



# **ABORIGINAL AND INTERCULTURAL STUDIES**

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General course

**Year 12 syllabus – What’s changing: Rationale and Aims**

**For teaching in 2027**

## **Acknowledgement of Country**

Kaya. The School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) acknowledges that our offices are on Whadjuk Noongar boodjar and that we deliver our services on the country of many traditional custodians and language groups throughout Western Australia. The Authority acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We offer our respect to Elders past and present.

## **Background**

As part of the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) Refreshment for reviewing the nomenclature of courses, the Authority has updated the rationale and aims of each syllabus.

The revised rationale and aims are aligned with the mapping of the general capabilities to provide clear connections between the rationale, aims and syllabus content. The rationale outlines what the subject is about and why it is important. It describes what students can expect to study in the course, along with the knowledge, skills and understandings they will develop throughout the course. It also explains how these can be applied in everyday life and references potential future pathways, outlining how students might connect what they learn in the course to further education, training and employment opportunities.

## **Important information**

### **WACE Refreshment: Reviewing the nomenclature of courses**

This document contains information that will be included in the syllabus effective from 1 January 2027.

Users of the syllabus are responsible for checking its currency.

Syllabuses are formally reviewed by the Authority on a cyclical basis, typically every five years.

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## Rationale

The Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies General course provides students with a deeper understanding of the world's oldest living continuous cultures and their ongoing significance in contemporary Australia. Students learn about the reciprocal relationship between First Nations Peoples and Country, including the importance of Country and cultural expression in shaping identity and heritage. The course focuses on cultural resilience, self-determination and reconciliation, with a strong emphasis on cultural safety and responsiveness to ensure respectful engagement with First Nations histories, voices and perspectives.

Students investigate the interrelationship between First Nations Peoples and the environment. They learn the important role that Country and the environment play in the lives, cultures and identities of First Nations Peoples, including education and knowledge sharing, ceremony and celebration, economic opportunities and management of contemporary environmental threats. The course includes comparative studies of the historical and contemporary experiences of First Nations Peoples in Australia and globally, encouraging students to analyse social, political, economic and environmental issues through an intercultural lens. The importance of ethical considerations, including awareness of intellectual and cultural property, is emphasised.

Students develop critical thinking, cultural awareness and ethical research skills as they use resources produced by or developed in consultation with First Nations Peoples, which provide First Nations voices and a range of perspectives. They investigate the diverse ways First Nations Peoples express and maintain their cultures, as well as the importance of protecting cultural heritage. Through exploring ideas of cultural resilience and reconciliation, students learn how to engage respectfully with diverse perspectives and participate in informed discussions on identity, heritage and social justice.

Students apply their learning through social action projects that promote awareness and respect for First Nations histories, cultures and contributions. By developing intercultural understanding, students gain essential skills for contributing to society as responsible global citizens. These skills can be applied in personal and professional settings, including advocating for social justice and celebrating First Nations Peoples' contributions. Students translate their knowledge into action through projects involving community engagement, advocacy or education. These initiatives enhance cultural understanding, support reconciliation and contribute to the protection of First Nations cultures. Students develop skills in reflection and evaluation, ensuring ongoing learning and impact.

The course helps students build skills and knowledge that open up exciting pathways for further education and careers in fields such as teaching and education support, social work, psychology, community and youth services, public health, environmental and land management, cultural liaison and advisory roles, media and storytelling, and the arts and humanities. Students gain transferable skills in critical thinking, ethical engagement, respectful communication and cultural responsiveness, supporting active citizenship and lifelong learning.

## Aims

The Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies General course aims to develop and further build students':

- knowledge and understanding of Australian First Nations Peoples as the oldest living continuous cultures in the world
- awareness of the ways First Nations Peoples' identities are expressed through unique ways of being, knowing and doing
- understanding that there are different and changing perspectives of history and that these inform and influence people's actions
- understanding that members of different cultures have different world views as a result of their beliefs, values, practices and experiences
- appreciation of the diversity and richness of Australian First Nations Peoples' histories and cultures
- critical thinking skills, including ethical research skills
- empathy and respect for the ways people think, feel and act
- growth as active and informed advocates for anti-racism and a just and inclusive world
- engagement in reconciliation, respect and recognition of the world's oldest living continuous cultures.