



PHYSICS

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

Critical and creative thinking

Students' critical and creative thinking capability is developed in this course through the science inquiry process. Science inquiry requires the ability to construct, review and revise questions and hypotheses about increasingly complex and abstract scenarios, and to design related investigation methods. Students interpret and evaluate data; interrogate, select and cross-reference evidence; and analyse processes, interpretations, conclusions and claims for validity and reliability, including reflecting on their processes and conclusions.

Digital literacy

Digital literacy capability is a key part of Science Inquiry Skills developed in this course. Students use a range of strategies to locate, access and evaluate information from multiple digital sources; collect, analyse and represent data; model and interpret concepts and relationships; and communicate and share science ideas, processes and information.

Ethical understanding

Ethical understanding is a vital part of scientific inquiry. Students evaluate the ethics of experimental science, codes of practice and the use of scientific information and science applications. They explore what integrity means in science, and they understand, critically analyse and apply ethical guidelines in their investigations. They consider the implications of their investigations on others, the environment and living organisms. They use scientific information to evaluate the claims and actions of others and to inform ethical decisions about a range of social, environmental and personal issues and applications of science.

Literacy

Students develop literacy through the course as they gather, interpret, synthesise and critically analyse information presented in a wide range of genres, modes and representations, including text, flow diagrams, symbols, graphs and tables. They evaluate information sources and compare and contrast ideas, information and opinions presented within and between texts. Students communicate processes and ideas logically and fluently and structure evidence-based arguments, selecting genres and employing appropriate structures and features to communicate for specific purposes and audiences.

Numeracy

Numeracy is developed and used in the course as students apply a wide range of Science Inquiry Skills, including making and recording observations; ordering, representing and analysing data; and interpreting trends and relationships. They employ numeracy skills to interpret complex spatial and graphic representations and to appreciate how physical systems are structured, interact and change across spatial scales. They engage in the analysis of data, including issues relating to reliability and probability, and they interpret and manipulate mathematical relationships to calculate and predict values.

Addressing the other general capabilities

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

- Intercultural 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 Physics 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	Physics (AEPHY)	ATAR	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Year 12	Physics (ATPHY)	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