



POLITICS AND LAW

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 Politics and Law ATAR course. The general capabilities are not assessed unless they are identified within the specified unit content.

Critical and creative thinking

Students develop capability in critical and creative thinking as they apply problem-solving, inquiry, analytical and decision-making strategies to generate and evaluate knowledge, clarify concepts and ideas, seek possibilities and consider alternatives. Students further develop critical and creative thinking through investigating and evaluating the political and legal systems of Australia and other countries, as well as by examining contemporary political and legal issues.

Ethical understanding

Students develop ethical understanding as they examine values, rights and responsibilities, and ethical norms associated with the upholding and/or undermining of democratic principles, including political representation, popular participation, the rule of law, judicial independence and natural justice in Australia and other countries. Students explore how those in power are held to account for their unethical decisions and practices.

Literacy

Students develop literacy capability as they research, read and analyse sources of information on aspects of Australia's political and legal system and contemporary issues. They learn to understand and use political and legal terminology to discuss, analyse and evaluate concepts and ideas related to political and legal power, accountability and rights. Students communicate information, analyses and conclusions using reasoned arguments in responses to short answer and essay questions, source analysis responses and an investigation.

Personal and social capability

Students develop personal and social capability as they investigate human rights protections in Australia and other countries and the changing experience of a particular group within Australia in terms of their political and legal rights. This allows them to develop their communication and decision-making skills while learning to appreciate others' insights and perspectives.

Addressing the other general capabilities

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

- Digital literacy
- Intercultural understanding
- Numeracy

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 Politics and Law 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	Politics and Law (AEPAL)	ATAR	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
Year 12	Politics and Law (ATPAL)	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