
Band level descriptions	<p>The band descriptions have been refined to reflect the revised strand structure.</p> <p>A new level description has been written for Foundation year to reflect the new content descriptions and achievement standard.</p>	<p>The band level descriptions have been improved to ensure they provide teachers with a clear overview of the learning that students should experience at each band. Refinements to the level descriptions also reflect the revised strands and this has created greater consistency across the subjects, which will support teachers to plan integrated approaches to teaching The Arts.</p> <p>Information about selecting material for use in learning programs has been updated to emphasise that such material should be selected for its relevance to students' interests and experiences.</p> <p>As Foundation has been separated from the F–2 band, a new year level description has been written.</p>
Achievement standards	<p>The achievement standards have been revised to improve their quality and alignment to the content descriptions.</p>	<p>The revised achievement standards have better cognitive alignment with the essential content described in the content descriptions. They also have improved in their consistency and clarity of language. They will support teachers to better understand what is expected of their students and therefore help them plan, teach and assess student learning.</p>
Content descriptions	<p>The content descriptions have been revised to align with the revised strand structure.</p> <p>The clarity and consistency of language have been improved in the content descriptions.</p> <p>Content descriptions have also been refined by removing specific examples and lists of elements to give teachers more flexibility in implementation.</p> <p>Content that aligns learning in The Arts with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures cross-curriculum priority has been emphasised through additional content descriptions at F–6.</p>	<p>The revised content descriptions clearly specify the essential knowledge, understanding and skills in each band.</p> <p>They have been improved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reflect the revised strand structure • remove inconsistencies and ambiguity and to ensure the meaning is clear to teachers • ensure consistency and clarity of language • better align the cognitive demand described in the content descriptions to that in the achievement standards • reflect new language and terms in The Arts. <p>In Foundation to Year 6, overarching terms are used in all subjects with links to the glossary to identify the range of content, rather than listing specific groups of elements in each band. This gives teachers flexibility to focus on specific content at different times across</p>

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	At Years 7–10, these connections are emphasised through realignment of existing content.	the band and to differentiate learning to meet the needs of students. <i>Details of the specific content changes are presented separately in Table 1.</i>
Content elaborations	Content elaborations have been revised or deleted and new elaborations have been developed, which align with revised content descriptions.	The revised content elaborations provide teachers with improved suggestions and illustrations of ways to teach the content descriptions. They: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • illustrate approaches to embedding learning about elements, principles, concepts and/or conventions relevant to specific Arts subjects and bands • illustrate ways to implement the curriculum with a focus on inclusion and recognising the diversity of students' needs and experiences • target the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities that provide the most appropriate and authentic opportunities to enrich the content of The Arts • identify opportunities to connect learning in The Arts with content from other learning areas.

Table 1: Details of proposed content revisions to the F–10 Australian Curriculum: The Arts

Nature of the content revision	Rationale for the revision
Content removed or reduced	
<p>F–10</p> <p>Lists naming specific elements removed from content descriptions and replaced with overarching terms.</p>	<p>This helps declutter the content of the curriculum. It also allows teachers to make choices about the frequency and depth of learning relating to subject-specific elements and gives them the flexibility to focus on content appropriate to specific learning activities.</p> <p>For example, the terms ‘elements of music’ and ‘elements of drama’ are used in the revised content descriptions, rather than listing specific elements and providing different lists of elements in each band across Years 1–10.</p> <p>When the revised curriculum is published on the new website, these terms will be included in the glossary and in the examples of knowledge and skills to reinforce that learning relating to each element can be incorporated as appropriate to the context of specific activities.</p>
Content realigned	
<p>F–10</p> <p>Content relating to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority.</p>	<p>The organising ideas for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority have been better aligned and given greater emphasis in the revised content descriptions. This helps clarify teachers’ expectations as to what should be taught and also provides guidance about ways to incorporate the content in learning programs.</p>
Content added	
<p>Foundation</p> <p>Content descriptions and achievement standards have been specified for the Foundation year, separated out from the current Years F–2 band.</p>	<p>This revision provides a clear set of expectations for the Foundation year and allows for improved alignment of content across all learning areas.</p>
Content refined and decluttered	
<p>F–10</p> <p>Content has been refined and reordered under the same four strands across all five Arts subjects.</p>	<p>The new strands for the Australian Curriculum: The Arts align presentation of The Arts with the format used in other learning areas and serve to give order and coherence to the content. Content has been refined and reordered under the same four strands to provide a consistent flow across the bands and Arts subjects. This approach enhances clarity, particularly for primary teachers.</p> <p>The four strands provide a framework for the essential knowledge, understanding and skills in The Arts. The current content has not been</p>

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	<p>removed, but the new structure makes it clearer for teachers and will support them to develop comprehensive Arts programs that meet student needs at the local level. The curriculum should feel more manageable, particularly in the primary levels, as integrated approaches will be easier to identify, plan and teach to progress student learning.</p>
<p>F–10</p> <p>The use of terminology has been refined across The Arts curriculum. The glossary and examples of knowledge and skills will be updated to reflect these changes and will be included on the new website.</p>	<p>Across the curriculum, the use of terminology has been refined to improve accessibility for all students and to cater for emerging directions in arts practice.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In all subjects, the term ‘experiences’ is used to clarify terms such as ‘see’, ‘view’ or ‘hear’. This strengthens the curriculum’s credentials as a ‘curriculum for all’ by recognising the range of ways people may experience an arts work or event depending on their personal abilities or preferences. • The approach to Viewpoints has been refined. Viewpoints have been grouped into three categories – personal and imaginative, cultures and worlds, and conventions and processes. This helps teachers to develop an inquiry approach to The Arts taking different viewpoints and understanding the different learning experiences this will offer to their students. <p>In Media Arts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about the Media Arts concepts has been updated by refining the description of each concept and incorporating a new concept, ‘relationships’, which recognises the interactive relationships embedded in everyday media practices. • The term ‘media conventions’ replaces ‘codes and conventions’ to improve clarity for teachers and to avoid confusion with codes and conventions that apply in other learning areas. <p>In Music:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The term ‘documentation’ is used rather than ‘notation’ to describe a record of heard or imagined music. This change strengthens the curriculum’s accessibility to all students and its relevance across existing and future approaches to composition and performance. Documentation can include notation forms such as Western staff, notations from classical music traditions, graphic, symbol-based or visual forms, tablature, audio recordings, video, animated or interactive notation. • The term ‘listening skills’ is introduced to clarify distinctions between the types of listening used in specific contexts and for specific purposes in music learning. This change gives teachers flexibility to focus on different types of listening as appropriate to

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	<p>selected learning activities. Information about aural skills has been retained in the content elaborations and will be developed in the examples of knowledge and skills. Examples of other listening skills such as active or focused listening have been added to the content elaborations and will also be included in the examples of knowledge and skills.</p> <p>In Visual Arts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The definition of ‘visual conventions’ has been updated to capture the breadth of traditional, cultural and/or stylistic ways of working in visual arts, craft and design. • The definition of ‘visual arts process’ has been introduced to encompass the broad range of processes that can be used to create visual art works. It includes methods, tools, techniques and technologies. • The definition of ‘visual arts practice’ has been updated to describe the way that artists go about their work, including influences, creative development of ideas, studio practice and collaboration, using visual arts processes, materials and visual conventions. This approach aligns use of the term ‘practices’ in Visual Arts with its use in the other Arts subjects.