Big History

Course document

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# Introduction

Big History is a Stage 5 NSW Department of Education approved elective course.

The [Curriculum planning and programming, assessing and reporting to parents K-12 Policy](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2005-0290) and the associated policy standards set out the requirements for schools regarding the mandatory hours for additional studies (electives) in Stage 5. Version 9.3 of the policy standards introduces the option of NSW Department of Education approved elective courses which can make up a maximum of 200 hours of the mandatory 400 hours of electives.

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

## Rationale

This course is designed for students curious about seeking answers to big questions regarding the history and development of our universe, including the origin of our species. It promotes reasoned predictions of future events. Collaboration among students, teachers, scholars and scientists is the foundation of Big History. It places human history in the broader context of the universe’s history.

Throughout history, humans have collaborated in creative endeavours leading to a dynamic body of knowledge which is continually refined and contested as evidence evolves. This knowledge provides explanations for various phenomena and enables sense to be made of the development of human society.

In Big History, students will develop deep knowledge, understanding and skills that will allow them to create new ideas and translate their ideas into practical applications. Through engaging with varying sources and perspectives, students will develop problem-solving, research and critical thinking skills, and demonstrate respect for differing viewpoints. Through the integrated study of the cosmos, life and humanity, students will use empirical evidence to develop a deeper appreciation of the evolution of knowledge systems and the complex relationship between evidence and ideas.

Big History addresses the need for students to use interdisciplinary understanding to solve problems and develop critical thinking skills to assess the validity of claims of knowledge. The course will build upon the learning across the curriculum content, including the general capabilities priorities from the NSW syllabus documents, that encompass the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours to assist students to live and work successfully in the 21st century.

## Aim

This course aims to develop students’ understanding of the history of the universe from the ‘Big Bang’ to the modern day and beyond, through an exploration of the themes and patterns that can help us better understand the world we live in. Big History will develop students’ ability to synthesise complex information, hypothesise and develop arguments, develop key critical thinking skills and enhance their reading, writing and research skills in a multidisciplinary way.

## Purpose and audience

This resource communicates the outcomes and content students will engage with throughout their study of the course. It is developed for teachers to provide consistent advice in the subject selection process for Stage 5 students and for use when developing resources and implementing the course.

## When and how to use this document

This resource is an essential document to ensure that all material developed and used for this course meets the requirements for hours, outcomes and content. Use this document when offering the course, when developing teaching and learning resources, and when maintaining records to indicate students have met the requirements for the course.

# Course structure and requirements

Big History is a 200-hour Stage 5 elective. It is made up of 10 topics all of which are mandatory. The course is designed to be taught sequentially.

## Course structure

Table 1 – Big History course structure

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Topic | Hours |
| What is Big History? | 20 |
| Big Bang | 10 |
| Stars and galaxies | 10 |
| New chemicals | 10 |
| Planetary bodies | 20 |
| Life | 30 |
| Humans | 30 |
| Agriculture and civilisations | 30 |
| Our connected world | 30 |
| The future | 10 |

# Outcomes

A student:

* **BH5-1** identifies and describes terms and concepts in appropriate contexts
* **BH5-2** evaluates a range of differing claims of knowledge and perspectives
* **BH5-3** identifies types of evidence and discipline-based claims of knowledge of the universe used in addressing essential questions
* **BH5-4** explains and assesses the role of evidence and discipline-based claims of knowledge of the universe used in addressing essential questions
* **BH5-5** identifies and describes appropriate concepts to address relevant questions, cases, problems and claims of knowledge
* **BH5-6** analyses differing perspectives and claims of knowledge through the use of sources and evidence
* **BH5-7** locates and selects relevant sources of information and evidence from across a range of disciplines
* **BH5-8** evaluates the usefulness of sources and evidence across a range of disciplines to respond to essential questions and assess claims of knowledge
* **BH5-9** assesses claims of knowledge across a range of disciplines
* **BH5-10** selects and uses appropriate oral, written and other forms, including ICT, to communicate effectively to different audiences.

# Core 1 – What is Big History?

This unit will explore Big History as a modern scientific origin story and starts with the long line of origin stories that humans have passed down for thousands of years. Big History explores the history of the universe and the Earth from a human perspective, and all the vast cosmos in a single unbroken continuum from the Big Bang until now. This is a story about all time, all existence, and a very personal story about who we are and where we came from.

## Outcomes

A student:

* **BH5-1** identifies and describes terms and concepts in appropriate contexts
* **BH5-3** identifies types of evidence and discipline-based claims of knowledge of the universe used in addressing essential questions
* **BH5-5** identifies and describes appropriate concepts to address relevant questions, cases, problems and claims of knowledge
* **BH5-6** analyses differing perspectives and claims of knowledge through the use of sources and evidence
* **BH5-8** evaluates the usefulness of sources and evidence across a range of disciplines to respond to essential questions and assess claims of knowledge
* **BH5-9** assesses claims of knowledge across a range of disciplines.

## Content

Students:

* describe Big History and its key skills and concepts, for example
* claims testing
* scale
* interdisciplinary approach
* make predictions for the near and distant futures, considering
* education
* technology
* living conditions
* social and political issues
* explore the nature and significance of origin stories, including
* the role of origin stories
* Big History as a modern, scientific origin story
* identify the key features of Big History as a modern, scientific origin story
* identify the key features of origin stories for at least 3 of the following civilisations
* Ancient Chinese
* Judaeo-Christian
* Iroquois
* Ancient Greek
* Tat Roog
* Hindu
* Ancient Egyptian
* an Aboriginal Australian nation
* explain the importance of scale in Big History, for example
* the concept of powers of 10 and its usefulness
* the impact of scale when viewing events
* analyse patterns and trends in the 13.8 billion-year timeline of Big History
* identify key events in Big History and create timelines
* explain how claims of knowledge are tested, including the role of
* intuition
* authority
* logic
* evidence
* apply understanding of the claims testing process used in Big History.

# Core 2 – Big Bang

This unit will shed light on the universe's origin, from the Big Bang 13.8 billion years ago to the release of Cosmic Microwave Background 380,000 years later. Students will explore collective learning, through which humans have steadily gained a greater knowledge of the universe over thousands of years, along with interdisciplinarity and how everything links up to these cosmological origins. One key concept is the ‘thresholds of increasing complexity’, the cosmic pattern stretching all history and uniting all things.

## Outcomes

A student:

* **BH5-1** identifies and describes terms and concepts in appropriate contexts
* **BH5-2** evaluates a range of differing claims of knowledge and perspectives
* **BH5-4** explains and assesses the role of evidence and discipline-based claims of knowledge of the universe used in addressing essential questions
* **BH5-6** analyses differing perspectives and claims of knowledge through the use of sources and evidence
* **BH5-8** evaluates the usefulness of sources and evidence across a range of disciplines to respond to essential questions and assess claims of knowledge
* **BH5-9** assesses claims of knowledge across a range of disciplines

## Content

Students:

* explore the thresholds of increasing complexity and the Big Bang as the first threshold of increasing complexity
* use claims testing to assess a claim as knowledge
* investigate the Big Bang as a model of the universe’s origin and reflect on its significance, including
* the components of the Big Bang
* Goldilocks conditions
* new forms of complexity
* using observation and measurement to develop an understanding of the universe
* the key elements of the Big Bang theory
* investigate the changing understanding of the universe, through the changing theories, observations and discoveries of key scholars and scientists, for example
* Claudius Ptolemy
* Galileo Galilei
* Nicolaus Copernicus
* Isaac Newton
* Henrietta Swan Leavitt
* Edwin Hubble
* outline the core concept of collective learning
* outline key points and concepts in the understanding of the universe, including
* connections between changing views of the universe as an example of collective learning
* the discovery of gravitational waves and the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) detector and its significance
* the different perspectives of scientists’ understanding of the universe and their significance
* demonstrate an understanding of the Big Bang theory by considering the importance of interdisciplinary approaches to the Big Bang theory
* propose interdisciplinary questions about the Big Bang theory
* explain the discipline of astrophysics and its relevance to Big History.

# Core 3 – stars and galaxies

This unit will explore the emergence of stars from a dark, cold and empty universe, approximately 100 million years after the Big Bang. This will go from a strange new cosmos to one dusted with billions of stars and galaxies that looks much more familiar to us today. Students will understand how stars form, how they are studied, and their vital role in complexity.

## Outcomes

A student:

* **BH5-1** identifies and describes terms and concepts in appropriate contexts
* **BH5-2** evaluates a range of differing claims of knowledge and perspectives
* **BH5-3** identifies types of evidence and discipline-based claims of knowledge of the universe used in addressing essential questions
* **BH5-5** identifies and describes appropriate concepts to address relevant questions, cases, problems and claims of knowledge
* **BH5-10** selects and uses appropriate oral, written and other forms, including ICT, to communicate effectively to different audiences.

## Content

Students:

* demonstrate understanding of the formation of stars by applying claim testers to claims of knowledge about stars and galaxies
* identify key information about stars and how they have been observed over time
* explain the appearance of stars and galaxies as the second threshold of increasing complexity
* identify the key processes in the formation of stars
* sequence and describe the different stages in the lifecycle of stars
* research and evaluate contemporary sources about stars and galaxies
* explore the study of stars, including
* the Hertzsprung-Russell diagram and its significance
* the concept of parallax and how it is used to measure distance
* changing telescope technology through time and how they function
* the impact of changing technology on the study of stars and black holes
* investigate stars and galaxies, including
* the impact of new technology on the study of astronomy
* using different sources of information about astronomy and astrophysics
* demonstrate understanding of the varying questions other disciplines ask about stars and galaxies.

# Core 4 – new chemicals

This unit will investigate the emergence of more chemical ingredients from the fiery furnaces of stars. Everything is made of ‘star stuff’, which is exemplified by the periodic table elements. Both the universe and humans work with chemical elements to create new and ever-varying forms of complexity. Students look at some brilliant minds in chemistry and how their work created links to many other disciplines.

## Outcomes

A student:

* **BH5-1** identifies and describes terms and concepts in appropriate contexts
* **BH5-4** explains and assesses the role of evidence and discipline-based claims of knowledge of the universe used in addressing essential questions
* **BH5-5** identifies and describes appropriate concepts to address relevant questions, cases, problems and claims of knowledge
* **BH5-6** analyses differing perspectives and claims of knowledge through the use of sources and evidence
* **BH5-7** locates and selects relevant sources of information and evidence from across a range of disciplines.

## Content

Students:

* demonstrate understanding of the creation of new chemical elements as the third threshold of increasing complexity
* identify the chemical elements and what they tell us about our connection to the universe
* investigate and research the chemical composition of an object
* describe the Goldilocks conditions needed to develop chemical complexity within the universe
* explain the significance of the periodic table, including
* patterns in the structure and format of the periodic table
* the properties and importance of a chemical element
* explore the function of chemical elements in the universe, including
* why chemical elements are the building blocks for more complex structures
* the formation of molecules and significance of DNA
* how humans use chemical elements
* evaluate contemporary sources about chemical elements
* explore new chemicals including
* the achievements of Marie Curie and the interdisciplinary nature of her work
* the types of questions different disciplines ask about new chemicals.

# Core 5 – planetary bodies

This unit will trace the deep past of the solar system and the Earth to their chaotic beginnings 4.5 billion years ago. From a young Sun surrounded by tiny particles of dust, the planetary system emerged. From a molten ball of fire, the Earth and all its rich diversity were created. Students will explore the early Earth and the millions of years it took to cool, form oceans, and create the right conditions for life. In addition, they will examine the importance of plate tectonics to geology and how they play a dynamic role in shaping the Earth even today, from earthquakes to tsunamis to volcanic eruptions.

## Outcomes

A student:

* **BH5-1** identifies and describes terms and concepts in appropriate contexts
* **BH5-3** identifies types of evidence and discipline-based claims of knowledge of the universe used in addressing essential questions
* **BH5-7** locates and selects relevant sources of information and evidence from across a range of disciplines
* **BH5-10** selects and uses appropriate oral, written and other forms, including ICT, to communicate effectively to different audiences.

## Content

Students:

* explore the formation of the solar system and planetary bodies, including the Earth, as the fourth threshold of increasing complexity
* apply claims testing to identify and locate key information about the solar system and Earth
* sequence and describe events and processes in the varying stages of planet formation
* demonstrate how accretion works
* demonstrate the scale of the solar system
* demonstrate understanding of the significance of using different scales to investigate Earth and the universe
* demonstrate understanding of what young Earth was like, including
* significant events at the Earth scale
* the key features of young Earth
* the key features of the early Earth’s atmosphere
* the key chemical elements in the Earth’s crust, the Sun, and the universe
* the common elements and the differences between the main chemical elements in the Earth’s crust, the Sun, and the universe
* demonstrate understanding of the importance of plate tectonics, including
* the significance of plate tectonics in the development of the early Earth
* the effects of plate tectonics
* the key features of a continent
* evaluate contemporary sources about planetary bodies
* investigate planetary bodies, including
* the significance of geology in the study of the Earth and solar system
* the development of theories of geology and applying claims testing to them
* the questions different disciplines ask about planetary bodies.

# Core 6 – life

This unit will investigate a tremendous revolution in increasing complexity 3.8 billion years ago – the origin of life. Students will explore how life emerged from the inanimate cosmos and what makes it different. They will examine how life changed from tiny, microscopic cells to the great diversity of flora and fauna of the biosphere, from trilobites to dinosaurs, from snowball Earth to horrifying asteroid impacts. Students will also further investigate the process of collective learning by which humans pieced together this astounding story, from the concept of natural selection to the secrets of DNA.

## Outcomes

A student:

* **BH5-1** identifies and describes terms and concepts in appropriate contexts
* **BH5-2** evaluates a range of differing claims of knowledge and perspectives
* **BH5-5** identifies and describes appropriate concepts to address relevant questions, cases, problems and claims of knowledge
* **BH5-8** evaluates the usefulness of sources and evidence across a range of disciplines to respond to essential questions and assess claims of knowledge
* **BH5-9** assesses claims of knowledge across a range of disciplines
* **BH5-10** selects and uses appropriate oral, written and other forms, including ICT, to communicate effectively to different audiences.

## Content

Students:

* identify what life is, as the fifth threshold of increasing complexity
* apply claims testing to determine what is life
* identify the similarities and differences between human DNA and that of other species
* investigate how life began and changed over time, including
* the different species in the ‘tree of life’ and their significance
* Charles Darwin and the voyage of the Beagle in our understanding of natural selection
* DNA, its importance to life, and how it works
* identify and label the different components of a DNA strand
* investigate how life and Earth interact, including
* how ecology works
* the complexity of the biosphere
* what life would be like living in the extremes of the biosphere
* the relationship between Earth and life over time
* different eukaryotic species
* the importance of biology
* the evidence for how dinosaurs became extinct
* the conditions of mass extinction events over time
* apply claims testing to the concept of life and reflect on an understanding of theories of evolution
* investigate questions that different disciplines ask about life.

# Core 7 – humans

This unit will uncover the long family tree of humans, from the extinction of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago to our last common ancestor with chimpanzees 5–7 million years ago, to the emergence of homo sapiens approximately 300,000 years ago. Students will explore one human trait that set off an explosion of new complexity, collective learning. This ability enabled our species to progress from stone tools to skyscrapers in a few short millennia and formed a unifying theme of human history. Students will also examine the vital work of biology, primatology, archaeology and anthropology in building this amazing story.

## Outcomes

A student:

* **BH5-1** identifies and describes terms and concepts in appropriate contexts
* **BH5-2** evaluates a range of differing claims of knowledge and perspectives
* **BH5-3** identifies types of evidence and discipline-based claims of knowledge of the universe used in addressing essential questions
* **BH5-4** explains and assesses the role of evidence and discipline-based claims of knowledge of the universe used in addressing essential questions
* **BH5-7** locates and selects relevant sources of information and evidence from across a range of disciplines
* **BH5-8** evaluates the usefulness of sources and evidence across a range of disciplines to respond to essential questions and assess claims of knowledge
* **BH5-9** assesses claims of knowledge across a range of disciplines.

## Content

Students:

* explore how our ancestors evolved as the sixth threshold of increasing complexity, including
* what makes humans different to other species
* how our primate ancestors evolve over time
* the significance of the evolution of humans
* the evolution of early humans
* the evolutionary history of a group of organisms
* supporting evidence for the evolution of primates
* demonstrate understanding of collective learning, for example
* how collective learning makes humans different to all other species
* early evidence of collective learning
* how scientific knowledge of human origins has changed over time
* describe how the first humans lived, for example
* the similarities and differences between the early and modern human lifestyles
* the foraging lives of early humans
* the types of foods early humans would have accessed
* human migration patterns
* apply claims testing to the concept of humans as the sixth threshold of increasing complexity
* assess the significance of Blombos Cave and Lake Mungo to the understanding of early humans and the disciplines required to study them
* describe what anthropologists do and why it is important for understanding how humans lived
* demonstrate understanding of the types of questions different disciplines ask relating to the development of humans.

# Core 8 – agriculture and civilisations

This unit will investigate how humans harnessed the power of the Sun with agriculture 12,000 years ago. By domesticating and cultivating our crops, collective learning and increasing complexity accelerated. Students will explore the development of the earliest agrarian civilisations, which signal the start of conventional history approximately 5,000 years ago. From powerful emperors to brave warriors, to intrepid explorers, to rapacious adventurers, they will discover how these new hubs of collective learning spread across the Earth and gradually united the globe into a single complex system.

## Outcomes

A student:

* **BH5-2** evaluates a range of differing claims of knowledge and perspectives
* **BH5-3** identifies types of evidence and discipline-based claims of knowledge of the universe used in addressing essential questions
* **BH5-4** explains and assesses the role of evidence and discipline-based claims of knowledge of the universe used in addressing essential questions
* **BH5-5** identifies and describes appropriate concepts to address relevant questions, cases, problems and claims of knowledge
* **BH5-7** locates and selects relevant sources of information and evidence from across a range of disciplines
* **BH5-8** evaluates the usefulness of sources and evidence across a range of disciplines to respond to essential questions and assess claims of knowledge
* **BH5-9** assesses claims of knowledge across a range of disciplines.

## Content

Students:

* explain the appearance of agriculture and civilisation as the seventh threshold of increasing complexity, including
* agriculture as an important turning point in human history
* the impact of domestication of crops over time
* factors that affect the quality of life of both farmers and foragers
* investigate the establishment of cities in areas that have agriculture, including
* where and when the first cities and states appeared
* the conditions that allowed cities and states to appear in some places and not others
* common features of agrarian civilisations
* different sources about burial practices in agrarian civilisations
* burial practices and social status and power in agrarian civilisations
* the relationship between record-keeping and collective learning
* the similarities and differences of civilisations
* investigate the role of current news as a source of information about agricultural civilisations
* explore the 4 zones of the agrarian world, including
* the key features of a society within one of the world zones
* the challenges of governing growing agrarian civilisations
* the importance of collective learning in the development of agrarian civilisations
* the importance of the Silk Road and the network of exchanges it created
* collective learning and the process of innovation in China’s Song dynasty
* draw comparisons between the similarities and differences of explorers
* investigate the exchange of culture, traditions and goods through trade and conquest
* explain the development of agriculture and civilisation, for example
* claims testing the concept of agriculture and civilisation as the seventh threshold of increasing complexity
* the role of data scientists in the study of history
* the role of an ancient historian
* the importance of different disciplinary thinking, for example, a data scientist and an ancient historian, to understand why agriculture was so important.

# Core 9 – our connected world

This unit will provide a Big History perspective on modern world history from the beginnings of globalisation 500 years ago, to the industrial transformation 200 years ago, to the astounding phenomena of the present. With an interconnected world, collective learning and complexity went into overdrive, forming a revolution still continuing today. Students will explore the Columbian exchange, the great acceleration, and the dramatic impact on how humans live their lives. Finally, they will examine how the broad trends of the past shape the many challenges of the 21st century.

## Outcomes

A student:

* **BH5-1** identifies and describes terms and concepts in appropriate contexts
* **BH5-4** explains and assesses the role of evidence and discipline-based claims of knowledge of the universe used in addressing essential questions
* **BH5-7** locates and selects relevant sources of information and evidence from across a range of disciplines
* **BH5-8** evaluates the usefulness of sources and evidence across a range of disciplines to respond to essential questions and assess claims of knowledge
* **BH5-9** assesses claims of knowledge across a range of disciplines
* **BH5-10** selects and uses appropriate oral, written and other forms, including ICT, to communicate effectively to different audiences.

## Content

Students:

* explore the connected world as the eighth threshold of increasing complexity, including
* the role of interconnections in the context of Big History
* global systems of exchange and trade in relation to collective learning and increasing complexity
* trade routes and global connections over time
* the effects of the Columbian exchange
* the emergence and development of a global economy and its relationship to the fossil fuel revolution
* different sources of information that examine the supply chain of an everyday item
* explore the causes of interconnection in the 18th and 19th centuries, the impact of industrialisation, and how these contributed to collective learning, including
* how global commerce, information and complexity began to accelerate
* the fossil fuel energy bonanza and its impact on the process of industrialisation
* the key processes of industrial transportation in a single country
* innovations spanning 3 centuries
* describe the impact of industrial transformation on the size and nature of conflict
* assess the significance of innovation and the impact it has had on the world today, including
* science
* medicine
* transport
* technology
* investigate the Anthropocene, including
* the relationship between humans and the biosphere over time
* the major changes that are taking place during the Anthropocene Epoch
* the comparisons between the agrarian civilisation and the modern industrial civilisation in the same region
* human energy consumption and population growth in the last 200 years
* the pace of change over the last 200 years
* the planetary boundaries model and its usefulness for assessing human impact on the environment
* apply claims testing to the understanding of the connected world as the eighth threshold of increasing complexity
* explain how the study of geography contributes to the knowledge of the world
* describe different kinds of research undertaken by climate ecologists
* demonstrate understanding of the types of questions different disciplines ask in relation to the connected world.

# Core 10 – the future

This unit will investigate where the trends of the past 13.8 billion years will head in the near and remote futures. Students will use what they have learned from the past to illuminate the next few hundred million, billion and trillion years. They will learn how to methodically anticipate different scenarios for the future on human, planetary and cosmic scales. Students will look at the distant future of the planet and the entire universe. They will also explore the future of humanity, what the next threshold of complexity will be, and what may happen if complexity continues to rise long into the future.

## Outcomes

A student:

* **BH5-2** evaluates a range of differing claims of knowledge and perspectives
* **BH5-4** explains and assesses the role of evidence and discipline-based claims of knowledge of the universe used in addressing essential questions
* **BH5-6** analyses differing perspectives and claims of knowledge through the use of sources and evidence
* **BH5-8** evaluates the usefulness of sources and evidence across a range of disciplines to respond to essential questions and assess claims of knowledge
* **BH5-9** assesses claims of knowledge across a range of disciplines
* **BH5-10** selects and uses appropriate oral, written and other forms, including ICT, to communicate effectively to different audiences.

## Content

Students:

* apply thinking about the future as the ninth threshold of complexity, including
* claims testing the theories of the future in the context of Big History
* events in Big History at universal, planetary and human scales
* how life on Earth may impact the future
* different time scales to understand the future
* describe predictions of near futures, including
* different scenarios for the end of the Anthropocene, for example, collapse, creative descent, green sustainability, a technological breakthrough
* the role and impact of alternative energy solutions for a familiar community
* propose and justify possible remote futures, including
* different remote future scenarios and their potential impact on the continents, the planet, and the universe
* the Drake equation as a probabilistic estimate of how many alien societies, capable of communicating, exist in the universe
* the possible futures for humanity
* predict a vision of the future.

# Support and alignment

This resource has been designed to support schools with successful implementation of new curriculum, specifically the NSW Department of Education approved elective course, Big History © NSW Department of Education for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales, 2021.

The resource is produced to assist schools with promoting and implementing the course for the first time. As the course may be taught by teachers from a range of key learning areas, the resource is designed to support teachers from a variety of KLAs.

**Resource evaluation and support**: all curriculum resources are prepared through a rigorous process. Resources are periodically reviewed as part of our ongoing evaluation plan to ensure currency, relevance and effectiveness. For additional support or advice, or to provide feedback, contact the Teaching and learning 7–12 curriculum team by emailing [secondaryteachingandlearning@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:secondaryteachingandlearning@det.nsw.edu.au).

**Differentiation:** further advice to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, EALD students, students with a disability and/or additional needs and High Potential and gifted students can be found on the [Planning, programming and assessing 7–12](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/planning-programming-and-assessing-k-12/planning-programming-and-assessing-7-12) webpage. This includes the [Inclusion and differentiation advice 7–10](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/planning-programming-and-assessing-k-12/planning-programming-and-assessing-7-12/inclusion-and-differentiation-advice-7-10) webpage.

**Assessment**: further advice to support formative assessment is available on the [Planning programming and assessing 7-12](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/planning-programming-and-assessing-k-12/planning-programming-and-assessing-7-12) webpage. This includes the [Classroom assessment advice 7–10](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/planning-programming-and-assessing-k-12/planning-programming-and-assessing-7-12/classroom-assessment-advice-7-10-). For summative assessment tasks, the [Assessment task advice 7–10](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/planning-programming-and-assessing-k-12/planning-programming-and-assessing-7-12/assessment-task-advice-7-10) webpage is available.

**Professional learning**: relevant professional learning is available on the [Teaching and Learning 7–12 statewide staffroom](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/statewide-staffrooms).

**Consulted with**: Aboriginal Outcomes and Partnerships, Inclusion and Wellbeing and EAL/D.

**Alignment to system priorities and/or needs**: [School Excellence Policy](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2016-0468).

**Alignment to the School Excellence Framework**: this resource supports the [School Excellence Framework](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2016-0468) elements of curriculum (curriculum provision) and effective classroom practice (lesson planning, explicit teaching).

**Alignment to Australian Professional Teaching Standards**: this resource supports teachers to address 2.1.2, 2.3.2, 3.2.2, 7.2.2.

**Creation date**: 3November 2021

**Evidence base**:

‘The long-term vision is for a curriculum that supports teachers to nurture wonder, ignite passion and provide every young person with knowledge, skills and attributes that will help prepare them for a lifetime of learning, meaningful adult employment and effective future citizenship’ (NESA 2020:xi).

The development of the course and the course document as part of department approved electives aims to respond to the goals articulated in NESA’s curriculum review. Consistent messages from the review include:

* ‘flexibility’ was the word most used by teachers to describe the systemic change they want
* teachers need more time to teach important knowledge and skills
* students want authentic learning with real-world application.

This course and the department approved electives provide teachers with flexibility in the curriculum and authentic learning experiences. They allow for ‘increased local decision making in relation to the curriculum’ as this ‘is associated with higher levels of student performance’ (NESA 2020:52).

This resource has been developed so that teachers are able to use the principles of what works best. Explicit teaching using ‘the language of the syllabus to increase students’ familiarity with the vocabulary so students can unpack assessment questions and understand exactly what they are being asked to do’ (CESE 2020b:11).

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

* syllabus outcomes and scope of learning for each KLA for each year
* a scope and sequence and associated learning programs for each course, including teaching activities mapped against NESA syllabus outcomes and content, and including registration and evaluation (NSW Department of Education 2021:7).

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