



VISUAL ARTS

ATAR 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.

Copyright

© School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2025

This document – apart from any third-party copyright material contained in it – may be freely copied, or communicated on an intranet, for non-commercial purposes in educational institutions, provided that the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) is acknowledged as the copyright owner, and that the Authority's moral rights are not infringed.

Copying or communication for any other purpose can be done only within the terms of the *Copyright Act 1968* or with prior written permission of the Authority. Copying or communication of any third-party copyright material can be done only within the terms of the *Copyright Act 1968* or with permission of the copyright owners.

Any content in this document that has been derived from the Australian Curriculum may be used under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence](#).

Rationale

The Visual Arts ATAR course combines practical creation and theoretical analysis of art, craft and design. It develops students' visual literacy, enabling them to perceive, understand, interpret and evaluate visual information. The course also develops their capacity to communicate through visual language and make informed evaluations of art, emphasising divergence, uniqueness and individuality while fostering greater understanding of their environment, community and culture.

Students engage in comprehensive art-making processes across both traditional and contemporary media. They explore art forms such as sculpture, painting, printmaking, digital design, photography and multimedia installations. Students develop personal imagery and artistic expression and learn to integrate forms, creating mixed-media compositions, digital-traditional hybrids and interdisciplinary projects that blend materials, techniques, processes and emerging technologies to develop and create innovative artwork.

Through this course, students develop critical thinking, creativity and technical proficiency. They build motivation, self-esteem, discipline, collaborative practice and resilience while honing their problem-solving abilities and analytical thinking. Innovation is fostered through inquiry, exploration and experimentation, allowing students to transform ideas into resolved artwork. They gain visual literacy and communication skills that enable them to express ideas through non-verbal symbol systems, make discriminating judgments about visual information and develop an awareness of how art can both reflect and challenge social attitudes.

The Visual Arts ATAR course develops practical and analytical skills that students can apply in their daily lives and provides opportunities to create, respond to and connect with their surroundings. By documenting their creative process and presenting their artwork, students learn to think creatively and critically and develop organisational, problem-solving and communication skills. Importantly, the course enables students to become visually literate citizens who can interpret and contribute meaningfully to visual culture, enhancing their understanding of the significance of environment and context.

The course prepares students for diverse future pathways by developing transferable creative thinking and problem-solving skills. The visual literacy, analytical abilities and technical skills they gain provide foundations for further education and careers in fine arts, design, architecture, art education, art therapy, museum and gallery curation, advertising, media and digital content creation. Beyond specific art-related careers, the course fosters an appreciation for the environment, an awareness of ecological sustainability, and a sense of enjoyment and fulfillment that enriches students' lives regardless of their chosen profession.

Aims

The Visual Arts course aims to develop students’:

- ability to generate and communicate innovative ideas through research-driven creative processes
- development of visual language that effectively expresses ideas and communicates artistic intent
- manipulation of art elements and principles to produce innovative, resolved artworks
- development and refinement of skills, techniques and processes to complete and present work for specific purposes, audiences and contexts
- reflective practice and articulate communication about creative processes
- critical evaluation of their own and others’ artwork using visual language and art terminology
- ability to recognise and interpret how visual arts function across diverse social, cultural and historical contexts
- understanding of visual art’s evolving role in society.