

COVID-19 INTERIM POLICY STANDARDS – SEMESTER 2 2021

Interim implementation document for Curriculum planning and programming,
assessing and reporting to parents K-12 policy for Semester 2 2021

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Context

This version of the Policy Standards has been developed as part of the department's response to support schools through impacts caused by COVID-19. This version remains current for Semester 2, 2021.

The policy standards outline the requirements for all NSW public schools to plan curriculum, develop programs, assess and report to parents in line with the Education Act 1990, the NESA syllabuses, credentialing requirements, obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the Disability Standards for Education 2005.

Curriculum planning and programming will account for the needs of every student. Curriculum options and adjustments¹ are negotiated through [collaborative curriculum planning](#) to reflect the learning and support needs of students whose learning is impacted by disability. Schools should consult the [Access and equity](#) section of the [policy library](#) to ensure that appropriate programs and provisions are provided for all students. The [High Potential and Gifted Education](#) policy is effective from Term 1, 2021.

In the case of temporary school closure, students will continue their learning at home. If the school is open but some students are learning at home due to self-isolation, they will engage in a similar program to their peers learning at school.

1 Curriculum planning and programming – curriculum and allocation of time

1.1 Years K to 6

Learning programs, based on NESA syllabuses, are to be provided to address each learning area in each year of schooling. In primary schools, the six key learning areas (KLAs) are:

- creative arts
- English
- human society and its environment (incorporating history and geography)
- mathematics
- personal development, health and physical education
- science and technology.

In providing curriculum, schools are to ensure that greater priority is given to English and mathematics.

In July 2021, NESA gave principals and school sectors the authority to decide which syllabus outcomes and content they teach and assess for [Kindergarten to Year 10](#). This means schools may select the outcomes and content that will form the basis of the educational program for Kindergarten to Year 6 students if learning is affected by COVID-19.

Schools adjusting curriculum provision due to the impacts of COVID-19, should ensure that English and mathematics remain a priority. The expectation is for at least 50% of the school week to be devoted to these key learning areas while study of other key learning areas and additional learning activities are delivered in the remaining allocation of time. Schools have flexibility in how these are implemented.

¹ Adjustments are measures or actions taken in relation to teaching, learning and assessment that enable a student whose learning is impacted by disability to access syllabus outcomes and content on the same basis as their peers. Adjustments reflect the learning and support needs of the individual student.

Refer to the [Religion and ethics](#) page for current information on Special religious education/Special education in ethics.

1.2 Years 7 to 10

In delivering curriculum in Years 7 to 10, schools will meet the requirements of NESAs for students to gain the RoSA. Schools must refer to the requirements, rules and procedures as detailed on the [Assessment, Certification and Examination \(ACE\)](#) website to ensure the eligibility of students.

The department provides annual updates to schools regarding RoSA requirements, which are available under the heading [RoSA monitoring](#) on the department's website. This commenced in 2016.

In addition to NESAs's mandatory curriculum requirements for the RoSA ([ACE 4007](#)), the department mandates additional studies (electives) as shown in Table 1.

Board Developed Courses, Content Endorsed Courses or Stage 5 VET Board Endorsed Courses can be credentialed on the RoSA if they are taught during Stage 5 and in accordance with syllabus and indicative time requirements ([ACE 4009](#)). Refer to NESAs's changes to [School Developed Board Endorsed Courses](#) effective from 2021.

From 2022, to meet the department's requirement for additional studies (electives):

- students study 400 hours of electives in Stage 5
- at least 200 of these hours must be Board Developed Courses, Content Endorsed Courses or Stage 5 VET Board Endorsed Courses, which are credentialed on the RoSA
- the remaining 200 hours of the mandatory 400 hours are either Board Developed Courses, Content Endorsed Courses, Stage 5 VET Board Endorsed Courses or [NSW Department of Education approved elective courses](#).

If a school chooses to deliver a NSW Department of Education approved course, students and parents/carers need to be consulted and understand that the course will not be listed on the RoSA.

Schools are to provide learning programs, based on NESAs syllabuses where available for each subject or course in each year of schooling. Learning programs for all courses should include teaching activities mapped against outcomes and content, and include registration and evaluation.

Schools have flexibility in how they deliver learning programs, for example, through integrated programs. Where schools have implemented integrated programs of learning they must be able to demonstrate they have met the minimum required hours for each of the learning areas.

Refer to the [Religion and ethics](#) page for current information on Special religious education/Special education in ethics.

Schools must refer to the updated requirements, rules and procedures provided on NESAs's [coronavirus advice](#) page and in the ACE manual [changes to the RoSA & HSC rules and requirements for 2021](#) and any subsequent update to ensure the eligibility of students for the RoSA.

Table 1 summarises the combined NESAs and department minimum requirements for government schools when providing curriculum.

Table 1 Curriculum time requirements for each learning area across Years 7 to 10

Learning area	For curriculum planning – policy requirement in hours
English (7-10)	500
Mathematics (7-10)	500
Science (7-10)	500
HSIE (7-10)	400 hours distributed as: Geography (7-8) – 100 hours History (7-8) – 100 hours Geography (9-10) – 100 hours History (9-10) – 100 hours
Languages	100 hours in a continuous 1-year period
Technology Mandatory (7-8)	200
Music (7-10)	100
Visual Arts (7-10)	100
PDHPE (7-10)	300 hours (delivered across 7-10)
Planned physical activity	150 minutes per week
Additional studies (electives) (9-10)	400 At least 200 hours of Board Developed, Content Endorsed or Stage 5 VET Board Endorsed courses The other 200 hours can be made up of the above, or department-approved elective courses

Schools should plan for the full requirement of curriculum hours in 2022 and beyond. NESAs will communicate any changes to this requirement. Please note that according to NESAs [changes to the RoSA & HSC rules and requirements for 2020](#), schools will not be required to make up any lost hours or mandated requirements of the RoSA in future years.

In July 2021, NESAs gave principals and school sectors the authority to decide which syllabus outcomes and content they teach and assess for [Kindergarten to Year 10](#) in 2021. This means schools may select the outcomes and content that will form the basis of the educational program for Years 7 to 10 students if learning is affected by COVID-19.

1.3 Years 11 to 12

The department provides annual updates to schools regarding the requirements for the Higher School Certificate (HSC), which are available under the heading [HSC monitoring](#) on the department's website.

Learning programs, based on NESAs syllabuses, are to be provided for each subject or course in each year of schooling to ensure students meet the requirements for the award of HSC.

Students in Year 11 and 12 should continue to complete the learning activities and assessments required as part of their courses of study.

In 2021, principals continue to have the flexibility to decide on the number, type and weighting of school-based assessments as shown on NESAs [coronavirus advice](#) page. NESAs [principles of effective assessment](#) continue to apply.

Performance and practical exams for the 2021 HSC have been impacted by COVID-19. NESAs provides updated information regarding changes as part of their advice on [HSC exams and major projects](#). Due to the uncertainty of COVID-19, there may be adjustments to HSC exams. NESAs will advise schools directly and update their [coronavirus advice](#) should adjustments be required.

In addition to NESAs requirements for students to gain an HSC, government schools are to provide students with [Life Ready](#), a 25-hour course. The provision of Special Religious Education is not required.

Schools are encouraged to provide Year 11 and 12 students with weekly access to a minimum of 150 minutes of physical activity, including sport, where possible. Refer to the [advice for school based staff](#) on the department's [COVID-19 \(coronavirus\)](#) webpage for current advice.

1.4 Complying with legislation including the Education Act 1990 and NESAs requirements

Under the Education Act 1990, all schools are required to maintain documentation that provides evidence of compliance with NESAs syllabuses and the [Registration Process for Monitoring the Government Schooling System](#).

Schools are required to maintain documentation that reflects the obligations to students under the:

- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the Disability Standards for Education 2005
- Multicultural NSW Act 2000, which contains the principles of multiculturalism and the framework for the department's [Multicultural Education Policy](#).

1.4.1 Years K to 6 (Early Stage 1 to Stage 3)

Essential elements to be included in a school's documented curriculum:

- syllabus outcomes and requirements in scope and sequence overviews for each KLA for each year
- syllabus content and teaching activities in teaching programs for each KLA for each year annotated to show amendments to syllabus outcomes
- timetables for each year/class showing allocation of time and teachers for each KLA.

1.4.2 Years 7 to 10 (Stage 4 to Stage 5)

Essential elements to be included in a school's documented curriculum:

- syllabus outcomes and scope of learning for each KLA for each year
- record of the total number of approximate hours that were allocated to each course
- a scope and sequence and associated learning programs for each course, including teaching activities mapped against NESAs syllabus outcomes and content, and including registration and evaluation
- assessment processes that
 - comply with the requirements outlined on NESAs [coronavirus advice](#) page and [ACE](#) website, NESAs official notices and department memorandums
 - include statements of school procedures for allocating grades in Year 10
 - set out requirements to retain student work samples to support grade allocation as required by NESAs for the RoSA.

The school's documented curriculum should include timetables showing the allocation of time and teachers for each year/class.

1.4.3 Years 11 to 12 (Stage 6)

The department provides annual updates to schools regarding the requirements for the Higher School Certificate (HSC), which are available under the heading [HSC monitoring](#) on the department's website.

Essential elements to be included in a school's documented curriculum:

- timetables showing the allocation of time and teachers for each year/class

- the total number of hours allocated to each Year 11 and Year 12 course
- courses of study for each student each year that comply with a pattern of study for Year 11 and Year 12, as described on the NESAs and ACE websites for candidates for the HSC ([ACE 8005](#))
- a scope and sequence and associated learning programs for each course, including teaching activities mapped against NESAs syllabus outcomes and content, and including registration and evaluation
- assessment policies and procedures that:
 - comply with the requirements as documented on the NESAs and ACE websites, NESAs official notices and department memorandums
 - include statements of school procedures for the allocation of grades in Year 11 courses, and in Year 12 English Studies and Mathematics Standard 1
 - set out requirements to retain student work samples to support grade allocation, as required by NESAs
- confirmation that the school has made disability provisions in accordance with the NESAs and ACE websites.

Particular documentation required in relation to Year 11 and Year 12 assessment includes:

- organisational details of the school's assessment program for each course, outlining the number and types of assessment tasks, components, weightings and scheduling of the tasks
- marking, recording and reporting student achievement in assessment tasks
- administrative arrangements regarding absence from an assessment task, late submission of tasks due to illness or misadventure, malpractice and invalid or unreliable tasks
- student appeals against assessment rankings
- 'N' Award (non-completion) warnings and determinations
- providing students with written advice about the school's requirements for assessment in each course.

Schools should also keep records of changes to assessment schedules as allowed and described on NESAs's [coronavirus advice](#) page and any other changes to administrative arrangements, including notification of these changes to students.

Schools should make decisions about the fieldwork and practical skills curriculum to ensure they can be taught safely. Refer to the [advice for school based staff](#) on the department's [COVID-19 \(coronavirus\)](#) page for advice on the safe delivery of curriculum and related activities.

Schools should maintain records for Year 11 to 12 students learning from home and at school including:

- syllabus outcomes and scope of learning for each course
- record of the total number of hours that were allocated to each course.

2 Assessing

Schools are to undertake assessment to inform students' learning. Assessment of student learning will be undertaken for all learners, including students whose learning is impacted by disability and students learning English as an additional language or dialect.

Ongoing assessment of student learning is important to enable teachers to provide feedback to students and guide their continuing provision of appropriate learning tasks. Teachers should continue to plan for assessment as part of their teaching and learning plans for students learning from home and school.

Adjustments to assessment tasks may be required for a student whose learning is impacted by disability and students learning English as an additional language. This should reflect the adjustments made to support the student's learning.

3 Reporting to parents – components of the written report

The parents/carers of all students are to be provided with a formal report on their child's learning twice a year.

Schools are required to issue the formal written report to parents/carers in digital or print format.

In Semester 2, 2021 the formal written report for each student will:

- use plain English
- describe student progress and achievement on the learning covered during the reporting period, including the learning from home period
- provide teacher comments to describe student learning and identify the next steps in learning.

In addition, principals will have flexibility to:

- adapt or modify existing reporting templates/software to meet current requirements (this may include adapting or modifying the simplified report developed in Semester 1 2020)
- continue to use the A-E scale where valid assessment judgements can be made against statewide syllabus standards²
- provide information about student attendance and commitment to learning, where possible
- incorporate information about student learning from parent-teacher discussions for a more complete picture of learning progress.

3.1 Reporting to parents – learning areas

3.1.1 Years K to 6 (Early Stage 1 to Stage 3)

Reporting to parents should focus on the learning undertaken during learning from home or school with priority given to English and mathematics.

Information should also be provided on student progress where learning was undertaken in other KLAs including creative arts; human society and its environment (which includes history and geography); personal development, health and physical education, science and technology and languages (where offered).

Reporting should provide feedback on individual student learning progress that supports parents/carers to understand how their child is progressing and what can be done to further support their learning.

3.1.2 Years 7 to 10 (Stage 4 to Stage 5)

Schools will report on subjects or courses studied in the eight KLAs of English; mathematics; science; human society and its environment; creative arts; languages; personal development, health and physical education; and technology and applied studies.

Reporting should provide feedback on individual student learning progress that supports parents/carers to understand how their child is progressing and what can be done to further support their learning.

3.1.3 Years 11 to 12 (Stage 6)

Schools will report on subjects or courses studied. Reports will show information for components of each subject.

² Syllabus standards are described by the components of a syllabus. The components that contribute to teachers' understandings of syllabus standards include objectives, Stage statements, syllabus outcomes and syllabus content or indicators. Stage statements (Years K-10) encompass, at a broader level than syllabus outcomes, the nature and scope of learning in each stage

For vocational education and training (VET) courses, schools will report on competency achievement. VET courses are competency-based where assessment of competencies is standards-referenced.

3.1.4 English as an additional language or dialect students, K to 10

Schools will report on the overall English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) Learning Progression phase of all students described as EAL/D. Schools will report on how EAL/D students' English language learning has been supported and their progress in learning English.

3.2 Reporting to parents – comparing student achievement against statewide syllabus standards in each KLA (required for written reports)

3.2.1 Kindergarten

Reports will describe how a child's achievement compares with syllabus standards through teacher comments.

3.2.2 Years 1 to 10

Schools should continue to use the A-E scale where valid assessment judgements can be made for students in Years 1 to 10. Achievement is judged in relation to syllabus standards, except VET courses where competency outcomes will be reported.

Table 2 Five-point scale for reporting student achievement to parents/carers

Describe this achievement level	Using this word	And/or this letter
The student has an extensive knowledge and understanding of the content and can readily apply this knowledge. In addition, the student has achieved a high level of competence in the processes and skills and can apply these skills to new situations.	Outstanding	A
The student has a thorough knowledge and understanding of the content and a high level of competence in the processes and skills. In addition, the student is able to apply this knowledge and these skills to most situations.	High	B
The student has a sound knowledge and understanding of the main areas of content and has achieved an adequate level of competence in the processes and skills.	Sound	C
The student has a basic knowledge and understanding of the content and has achieved a basic level of competence in the processes and skills.	Basic	D
The student has an elementary knowledge and understanding in few areas of the content and has achieved very limited competence in some of the processes and skills.	Limited	E

Where the word summaries are used, the report will contain a statement to explain that the five-point achievement scale used in this report equates to the A-E scale.

3.2.3 Years 11 to 12

Schools will use a numerical score (1-100) or use A-E (or equivalent) achievement grades to clearly convey what the student knows and can do in relation to syllabus standards in each course.

For Year 11, reporting to parents should focus on the learning undertaken during learning from home or school in each subject or course studied. It should provide feedback on individual student learning progress that supports parents to understand how their child is progressing and what can be done to further support their learning growth.

For VET courses, schools will report on competency achievement.

3.2.4 Reporting on learning outcomes for students learning English as an additional language

For new arrival EAL/D students in primary, central and high schools, if appropriate, KLAs or subjects studied may be reported against the five-point achievement scale as described in 3.2.2, otherwise only comments need be provided.

For new arrival EAL/D students in Intensive English Centres and the Intensive English High School, students' achievements in KLAs or subjects are to be described against the standards of the department's Intensive English Program Curriculum Framework.

For other EAL/D students (more than four terms in an Australian school) achievement in the KLAs or subjects will be reported using the five-point achievement scale as described in 3.2.2. EAL/D students' achievement in primary KLAs or secondary subjects will be assessed against syllabus standards.

3.2.5 Reporting on learning outcomes for students whose learning is impacted by disability

Reports for students, whose learning program is based on syllabus outcomes that are the same as the age/stage of their peers, should follow the requirements as set out above 3.1 to 3.2.4.

Reports for students, whose learning program is based on syllabus outcomes that are different from the age/stage of their peers, including life skills outcomes, will indicate achievement against a personalised learning program. A process of [collaborative curriculum planning](#) determines the most appropriate curriculum options and adjustments.

P – Personalised

In general, personalised reports will be provided for students with moderate or severe levels of intellectual disability. Personalised reports may also be provided for students with other disabilities in KLAs or subjects where a student's learning is based on syllabus outcomes that are different from the age/stage of their peers.

In addition to reporting the student's achievement, schools also may report the student's achievement using the following scale in KLAs or subjects through written comments.

P4 – Independent

The student can complete a task independently, without assistance. The student maintains the skill or knowledge over time. The student generalises the skill or knowledge to new settings, people or materials.

P3 – Frequent

The student relies on partial prompts to complete a task. The student can regularly perform the skill or demonstrate knowledge. The student uses the skills or knowledge in a variety of familiar settings and situations.

P2 – Occasional

The student understands information, concept and/or can perform skill. The student often relies on physical or verbal assistance when participating in a task. The student has begun to demonstrate the skills in selected, familiar settings.

P1 – Beginning

The student has some existing prior knowledge and/or necessary pre-skills for the task. The student is beginning to participate in a task with maximum teacher assistance. The student uses skills and knowledge in a single setting.

3.3 Reporting to parents – comparing student achievement with the child’s peer group at the school in each KLA or subject in Years 1 to 12

In response to requests from a child’s parents/carers, where possible, schools are to provide information on how their child’s achievement compares with the performance of the student’s peer group, acknowledging not all students will have covered the same outcomes or content.

This information may be provided verbally and describe patterns of progress and achievements against tasks undertaken during learning from home and school.

For Years 11 and 12, information on how student achievement compares with that of the peer group may be provided through course group rankings or grade distributions where available.

3.3.1 Peer groups of less than five students

Schools where the peer group is less than five students are to negotiate with the school community about providing data for comparison. The negotiation should ensure that the potential for publicly releasing information about individual students is avoided.

3.3.2 Newly arrived EAL/D students

For newly arrived EAL/D students in Intensive English Centres and the Intensive English High School, schools are not required to provide information to parents/carers about how their child compares with the student’s peer group.

For EAL/D students at primary, central and high schools, who are new arrivals in Australian schools (four terms or less), schools are not required to provide information to parents/carers about how their child compares with the student’s peer group.

3.3.3 Students with a personalised learning plan

Where students are working with a personalised learning plan (as described in section 3.2.5), schools are not required to provide information to parents/carers about how their child compares with the student’s peer group and the student is not included in the number of students achieving at each of the five levels of the achievement scale.