
Terms of Reference – NSW Curriculum Review

The NSW Minister for Education, the Hon. Rob Stokes, has tasked the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESAs) with “a review of the NSW curriculum to ensure it equips students to contribute to Australian society in the 21st century” (the Review).

The Review is conducted in a context of a high performing NSW Education system, which strives to meet the needs of a wide range of students, including those who are Aboriginal, or from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, or living with disabilities.

The Review will undertake a comprehensive community engagement process to seek the diversity of views in the community, including the views of young people, parents, employers and those involved in the delivery of school education. These Terms of Reference have been developed following targeted stakeholder engagement.

The aim of the Review is to enhance the effectiveness of school education in NSW to:

- provide an education that engages and challenges every child and young person in learning, rewards them for effort and promotes high standards, and
- prepare each student with strong foundations of knowledge, capabilities and values to be lifelong learners, and to be flourishing and contributing citizens in a world in which rapid technological advances are contributing to unprecedented economic and social change in unpredictable ways.

The Review will consider the strengths and weaknesses of the current NSW curriculum, its relationship to the Australian Curriculum and its accessibility to all NSW students.

The Review, in developing its recommendations, should:

1. articulate the purposes of the school curriculum, including underpinning philosophies and principles
2. identify essential knowledge, skills and attributes as the common entitlement for every learner, ensuring parity of access to learning that is necessary for success, taking account of:
 - a. the evidence on how skills and attributes are acquired through knowledge-based disciplines
 - b. the extent of overcrowding in the curriculum
 - c. the appropriate scope for school community choices about content
3. explain how the curriculum could be redesigned and presented to better support teaching, learning, assessment and reporting, including consideration of:
 - a. the desirability of identifying priorities for learning at different stages of schooling
 - b. the appropriate level of detail in curriculum documents
 - c. the breadth and depth of study
 - d. ways of improving every learner’s transition into school and across the years of schooling
 - e. ways of enhancing the options and pathways for all students to further education and work
4. identify the implications of any new approach to curriculum design for:
 - a. assessment and reporting (including NAPLAN, the Record of School Achievement and the Higher School Certificate)
 - b. pedagogical practices and teacher workload
 - c. teacher preparation and ongoing professional learning
 - d. school organisation and regulation
 - e. relevant legislation
 - f. measuring the quality and impact of schooling.

The Review will have regard to:

- National policy developments and reports, including:
 - the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015*, and the national *Closing the Gap* strategy
 - *Through Growth to Achievement: Report of the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools*. The Review will contribute appropriately to any related national processes
 - *Lifting Our Game: Report of the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools through Early Childhood Interventions*
 - Australia's Chief Scientist, Dr Alan Finkel's report *Optimising STEM industry-school partnerships: inspiring Australia's next generation*
 - the *Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education* conducted by Emeritus Professor John Halsey
 - the *Review of the Australian Curriculum: Final Report*.
- Obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the Disability Standards for Education 2015
- The 2016 BOSTES Review (particularly in relation to the crowded curriculum) and the Stronger HSC Reforms introduced from 2017
- Any significant lessons to be drawn from other Australian jurisdictions including in their implementation of the Australian Curriculum, as well as perspectives from international jurisdictions where there have been recent reviews and curriculum revisions
- Corresponding work of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) to review and refine the Australian Curriculum, including international research.

Timelines and process

The Review will be conducted over an 18 month period, with a draft report to be provided to the Minister in the second quarter of 2019, and a final report by the end of 2019.

NESA has engaged Professor Geoff Masters as Lead Reviewer, and established a Taskforce to support the work of the Review. The NESA Board will act as a Reference Group for the Review, receive regular reports on its progress, and provide advice to the Government about implementing the Review's recommendations.

NESA will proactively publish advice on its website about public engagement activities throughout the Review period. These will include regional meetings, online feedback, targeted stakeholder meetings, focus groups, and written submissions.