**Video transcript: WACE 2015-16 – Overview**

Hi, I’m Allan Blagaich, the CEO of the School Curriculum and Standards Authority.

As you know, in January 2013, the Minister for Education together with the Premier announced significant reforms to the WACE from 2016.

Since that announcement we have listened to the feedback from teachers, principals and other stakeholders and identified a number of areas that required additional consideration or clarification to ensure that the overall objectives of the reforms are best met.

Information outlining the refinements we have made as a result of that feedback was sent to schools and published on our website in November 2013. Many principals and deputy principals have also attended WACE 2016 briefings in 2013 and 2014.

First of all I would like to thank the 1300 teachers, deputies, principals and university and training educators who have been working with us to get the syllabuses for Year 11 and 12, the sample exams and marking keys, the sample externally set tasks and the draft *WACE Manual 2015-16* ready for you. I said from the outset that this work could only be done if teachers were working with us to get it done and to keep it real. We have and we thank you.

The purpose of this video is to take you through the key areas of the reform and to let you know where we have landed in relation to each one.

More detail about where we’ve landed is outlined in a report called the *Supplementary information to the report: the Western Australian Certificate of Education 2015 Responding and adaptin*g. It is dated November 2013. You can download this report from our website and read it at your leisure.

To help teachers in the transition process we have published two WACE Manuals. We have a *WACE Manual 2014–15* for the current WACE requirements. This is for Year 11 and Year 12 students in 2014 and for Year 12 students in 2015.

We have also published a draft WACE Manual for 2015–16 for the revised WACE requirements. Once finalised, this will be for Year 11 students in 2015 and for Year 11 and Year 12 students in 2016.

Please don’t get confused between these two documents.

The FINAL WACE Manual for 2015–16 will be published before school starts in 2015.

**Now for a broad overview of what students will need to do to achieve a WACE in 2016**

Students will need to demonstrate the minimum standard for literacy and numeracy. This can be either achieved by demonstrating Band 8 or higher in the NAPLAN, Reading, Writing and Numeracy tests in Year 9 or by meeting the minimum standard of the Reading, Writing and Numeracy components of the Online Literacy Numeracy Assessment, or – here comes another acronym – the OLNA. The OLNA assessments which many Year 10 students sat for the first time in March will be run twice a year, providing most students <with> six opportunities to complete the assessment – if required – between Year 10 and Year 12.

Students will be required to complete a minimum of four Year 12 ATAR courses including the external examination – that is, they must be eligible for an ATAR – or complete a Certificate II or higher.

They must complete two Year 11 English units and a pair of Year 12 English units.

They also must complete at least one pair of units from a Year 12 List A course and one pair of units from a Year 12 List B course

Further, they must complete at least 20 units (or equivalents) including a minimum of 10 Year 12 units, that is, five courses. That’s a change folks and you need to not that. So, they need to do five courses in Year 12.

And, finally, achieve a minimum of 14 C grades in Year 11 and Year 12 units, or equivalents. Those 14 C grades MUST include at least 6 C grades in Year 12 units, or equivalents.

All students, whether they have achieved the WACE or not, will receive a Western Australian Statement of Student Achievement – a record of all courses and programs completed.

If students **do not** meet the literacy and numeracy standard by the time they exit secondary school, they can apply to the Authority to re-sit the assessment. If they are successful at that point then they will receive their WACE.

**So, just a couple more points about the OLNA**

If the student doesn’t meet the standard in Semester 1, Year 10 then they **must** sit the assessment again in Semester 2, and, if required, Semester 1 in Year 11. From then on, and if required, students – in consultation with their school and parents – may choose when next to sit the assessment.

Students with identified special needs may choose not to sit the assessment. This will therefore make them ineligible for a WACE. Further information about this is available in the OLNA guidelines which were emailed to schools in January and are available on our website.

Students with a language background other than English, who arrived from overseas and have been attending school in Australia for less than a year before the OLNA, should be given the opportunity to attempt the assessment, but they may be exempted from the assessment in Semester 1, Year 10.

The OLNA occurs each year in March and September. Specific dates will be published on our website and communicated to schools.

In addition, schools will receive information identifying general concepts that they may focus on so they can support improved student achievement.

Reporting will cover three categories of achievement.

Category 3 is those students who have demonstrated the standard, either by sitting the assessment or through NAPLAN.

Category 2 is those students who through normal development of literacy and numeracy skills over Years 10 to 12 should demonstrate the minimum standard before the end of Year 12. It is strongly recommended that these students enrol in General (or ATAR) courses.

Category 1 is those students whose results are considerably below the minimum standard and may require specific learning interventions. It is recommended that consideration be given to enrolling these students in Foundation courses.

If you are after more specific information in relation to students with special needs and the OLNA and WACE please refer to documentation on our website.

**So, back to the units. Let’s clarify the issue about sequential development and delivery of units.**

All ATAR and General courses demonstrate an increasing level of complexity from Year 11 to Year 12. This is inherent in the design. Remember that the units in the General Courses in Year 11 are based on modified Stage 1 units and units in Year 12 courses are based on modified Stage 2 units. Therefore Year 12 units are, by design, more challenging than Year 11 units and it makes no educational sense to do Year 12 before Year 11. In other words, you can’t go backwards.

Course units must be completed sequentially, with Year 11 – Units 1 and 2 – being undertaken before Year 12 – Units 3 and 4 – unless students enrol directly in Year 12 units without having completing Year 11 units in that course. So, for example, the student who decides at Year 11 that they want to come out of History and swap to Geography – they are able to enrol in the Year 12 Geography course.

It is really important that you realise that Year 12 Units 3 and 4 are now paired. In other words, the old course change date in May is back. It will not be possible to switch after this date. Any student who does switch courses in Year 12 before that date will have to complete the assessment requirements of **both** Units 3 and 4 of the new course.

**Now, let’s talk about eligibility for Foundation and Preliminary**

Students who achieve the literacy standard in either NAPLAN Year 9 or OLNA are **not** eligible to enrol in Foundation English or any other List A Foundation courses.

Students who achieve the numeracy standard in either NAPLAN Year 9 or OLNA are **not** eligible to enrol in Foundation Mathematics or the other List B Foundation courses.

Students who achieve the minimum standard of literacy and/or numeracy in Semester 1 of Year 11 are **not** eligible to continue in the associated Foundation courses in Semester 2 of that year.

In other words, if they meet the standard for either literacy or numeracy in March Year 11 they should and have to swap their enrolment to the equivalent General or ATAR Courses in Semester 2. Folks, it’s really important that everyone understands that.

Enrolment in Preliminary courses will be restricted to students who have been identified as having a severe learning difficulty; intellectual disability or severely disrupted learning pathway that has significantly impeded their learning.

Schools enrolling students in Preliminary units may be asked to provide evidence to the Authority through an audit process.

**Maximum credit in a subject is something I’d like to talk about as well.**

Students can achieve credit towards the WACE for a maximum of four units within any one subject. For example, four ATAR course units, four General course units or a combination of four ATAR and General course units.

While Year 10 students who are enrolled in Stage 1 or Stage 2 units in 2014 may use these results as credit towards their WACE against the related Year 11 ATAR or General course, students can only achieve a credit towards the WACE for a maximum of four units within any one course.

For example, a student enrolled in Stage 1 Visual Arts in Year 10, who then enrols in Visual Arts General Units 1 and 2 in Year 11 and then enrols in Visual Arts General Units 3 and 4 in Year 12 – out of all of those units, a maximum of four units from these may contribute to the WACE.

Transition Arrangements for students in Stage 1 or Stage 2 units can be found in the Supplementary Information document on the Authority’s website.

**VET**

VET is such an important part of this reform that we have chosen to make a video specifically focusing on the VET area and I urge you to watch that video.

There are a few key points from the video that I want to highlight for you right now.

A Certificate I can only count for Year 11 unit equivalence and a completed Certificate I must have a minimum of 110 nominal hours. That means students may require additional electives to meet the 110 hour minimum.

A Certificate II and above: the minimum nominal hours requirement increases to 220. Again, additional elective units may be required to ensure the minimum is met. A Certificate II or higher **can** count for Year 11 and Year 12 unit equivalence.

The Authority received considerable feedback in relation partial completion of Certificate III and above and the Board has agreed with teachers that there are circumstances when partial completion should be accredited for the WACE. For specific details related to partial completion of Certificate III and above please refer to the information on our website and within the VET video.

You should also note that VET industry specific courses will no longer be identified as List A or List B and will not satisfy the breadth requirement of the WACE. This change is to support students being exposed to a broad general education.

You may also note that we have included Creative Industries qualification options and a new Engineering VET industry specific course.

One other important thing to note is that the Certificate of General Education for Adults, or the CGEA, will not be allocated credit, nor recognised as meeting the requirement of achieving a Certificate II or higher for WACE completion. The Authority’s Board has reserved the right to identify some qualifications from nationally recognised courses which it will not recognise for unit equivalence in the WACE. Should this occur, information will be communicated to schools.

However, qualifications from the suite of Certificates of General Education for Adults and other general education qualifications will be reported on a student’s Western Australian Statement of Student Achievement.

Again, I urge you to visit our website and watch the VET video as there is very specific information in relation to nationally endorsed training packages and their role in providing credit towards the WACE.

**So, what’s happening with Workplace Learning?**

The Authority recognises the value of Workplace Learning and the requirement for Workplace Learning to achieve some VET qualifications.

Current Workplace Learning offerings will be discontinued and will be replaced by one endorsed program which allows students to accrue a maximum of two Year 11 units and two Year 12 units. These units are generic in nature and allow for a variety of workplace experiences whilst meeting the needs of all students who wish to use Workplace Learning within their WACE.

Therefore, four units of Workplace Learning will be available.

The Workplace Learning units, along with VET programs and other endorsed program units, can only be used to accrue credit up to a combined maximum of four Year 11 units and four Year 12 units.

Students may elect to undertake the additional VET programs and endorsed program units but will be limited to a maximum of eight units credit as part of the requirement to complete a minimum of 20 units over Years 11 and 12.

**And then we’ve got Endorsed Programs**

The Board is taking advice from the Endorsed Programs Committee on a range of issues relating to Endorsed Programs.

The Board is seeking to strengthen policies and processes regarding the approval of endorsed programs for credit within the WACE.

They are looking to rationalise the number and nature of endorsed programs on offer, and to discontinue the use of endorsed programs for credit within the WACE where the proposed courses have significant overlap with WACE courses.

Basically schools need to remember that a student can use endorsed programs only for two units of equivalence in Year 11 and two units in Year 12 – but this must be considered in relation to the total number of equivalences being claimed for through VET.

**Now, let me give you an update about Private Candidates**

From 2016, private candidature in ATAR examinations will be discontinued except for students seeking mature age university entrance and/or undertaking language courses through interstate or Collaborative Curriculum Assessment Framework for Languages (CCAFL) offerings.

**One of the other major changes is in relation to Moderation and the introduction of Externally Set Tasks**

An externally set task – EST process – will be introduced as part of the Authority’s suite of moderation processes for General courses. This will also apply to Foundation courses but not Preliminary courses at Year 12.

This process will support consensus moderation and ultimately seeks to ensure that a C in one school is the same as a C from every other school.

It is imperative that there is public confidence in school-based grades for these non-examination courses in order to maintain the credibility of certification.

The importance of getting this element of the reform right cannot be underestimated. The Authority has been funded to implement the ESTs for General courses and to implement moderation exercises fully across all courses including Foundation but not Preliminary.

**So, some further details about the EST**

The Authority will inform all schools during Term 3 in the previous year of the section/s of the syllabus content on which the task will be based.

The EST will be a task of approximately 60 minutes duration which students will complete individually under test conditions and which will contribute towards 15 per cent of their final Year 12 school mark.

The Authority will provide a marking key for the task.

Teachers will assess the task against the key and the task will be used for consensus moderation. On a rotation basis, schools will be required to submit marks and a sample of scripts to the Authority for validation of those marks. These processes will inform moderation visits the following year.

It is intended that the EST process will:

* have an educative role in establishing common understandings of the course standards and related content;
* provide access to feedback which will encourage teachers to review and where appropriate adjust their marking, assessment and teaching;
* model assessment practice which teachers can apply to other school-based assessment tasks;
* enable analysis by the Authority across schools and/or courses;
* inform the Authority’s selection of schools for which grading reviews will be conducted; and finally, and probably most importantly,
* enhance public confidence in school-based grades for these non-examination courses and maintain the credibility of certification.

**(Review of courses)**

From 2016, courses (excluding Languages) with fewer than 100 students in Year 12 across the State for two consecutive years will be placed on notice, and if enrolments remain at or below 100 students for a third year, the course will be removed from the course list.

All syllabuses will be reviewed typically on a five-year cyclical basis, according to learning area. The schedule of review will be published later in 2014.

**Certificates of Merit and Distinction**

Two new awards, Certificates of Distinction and Certificates of Merit, will be established that are based on students’ achievement measured by the grades awarded by schools and the levels of the courses and programs undertaken.

Certificates will be determined through the allocation of points.

These certificates will replace the current Certificates of Commendation.

The rules for calculating points for Certificates of Merit and Distinction, with some examples, can be found on the Authority’s website.

**So, what’s happening in 2014 in relation to Australian Curriculum and the WACE syllabuses?**

The Year 11 and 12 Western Australian syllabuses incorporate some of the general design associated with the approved senior secondary Australian Curriculum. Typically, syllabus statements include the following components: a rationale, aims, organisation, specific unit information including a unit description, learning outcomes or objectives, unit content, school-based assessment, WACE examination – where relevant.

Consistent with the Australian Curriculum, the syllabuses include, within the organisation section, reference to the seven general capabilities – literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology competence, critical and creative thinking, personal and social competence, ethical understanding and intercultural understanding – and three cross-curriculum priorities – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures, Asia and Australia’s Engagement with Asia and Sustainability.

I want to be really clear that the cross-curriculum priorities and the general capabilities are not applicable in all syllabuses and are identified syllabus unit content only when appropriate.

The specific unit information, specifically the unit content, identifies the expected student learning within each syllabus. General capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities are not assessed unless they are identified within the specified unit content.

Good teachers make good decisions about making connections.

The Australian Government has announced a Review of the Australian Curriculum.

The report on the Review is due to be published by 31 July 2014.

Any changes that the Australian and Western Australian Governments may endorse as a result of the Review will be considered by the Authority in the Western Australian syllabuses as part of our curriculum review cycle.

The following support resources are available on the Authority’s website:

* 230 syllabuses divided into Year 11 and Year 12 except for Preliminary
* sample externally set tasks for all General courses
* sample examinations for the 14 ATAR courses developed from the Senior Secondary Australian Curriculum
* the draft *WACE Manual 2015-16*
* learning area videos, and
* registration for learning area webinars.

Keep an eye on our website.

I’d like to take this opportunity for thanking you for all of your support. We have very much appreciated and trust that during the course of this year we will get all of this work right for you and for our students.