

ACARA survey responses – VATE forum members

Please note that the following responses are verbatim from member feedback, not embellished or refined, as we wanted to capture their voices and reflect the diversity of our membership.

The online survey on the ACARA website was limited in terms of the comment boxes. As such, please also refer to the raw feedback (VATE Salon feedback), which was also sent to ACARA, for further comments.

SD = Strongly disagree

D = Disagree

A = Agree

SA = Strongly Agree

ACARA survey

The draft content descriptions:	
1	are clear and unambiguous, ie explaining in understandable language what is to be taught D
2	are coherent, ie clearly articulated across strands and year levels SD
3	are sequenced appropriately, ie in an order consistent with your experience D
4	are pitched appropriately, ie sufficiently challenging for students at each year level A
5	cover the important content for this learning area A
6	Please identify any content that you believe should be included in the Australian Curriculum that is not currently, and give reasons for your selection. Text should be central to the curriculum, and language and literacy are taught through text. See some examples of evaluative vocabulary.
7	Please identify any content that you believe should not be included in the Australian Curriculum that is currently included, and give

	<p>reasons for your selection.</p> <p>Object to some of the values teaching that underlies this e.g. 'Impact of English as a language in Asia'. Technical terminology such as hypertheme - daunting and unfamiliar. Some of the content is too challenging or inappropriate e.g. aesthetics at year 7. Evaluation at year 10 is too abstract, developmentally inappropriate at this level. Yet in other places it is too easy e.g. using a dictionary and thesaurus should be done in lower levels of secondary school, not year 10.</p>
8	<p>Please provide any additional comments you would like to make about the content descriptions.</p> <p>In general, the content descriptions are a mixture of too detailed, particularly in the Literacy and Language strands, and too vague, ie, in the Literature strand. It is confusingly repetitive, not only across levels but within strands at the same level. There is little sense of a logical sequence, e.g. verbs precede nouns in this document. What is the rationale for some technicalities being taught at specific levels? The document is not user-friendly and does not appear as a working document.</p>

Content Elaborations

- 9. illustrate the content description effectively A
- 10. illustrate the content descriptions sufficiently D
- 11. are clear and unambiguous D
- 12. are relevant and appropriate illustrations A
- 13. How can these be further improved to better illustrate the content descriptions?

Great deal of focus on teaching reading – seems to operate on the assumption that the mode is reading. Very little on teaching writing explicitly e.g: nominalisation = the thing you do to write essays Verbs= more lively writing

The draft achievement standards are:	
14	clear and unambiguous, ie explaining in understandable language what students are expected to learn
15	coherent, ie clearly articulate across year levels
16	sequenced appropriately, ie in an order consistent with your experience
17	pitched appropriately, ie sufficiently challenging for students at each year level

18	<p>Please provide any other comments you would like to make about the draft achievement standards.</p> <p>How the three strands are accessed through the modes is seen as incongruous by some (about 40% of respondents), while others do not see a problem with this. Text is the starting point, literacy skills enable students to engage with the text, and students produce their own texts using their knowledge of language and text and the skills acquired. Thus the output is accessed through the modes. The content is only one part of the assessment and can be written into the assessment criteria.</p>
19	The annotated work samples help illustrate and exemplify the achievement standards D
20	<p>How can the work samples be improved so that they better illustrate and exemplify the achievement standards?</p> <p>Not enough available yet. Need to explicitly show how the strands mesh with the achievement standards. Need more than work samples; a unit of work plus annotated samples would be more useful.</p>

The draft structure of the curriculum	
21	The organisation of the learning area(s) provides a coherent view of the key elements and features of the curriculum - SD
22	<p>Please provide any suggestions you have for improvements to the organisation of the learning area(s).</p> <p>It is not coherent at all. There needs to be stronger links across the strands to show how they are integrated. Suggest organisers common to all three that reflect what students 'know' and what students 'do', for example. Line the descriptions up so they can be read across the strands as well as down. This means reducing the amount of specificity in Literacy and Language, and expanding Literature.</p>
23	The content descriptions together with the achievement standards provide clarity about the depth of teaching and learning required - SD
24	<p>Please provide any further comments.</p> <p>It does allow local flexibility in the delivery because it says nothing about the texts. The reaction to the three strands is about 65% in favour of the three being made explicit, and 35% who disagree with organising the curriculum in this way. Suggestions include realigning the strands so that Literacy is first, Literature is second and Language third, and remove the numbering of the Content Descriptions – implied hierarchy of importance.</p>
25	The Rationale and Aims of the learning area(s) provide a clear foundation and direction for the curriculum. - D
26	<p>Please explain your response.</p> <p>Motherhood statements rather than a rationale.</p>

The following general capabilities are clearly evident in the content descriptions and achievement standards	
27	Literacy – SA
28	Numeracy - SD
29	Information and communication technologies - SA
30	Thinking skills - SA
31	Creativity - A
32	Self-management - A
33	Teamwork - A
34	Intercultural understanding - D
35	Ethical behaviour - A
36	Social competence - D
37	<p>Please provide any further comments you would like to make on the incorporation of general capabilities into the Australian Curriculum.</p> <p>It is difficult to argue with the importance of General Capabilities but these should be seen as underpinning values of modern education rather than as items to be specified in the curriculum. What is the definition of ‘ethical behaviour’ and who determines this? Not consistent. Some of the GCs, are pedagogical approaches well-established in teaching, and should not need to be specified in this way. Perhaps better placed elsewhere and in a different format, statements aligned with rationale.</p>

The following cross curriculum dimensions are clearly evident in the content descriptions	
38	Indigenous history and culture – D
39	A commitment to sustainability – D
40	Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia – D
41	<p>Please provide any further comments you would like to make on the incorporation of the cross curriculum dimensions into the Australian Curriculum.</p> <p>The intention to include these dimensions is worthy, however, at present they are dealt with in a very uneven and ultimately tokenistic way. We question narrow focus on Asia – so many people in Australian society, and particularly students in our classrooms, e.g. Africa, Pacific and South America, and to exclude them is highly inappropriate. The implication that Asia is a homogenised group is</p>

	offensive. Comment from VATE forum members regarding how to locate suitable resources.
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Digital layout:	
42	The Australian Curriculum consultation website is easy to navigate. - SD
43	All parts of the draft Australian Curriculum can be easily accessed on the website. - SD
44	How can the layout of the Australian Curriculum consultation website be improved to enable easier access and navigation? Glossary needs to be downloadable. Search tool needs to be able to do just that e.g we put in work samples and found zero results. Work samples hidden. Achievement standards go first. Filters need to include elaborations.

