



GEOGRAPHY

ATAR course

Year 12 syllabus – What’s changing: General capabilities

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 to investigate the assessment and reporting of the general capabilities on the Western Australian Statement of Student Achievement (WASSA), the Authority has updated the statements about the general capabilities in each syllabus.

The Authority has mapped the general capabilities through the unit content and assessment types for each of the WACE courses. Students will have the opportunity to develop the general capabilities identified in the course through the teaching, learning and assessment programs. These general capabilities will be reflected on the WASSA.

Important information

WACE Refreshment: Investigating the assessment and reporting of the general capabilities on the Western Australian Statement of Student Achievement (WASSA)

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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Representation of the general capabilities

The general capabilities encompass the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that will support students to live and work successfully now and into the future. Teachers should find opportunities to incorporate the following capabilities into the teaching and learning program for the Geography ATAR course. The general capabilities are not assessed unless they are identified within the specified unit content.

Critical and creative thinking

Students develop critical and creative thinking skills in the course to understand the complex world around them. They learn to analyse the interrelationships between people, ideas and environments, exploring the impacts and consequences of these relationships. They practise thinking creatively, proposing different solutions to geographical problems, especially those related to the environment, sustainability and global change. When investigating geographical questions, they learn to think broadly and spatially, using skills like analysing information, interpreting data, predicting trends and finding connections between different things.

Students develop curiosity and a willingness to find solutions to real-world problems. They learn to evaluate information from various sources, identify trends and patterns and make predictions. Students also practise proposing and evaluating different actions to address geographical issues, considering environmental, social, and economic factors. Essentially, they learn to think like geographers, using critical and creative thinking to understand and solve problems related to our planet.

Digital literacy

Students become proficient in using technology to explore and understand the world. They use digital tools, especially spatial technologies, to investigate geographical problems and questions. Students learn to evaluate the quality and reliability of online information and understand the strengths and weaknesses of different digital tools, and understand how information is shared online. They learn to think carefully about the ethical use of digital information, especially geographical and demographic data, and consider the potential social and environmental impacts. They develop skills to find and use digital information responsibly, respecting intellectual property and Aboriginal and Torres Islander Peoples' cultural knowledge. Specifically, students use digital tools to find and use a variety of digital information sources; collect and analyse data, and represent it digitally; use online mapping tools and databases; critically evaluate the quality of online information; create reports and presentations using different media; understand the ethical implications of using digital information; and recognise the impacts of technology on people and places.

Intercultural understanding

Intercultural understanding plays an important role in geographical inquiry. Students explore the links between human rights and responsibilities and the ways that diverse perspectives, values and cultures impact on geographical issues. Students discuss how people and places accept, change or reject cultural influences; consider the social, economic and environmental effects of cultural changes; develop respect for diverse perspectives and beliefs; and learn to propose solutions that are sensitive to different cultures. Essentially, they learn to appreciate and understand cultural diversity, which is crucial for finding fair and sustainable solutions to global challenges.

Literacy

Students develop their literacy skills by exploring, interpreting and evaluating geographical phenomena and issues and communicating geographically. They work with oral, print, visual and digital texts to gather, synthesise and analyse information from a range of sources. They present, analyse and justify ideas, conclusions and opinions within a broad range of geographical contexts. They use language features, specific geographical terminology and text structures to comprehend and compose cohesive texts about people, places and environments. Students also develop visual literacy skills as they make meaning of information communicated through maps, graphs, diagrams, flow charts and other images.

Numeracy

Students develop numeracy skills in the course by interpreting and communicating spatial and temporal patterns. They learn to translate raw data into meaningful visual representations, interpreting trends and relationships through graphs and maps. Students apply analytical techniques to quantify change over time.

Students improve their numeracy skills by interpreting and manipulating map scales, including written, linear and ratio formats. They calculate distances, areas and gradients on a variety of maps. They use and apply numerical data and statistical analysis to support their conclusions.

Addressing the other general capabilities

Although the following general capabilities have not been identified as a focus in the Geography ATAR Year 12 syllabus, teachers may find opportunities to incorporate these capabilities into the teaching and learning program.

- Ethical understanding
- Personal and social capability

Such opportunities may occur through the application of different contexts, pedagogical practices and/or assessment strategies that relate to the syllabus as part of the teaching and learning program.

Summary representation of the general capabilities in the Geography ATAR course

A representation of the general capabilities for the two years is summarised in the table below.

Year	Course	Course type	General capabilities						
			CCT	DL	EU	IU	L	N	PSC
Year 11	Geography (AEGEO)	ATAR	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Year 12	Geography (ATGEO)	ATAR	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	

Key

CCT: Critical and creative thinking, DL: Digital literacy, EU: Ethical understanding, IU: Intercultural understanding, L: Literacy, N: Numeracy, PSC: Personal and social capability