



HEALTH STUDIES

General course

Year 12 syllabus for teaching from 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.

Important information

As part of the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) Refreshment, the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) has revised the course rationale and aims, and updated the General Capabilities to create clearer connections with the syllabus content.

This syllabus is effective from 1 January 2027.

Users of this 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 Health Studies General course provides students with the knowledge and understandings to recognise health issues and the skills to convey information about healthy choices for individuals.

The course introduces students to health promotion and its influence on community health. Students investigate health-related data to identify trends and patterns regarding health in communities. They explore social marketing in health and emotional intelligence as a mechanism for perceiving, controlling and evaluating emotions.

Students develop reflective thinking and problem-solving skills to understand health information and make sound choices. They enhance their communication and leadership abilities to collaborate with others and support community wellbeing.

The course empowers students to apply their knowledge, adopt healthy behaviours, support others and contribute to their communities. It also provides strategies for managing personal health, accessing reliable information and advocating for positive change.

The Health Studies General course opens pathways to careers in health and community services, including health promotion, allied health and support roles. It provides a strong foundation for further study and employment by fostering transferable skills in research, communication and problem-solving. These skills are highly valuable across all professions that involve working with people.

Aims

The Health Studies General course aims to develop students':

- understanding of the contexts that can impact health and ability to recognise contemporary health challenges
- ability to explore determinants of health and apply relevant frameworks, models and theories
- capacity to analyse how beliefs, attitudes, values and social and cultural norms shape health behaviours
- self-management and communication skills to make informed decisions and promote health and wellbeing
- application of critical thinking to health-related concepts and issues.

Organisation

This course is organised into a Year 11 syllabus and a Year 12 syllabus. The cognitive complexity of the syllabus content increases from Year 11 to Year 12.

Structure of the syllabus

The Year 12 syllabus is divided into two units which are delivered as a pair. The notional time for the pair of units is 110 class contact hours.

Unit 3

This unit focuses on building students' knowledge and understandings of health determinants and their interaction and contribution to personal and community health. Students define and consolidate understandings of health promotion and are introduced to key health literacy skills. Students expand on their understanding of the impact of beliefs on health behaviour and continue to develop personal and interpersonal skills which support health. Inquiry skills are consolidated and applied, including the ability to identify trends and patterns in data.

Unit 4

This unit focuses on the impact of health determinants on personal and community health. The concept of community development and the importance of participation and empowerment is introduced. Students learn about how chronic conditions are defined in the National Strategic Framework. The use of social marketing in health is explored and students are introduced to emotional intelligence as a mechanism for perceiving, controlling and evaluating emotions. Students continue to refine inquiry skills as they address relevant issues and produce insightful and well-researched reports.

Each unit includes:

- a unit description – a short description of the focus of the unit
- unit content – the content to be taught and learned.

Organisation of content

For each unit, the content is organised as follows.

Content organisers	Sub-organisers
Health concepts	Holistic health
	Principles, frameworks, models and theories
	Actions and strategies
	Consumer health
Attitudinal and environmental influences	Beliefs, attitudes and values
	Social and cultural norms
Skills and processes	Self-management skills
	Interpersonal skills
	Health inquiry

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. They are not assessed unless identified within the specified unit content. Teachers should find opportunities to incorporate the following General Capabilities into the teaching and learning program for the Health Studies General course.

Digital literacy

The course supports students in effectively accessing online health information and services. They apply legal and ethical practices when locating, generating and evaluating information for research. Given the vast range of online health sources, students develop targeted search techniques to assess the credibility and relevance of information.

Ethical understanding

Attitudes, values and beliefs shape health-related decisions and influence lifestyle choices as barriers or enablers. Students develop ethical understanding by examining how these factors, along with differing interpretations of health information, impact decisions and contribute to health disparities between populations.

Intercultural understanding

Cultural attitudes and perspectives significantly influence health and wellbeing. Students explore how cultural complexities shape beliefs, practices and health promotion initiatives.

Literacy

The course develops literacy by introducing health-specific terminology and language to describe factors influencing health, health status and related frameworks. Students enhance critical health-consumer skills to access, interpret, and evaluate health information while navigating the healthcare system. Through practical and collaborative activities, they refine communication skills for effective interaction in personal and group settings.

Addressing the other General Capabilities

Although the following General Capabilities have not been identified as a focus in the Health Studies General Year 12 syllabus, teachers may find opportunities to incorporate them into the teaching and learning program.

- Critical and creative thinking
- Numeracy
- 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 Health Studies General course

The unit content and assessment types for this course provide students with the opportunity to develop the General Capabilities summarised in the table below.

Year	Course	Course type	General capabilities						
			CCT	DL	EU	IU	L	N	PSC
Year 11	Health Studies (GEHEA)	General	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Year 12	Health Studies (GTHEA)	General		✓	✓	✓	✓		

Key

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

Representation of the Cross-curriculum Priorities

The Cross-curriculum Priorities address the contemporary issues which students face in a globalised world. Teachers may find opportunities to incorporate them into the teaching and learning program for the Health Studies General course. The Cross-curriculum Priorities are not assessed unless they are identified within the specified unit content.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

Through the study of relevant contexts, opportunities will allow for the development of students' understanding and appreciation of the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' histories and cultures. For example, students learn about the importance of family and kinship structures for maintaining and promoting health, safety and wellbeing as they study determinants that influence personal and community health.

Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia

In this course, students engage with diverse cultures, traditions and belief systems and develop self-management and interpersonal skills that reflect cultural understanding, empathy and respect.

Sustainability

In this course, students explore how they connect and interact with environments and people in different social and cultural groups within personal networks and the wider community. They consider how these connections contribute to the creation of supportive environments in which healthy choices are made easier. Students explore factors influencing health, including the role of natural and built environments in supporting health-related decisions and behaviours.

Unit 3

Unit description

This unit builds students' knowledge and understandings of health determinants and their interaction and contribution to personal and community health. Students define and consolidate their understandings of health promotion, and are introduced to a personal behaviour change model and a framework for health promotion action. Health literacy skills, which support positive health consumer practices, and a range of factors influencing the use of health products and services, are examined. Students expand on their understanding of the impact of beliefs on health behaviour by exploring the elements of the health belief model. Personal skills and strategies which support the development of self-management and interpersonal skills are also a focus. Students consolidate and continue to develop inquiry skills, including the ability to identify trends and patterns in data and apply this information to support conclusions.

Unit content

An understanding of the Year 11 content is assumed knowledge for students in Year 12. It is recommended that students studying Unit 3 and Unit 4 have completed Unit 1 and Unit 2.

This unit includes the knowledge, understandings and skills described below.

Health concepts

Holistic health

- determinants of health
 - social
 - stress
 - early life
 - social exclusion
 - work
 - unemployment
 - social support
 - addiction
 - food
 - transport
 - culture
 - environmental
 - features of the natural and built environment
 - geographical location
 - socioeconomic
 - education
 - employment
 - income
 - family, neighbourhood
 - housing
 - access to services

- biomedical
 - birth weight
 - body weight

Principles, frameworks, models and theories

- definition of health promotion
- purpose and elements of the *Ottawa Charter* for health promotion
- steps in the stages of change model
 - pre-contemplation
 - contemplation
 - preparation
 - action
 - maintenance
 - relapse

Actions and strategies

- action areas of the *Ottawa Charter*
 - building healthy public policy
 - developing personal skills
 - creating supportive environments
 - strengthening community action
 - reorienting health services
- definition and importance of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation for behaviour change

Consumer health

- definition of, and skills required for, health literacy
 - accessing, reading and comprehending health information
 - engaging in self-care and disease management
- factors influencing use of health products and services
 - media
 - transport
 - cost
 - consumer confidence

Attitudinal and environmental influences

Beliefs, attitudes and values

- purpose and elements of the health belief model
 - perceived susceptibility
 - perceived severity
 - perceived barriers
 - perceived benefits
 - cues to action
 - self efficacy

Social and cultural norms

- influence of the media on social norms and health behaviour

Skills and processes**Self-management skills**

- coping skills and strategies
 - stress management
 - accessing support
 - time management

Interpersonal skills

- skills required for working effectively with individuals and groups
 - negotiation
 - conflict resolution
- characteristics of introvert and extrovert personality styles

Health inquiry

- planning a health inquiry
 - identification and description of a health issue
 - development of focus questions to research a health issue
- use of a range of information to explore a health issue
 - identification and use a range of reliable information sources
 - identification and application of criteria for selecting information sources
- interpretation of information
 - summary of information
 - identification of trends and patterns in data
 - development of general conclusions
- presentation of findings in appropriate format to suit audience

Unit 4

Unit description

This unit focuses on the impact of health determinants on personal and community health. The concept of community development and the importance of participation and empowerment is introduced. Students learn about how chronic conditions are defined in the National Strategic Framework. The use of social marketing in health is explored and students are introduced to emotional intelligence as a mechanism for perceiving, controlling and evaluating emotions. Students continue to refine inquiry skills as they address relevant issues and produce insightful and well-researched reports.

Unit content

This unit builds on the content covered in Unit 3.

This unit includes the knowledge, understandings and skills described below.

Health concepts

Holistic health

- impact on personal and community health status of social, environmental, socioeconomic and biomedical determinants of health

Principles, frameworks, models and theories

- definition and purpose of community development
- community development principles
 - sustainability
 - diversity
 - social justice
 - human rights
 - addressing disadvantage
 - valuing local culture, knowledge, skills and resources
- relationship between participation and empowerment in community development
- definition of chronic conditions:
 - have complex and multiple causes
 - may affect individuals either alone or as comorbidities
 - usually have a gradual onset, although they can have sudden onset and acute stages
 - occur across the life cycle, although they become more prevalent with older age
 - can compromise quality of life and create limitations and disability
 - are long-term and persistent, and often lead to a gradual deterioration of health and loss of independence
 - while not usually immediately life threatening, are the most common and leading cause of premature mortality

Actions and strategies

- measures of health status
 - mortality
 - life expectancy
- preventive strategies to maintain, avoid and manage risk for personal and community health
 - screening
 - immunisation
 - health education
- primary, secondary and tertiary prevention

Consumer health

- ethical issues arising from contemporary health practices
 - organ donation
 - in-vitro fertilisation
 - stem-cell therapy
 - genetically modified foods

Attitudinal and environmental influences**Beliefs, attitudes and values**

- social marketing
 - definition
 - product, price, place, promotion
 - examples of social marketing campaigns

Skills and processes**Self-management skills**

- definition of and competencies for emotional intelligence
 - self awareness
 - self-regulation
 - self-motivation
 - social awareness
 - social skills

Interpersonal skills

- characteristics and appropriate use of autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles

Health inquiry

- planning a health inquiry
 - identification and description of a health issue
 - development of focus questions to research a health issue
- use of a range of information to explore a health issue
 - identification and use a range of reliable information sources
 - identification and application of criteria for selecting information sources

- interpretation of information
 - summary of information
 - identification of trends and patterns in data
 - development of general conclusions
- presentation of findings in appropriate format to suit audience

School-based assessment

The *Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) Manual* contains essential information on principles, policies and procedures for school-based assessment that needs to be read in conjunction with this syllabus.

Teachers design school-based assessment tasks to meet the needs of students. The table below provides details of the assessment types for the Health Studies General Year 12 syllabus and the weighting for each assessment type.

Assessment table – Year 12

Type of assessment	Weighting
Inquiry Students plan, conduct and communicate the findings of a health inquiry. Evidence can include: oral and/or written reports, posters or wall charts, websites, PowerPoint presentations, debates, articles for publication, and/or any combination of these.	20%
Project Students explore ideas and manage the components of the task. Evidence can include: reports, displays, health fairs/expos, demonstrations, campaigns, merchandise (production or design), pamphlets, brochures, fact sheets, newsletters, web pages, and/or any combination of these.	40%
Response Students apply knowledge and skills to analyse and respond to stimuli or prompts that can include: scenarios, diagrams, graphs, tables, media excerpts/scripts, photos and/or health promotion resources. Evidence can include: tests, in-class essays and/or responses to a specific stimulus.	25%
Externally set task A written task or item, or set of items, of 50 minutes duration, developed by the School Curriculum and Standards Authority and administered by the school.	15%

Teachers are required to use the assessment table to develop an assessment outline for the pair of units.

The assessment outline must:

- include a set of assessment tasks
- include a general description of each task
- indicate the unit content to be assessed
- indicate a weighting for each task and each assessment type
- include the approximate timing of each task (for example, the week the task is conducted, or the issue and submission dates for an extended task).

In the assessment outline for the pair of units, each assessment type must be included at least once over the year/pair of units. The externally set task occurs in Term 2.

The set of assessment tasks must provide a representative sampling of the content for Unit 3 and Unit 4.

Assessment tasks not administered under test/controlled conditions require appropriate validation/authentication processes. For example, student performance for a health inquiry could be validated by a task (such as a structured essay or extended response) which is completed in class after the assessment is submitted.

Externally set task

All students enrolled in the Health Studies General Year 12 course will complete the externally set task developed by the Authority. Schools are required to administer this task in Term 2 at a time prescribed by the Authority.

Externally set task design brief – Year 12

Time	50 minutes
Format	Written
	Conducted under invigilated conditions
	Typically between two and six questions/items
	Questions can require students to refer to stimulus material
Content	The Authority informs schools during Term 3 of the previous year of the Unit 3 syllabus content on which the task will be based

Refer to the *WACE Manual* for further information.

Grading

Schools report student achievement in terms of the following grades:

Grade	Interpretation
A	Excellent achievement
B	High achievement
C	Satisfactory achievement
D	Limited achievement
E	Very low achievement

The teacher prepares a ranked list and assigns the student a grade for the pair of units. The grade is based on the student's overall performance as judged by reference to a set of pre-determined standards. These standards are defined by grade descriptions and annotated work samples. The grade descriptions for the Health Studies General Year 12 syllabus are provided in Appendix 1. They can also be accessed, together with annotated work samples, through the Guide to Grades link on the course page of the Authority website at www.scsa.wa.edu.au.

To be assigned a grade, a student must have had the opportunity to complete the education program, including the assessment program (unless the school accepts that there are exceptional and justifiable circumstances).

Refer to the *WACE Manual* for further information about the use of a ranked list in the process of assigning grades.

Appendix 1 – Grade descriptions Year 12

A	Health concepts Provides clear and detailed explanations of the impact of health determinants, principles and frameworks, and a range of appropriate actions and strategies to avoid or reduce risks to health. Provides clear and detailed explanations of multiple influences shaping beliefs, attitudes and values, and describes the complexities of their relationship to health behaviour. Identifies and evaluates factors and issues related to healthcare.
	Skills Clearly identifies appropriate health decisions and strategies and applies them effectively to unfamiliar situations. Describes the influence of a range of overt cultural factors on personal and group interactions.
	Health inquiry Independently produces research questions; consistently uses reliable and relevant sources of information; demonstrates correct recording and simple referencing techniques. Clearly and accurately interprets evidence to develop a valid argument; presents information in well-structured ways using appropriate health language.
B	Health concepts Provides clear explanations of the impact of health determinants, principles and frameworks, and actions and strategies to avoid or reduce risks to health. Provides clear explanations of overt influences shaping beliefs, attitudes and values, and describes their relationship to health behaviour. Identifies factors and issues related to healthcare.
	Skills Identifies appropriate health decisions and strategies and applies them effectively to familiar situations. Describes the influence of overt cultural factors on personal and group interactions.
	Health inquiry Independently produces simple research questions; uses reliable and relevant sources of information; demonstrates mostly correct recording and simple referencing techniques. Clearly interprets evidence to develop a mostly valid argument; presents information in structured ways using appropriate health language.

C	Health concepts Provides generalised explanations of the impact of health determinants, principles and frameworks, and simple actions and strategies to avoid or reduce risks to health. Provides generalised explanations of influences shaping beliefs, attitudes and values, and describes their relationship to health behaviour in simple ways. Identifies general factors and issues related to healthcare.
	Skills Identifies some appropriate health decisions and strategies and applies them to familiar situations. Describes the influence of simple cultural factors on personal and group interactions.
	Health inquiry With guidance, produces mostly relevant focus questions; uses mostly reliable and relevant sources of information; demonstrates general recording and referencing techniques. Interprets evidence in a general sense; presents information in simple ways using basic but appropriate health language.
D	Health concepts Provides basic explanations of health determinants, principles and frameworks, and few actions or strategies to avoid or reduce risks to health. Provides basic explanations of influences shaping beliefs, attitudes and values, and describes their relationship to health behaviour in simple terms. Provides basic explanations of factors and issues related to healthcare.
	Skills Identifies, and inconsistently applies, a limited number of appropriate health decisions and strategies. Describes, in a very limited way, the influence of simple cultural factors on relationships.
	Health inquiry With guidance, produces simple focus questions; uses minimal sources of information; demonstrates limited recording and referencing techniques. Makes limited attempts to interpret evidence; typically presents information in simple ways that often lack clarity.
E	Does not meet the requirements of a D grade and/or has completed insufficient assessment tasks to be assigned a higher grade.

