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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Will the *Curriculum Framework* be revised to reflect the current Western Australian and national education context?**

- While the *Curriculum Framework* describes the most contemporary views about learning and teaching, the Curriculum Council is scheduled to review it in 2008. The review will ensure that the *Framework* continues to reflect local, national and global developments and education research.
- The Department remains committed to the full implementation of the *Curriculum Framework*, including the principles underpinning the *Framework* which guide system direction and initiatives, school and teachers' planning and curriculum development.

### **What is the status of the *Outcomes and Standards Framework*?**

The *Outcomes and Standards Framework* remains as a teaching and assessment tool for teachers. The Department is unequivocal in its support of evidence-based, developmental and inclusive approaches to learning, teaching and assessment.

Underpinning these approaches is a standards framework directly referenced to the *Curriculum Framework* and syllabuses, as well as nationally agreed benchmarks used in state-wide testing.

### **How will syllabuses assist teachers implement the *Curriculum Framework*?**

- The Department is listening and will address workload issues related to implementation of curriculum initiatives so that teachers can concentrate on good teaching.
- The curriculum will be uncluttered by emphasising core elements of learning in each phase of schooling.
- Greater clarity will be provided about what to teach and assess. This will be achieved through the development of syllabuses that will describe essential learning and assessment for each phase of schooling.
- Practising teachers are being consulted in determining the content of the syllabuses and what is to be emphasised in student learning.
- Practical resources for teachers will support planning and assessment, providing classroom-ready examples of lessons. Resources of this kind will assist teachers experiencing work pressure for a variety of reasons, including being new to teaching, returning from long leave, entering the workforce from overseas or teaching out of their areas of training.

### **When will public schools be provided with syllabus documents?**

Working versions of the syllabus scope and sequences are available online ([www.k10syllabus.det.wa.edu.au](http://www.k10syllabus.det.wa.edu.au)), complemented by practical resources. They describe for teachers what is expected to be taught and learned at each phase of schooling to enable students to achieve the outcomes in the *Curriculum Framework* in all eight learning areas.

Additionally, K-10 Syllabuses are in development and draft working versions will be available for second semester 2007. These versions will be refined in accordance with consultation and feedback. They will be available for teachers at the end of 2007.

### **What processes are in place to ensure that the syllabuses will meet the needs of all practicing teachers in Western Australian public schools?**

The Department continues to establish and maintain a strong process of consultation to ensure that the syllabus materials reflect the needs of teachers.

Throughout 2006 a total of 2 474 stakeholders were consulted. Two thousand two hundred and fifty three (2 253) of these were teachers and school administrators. Reference groups consisting of teachers have been developed for all learning areas across the phases of development.

Specialist reference groups have been established to provide advice in areas such as inclusion of Australian history in K-10 materials and civics and citizenship.

Throughout 2006, consultation meetings have been held with key stakeholder groups: WASSEA; WAPPA; WASSTA; WAESPA; DHSPA; district directors and district curriculum improvement managers, the SSTUWA, other system/sectors, professional teacher associations and Curriculum Council representatives.

A group of education experts from other States and Territories will be convened in the near future to seek further feedback of the articulation of Western Australian syllabuses with national positions.

Regular updates about syllabus development were communicated through *Ed-e-mail* and *School Matters*.

Opportunities for consultation have been provided to all teachers through the K10 Syllabus website. To date, 316 teachers have provided feedback through the website. Teachers view the project as being responsive to their needs.

Consultation with schools leaders, teachers and other stakeholders will be expanded and ongoing during 2007. New strategies being implemented include the development of K-10 Syllabus Committees and communication via the Department's *Ed-e-mail* system; letters to Principals for distribution to all teaching staff; and provision of information at graduate and new teacher inductions.

#### **What will the syllabuses contain?**

The development of syllabuses and practical resources (including assessment strategies) will support the full implementation of the *Curriculum Framework*.

The introduction of syllabuses will reduce teachers' workload in designing curriculum, providing clarity about essential content aligned to the standards framework and what, as a minimum, is expected to be taught and assessed for each year of school K-10.

It is proposed that the syllabuses will include the following information:

- Rationale – linked to the *Curriculum Framework* for each Learning Area and the *Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting K-10: Policy and Guidelines*.
- Essential Content – derived from the scope and sequence statements and linked to the *Curriculum Guides* and elaborated versions.
- Pedagogical Approaches.
- Emphases of core elements of learning for each phase of schooling.
- Recommended Contexts.
- Advice on Whole-School Planning and Time Allocation for Learning Areas
- Assessment Advice for Learning Areas – linked to the *Outcomes and Standards Framework*, Department Achievement Targets, *First Steps* Literacy and Numeracy, *Literacy Net* etc.

#### **What will be the focus of Early Childhood Education syllabuses?**

Syllabuses will provide support and advice on all learning area outcomes across all phases of schooling. However, the Early Childhood (Kindergarten – Year 3) syllabuses will emphasise an approach to learning and assessment that focuses on literacy, numeracy, social/emotional and physical development.

#### **How much time should be allocated to the teaching of individual learning areas across the different phases of schooling?**

Advice is provided to schools in the *Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Policy*:

....."Schools will ensure that all students in Years 1 - 10 participate in a minimum of two hours of physical activity each week, during the school day as part of student learning programs".

Further advice was forwarded to schools via Ed-e-Mail on 9 March 2007 (TRIM number DO07/066466) that indicated a requirement that all schools with primary aged students provide a minimum of 50 per cent delivery time for literacy and numeracy.

The Department is in the process of seeking advice from practising teachers and administrators about time allocation. This will provide additional advice to schools to assist them in determining time allocations for learning areas for each phase of schooling.

**Will teachers be able to access professional learning related to the use of syllabuses?**

The release of syllabuses and practical resources will be supported by professional learning on their content, structure and use. This will be connected to current professional learning activities in literacy, numeracy, early childhood education and Science.

Teachers will not be required to attend additional professional learning.

**Will the *Outcomes and Standards Framework* still be used in schools to monitor student progress and report achievement?**

In line with the requirements of the Department's *Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting K - 10: Policy and Guidelines*, the *Outcomes and Standards Framework* will continue to be the reference point for reporting student and school progress.

Teachers are encouraged to provide feedback to students on assessments so that students know what to do to improve and teachers know what to plan for next in their teaching.

However, assessment should focus on the core elements of syllabuses and teachers are not expected to level or grade all student work.

Teachers may monitor student performance with on-going assessment, using a variety of methods with which they feel comfortable. These methods may include marks, *First Steps*, *ESL progress Maps*, anecdotal comments, observations, checklists or levels.

These procedures take effect immediately.

Assessments should be developed with reference to the *Outcomes and Standards Framework*, the Principles of Learning, Teaching and Assessment in the *Curriculum Framework* (page 33) and syllabuses.

Those teachers seeking additional support on assessment and moderation will be provided with access to sample assessment items, including work samples and marking keys. These resources will be available early in 2008. Some literacy and numeracy samples are already available: [www.det.wa.edu.au/education/standards/Ordering.html](http://www.det.wa.edu.au/education/standards/Ordering.html)

**Will information on formative assessment practices be provided in the syllabus documents?**

Providing feedback to students reflects contemporary best practice. Assessment practices that explicitly focus daily teaching and students' participation on critical skills and understandings (essential content of syllabuses) is amongst the most powerful instructional strategies for improving learning.

The syllabuses will highlight what and how to assess, with a focus on reducing workloads.

Teachers will have access to system-developed assessments tasks, items and prompts with exemplars of students' responses aligned to essential content in the syllabuses and mapped to the *Outcomes and Standards Framework*. Resources will include diagnostic assessments, profiles, checklists and marking guides aligned to the essential content of syllabuses. Annotated work-samples will assist teachers to identify students' relative strengths and weaknesses.

**Will school reports change in 2007?**

As per Federal Government requirements, teachers will report formally each semester using grades referenced to the *Outcomes and Standards Framework*.

Schools are required to report to parents and caregivers twice a year using the Department's formal reporting template using grades to report student achievement.

The Department is committed to review the existing reporting templates throughout 2007 as stipulated by the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commissioner. Any changes made to the existing Years 1 - 7 reports for parents will be contingent on this review and negotiation with the SSTUWA.

The Department and the SSTUWA have reached agreement on removing levels from the Years 8-10 reports.

Other minor changes include an E Grade (very low) to the primary template and grade descriptors for Learning Area achievement.

**Will teachers be required to use the grades to report student achievement?**

As per Federal Government requirements, teachers will report formally each semester using grades referenced to the *Outcomes and Standards Framework*.

As from Semester 1, 2007 teachers will report a summative grade. Teachers may refer to either Grade Allocation Charts **or** use Student Information System (SIS) software.

This enables teachers to allocate a grade drawing information gathered over a range of assessments and referring to Grade Allocation Charts **or** using levels that the SIS software will automatically convert to a grade which teachers have the option to override.

To assist teachers, Grade Allocation Charts are available to schools and can be located at: <http://www.det.wa.edu.au/education/curriculum/CIP2/>

Grade allocation resources explain how a grade is calculated in the SIS software and how it relates to progress on the *Outcomes and Standards Framework*.

A Learning Area grade is automatically generated by SIS once all judgements of student achievement are completed.

Teachers may manually enter a grade onto the formal reporting template.

**What constitutes a formal report?**

Schools are required to issue a formal report for each student at the end of each semester. In Years 1-10 the standardised reporting templates developed by the Department will be used. In the pre-compulsory years, the format and style of the reports will be determined by the school in consultation with parents / caregivers.

All public schools are also required to report regular and relevant information to parents/caregivers and have a reporting policy developed in consultation with the school community.

It is expected that teacher workload will be a consideration when developing a school reporting policy.

**With the removal of levels from reports, what information can parents and students use to assist with Year 11 subject selection?**

Grades that appear on the Department's standardised report templates are determined by a student's performance against the *Outcomes and Standards Framework*. To this end, schools will be able to provide information to parents, students and counsellors on request to facilitate the selection process.

**Will WALNA and MSE9 testing exist from 2008 onwards?**

The Department will administer WALNA and MSE 9 in 2007. However, all states and territories will administer common tests as part of the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy to all Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 students in 2008.

The Curriculum Council is to have carriage of the literacy and numeracy testing from 2008.

**In what other testing programs are schools required to participate?**

Schools are required to participate in all of the MCEETYA National Assessment Programs (NAP). The NAP includes both national testing in Science Literacy (SL), Civics and Citizenship (C&C) and Information and Communication Technologies Literacy (ICTL), and international testing in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS).

For all current national testing programs only a sample of schools in each state and territory are selected to participate.

The national components of the NAP occur on a cyclic basis over a 3 year period. NAP-SL was the first national sample program to be implemented in 2003, followed by NAP – C&C in 2004 and NAP – ICTL in 2005. SL had its second cycle in 2006.

PISA and TIMSS were both administered in 2006.

From 2008, the NAP will also include full cohort testing using common national tests at Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in literacy and numeracy.

For 2007, testing that will occur in Western Australia includes a trial of national literacy and numeracy test items in May and the NAP – C&C sample testing in October. It is possible that there could be a trial of the NAP – ICTL test items later this year; however, this may not affect Western Australia.

More information on the National Assessment Program is available at the following website [www.mceetya.edu.au](http://www.mceetya.edu.au)

**If public schools are required to participate in the National Assessment Program, will the Department of Education and Training still provide schools with student performance information through existing mechanisms?**

Schools will be provided with a detailed analysis of student performance data through the Education Assessment Reporting System (EARS), student reports, First Cut and Data Club.

From 2008 onwards, it is anticipated that the entire national literacy and numeracy testing program will operate within Western Australia in the same way as the current state testing programs. This means that schools will still be supported during the distribution of tests to schools, the administration of the tests and the collection of materials.

**How can I insure that I am providing my students with the knowledge and skills required to excel in National Assessment Program testing?**

Essential content of the syllabuses, for relevant learning areas, will explicitly include nationally agreed Statements of Learning that outline required content to be covered in English, maths, science, Civics and Citizenship and ICT.

**Is participation in the *Making Consistent Judgements* professional Learning program mandatory?**

It is expected that all schools will send teachers of students in year groups/learning areas in which an achievement target is defined to participate in fully-funded professional learning.

In situations where participation of all *target* teachers from a given school is not practical, principals must ensure that other arrangements are made for all teachers to develop their understandings of moderation processes.

Suitable alternatives to ensure that teachers have a range of support mechanisms include:

- district and centrally delivered, fully-funded catch ups (as detailed above);
- district networks; and
- school facilitated/organised collegiate groups (with district and central office support).

Teachers who have concerns, regarding occupational health and safety or other issues, with regard to MCJ or across-school moderation arrangements should communicate these problems with the School Principal; the District Curriculum Manager; or they may contact the Principal Education Officer, Professional Support on 9264 4816.

**Are teachers required to engage in between and across school moderation?**

All schools are required to ensure there are processes in place to moderate teacher judgements. The moderation of teacher judgements is an integral part of school accountability and reporting process and is reflected in the *Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Policy*.

It is expected that schools will support teachers of Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 to make consistent judgements in relation to student attainment of achievement targets. Participation in MCJ can assist teachers. However, it is acknowledged that there are a number of other ways in which comparability between teachers can be achieved. Other similar activities are acceptable and to be used at the discretion of principals in consultation with staff.

Support for schools who wish to offer alternative arrangements is available through Central and District Education Offices.

**Will professional learning opportunities for teachers be offered during school hours in 2007?**

Professional learning opportunities will continue to be offered to teachers during school hours in 2007. This will include School Development Days.

**Where can I locate information on changes to Year 11 and 12 schooling?**

For information on all aspects of senior schooling, including recent changes announced by the Curriculum Council, please contact the Curriculum Council Secretariat on 9273 6300, or log on to [www.curriculum.wa.edu.au](http://www.curriculum.wa.edu.au)

Public school teachers requiring specific learning area advice may also contact the Senior Schooling, Academic Standards and Support directorate on 9264 5121.