



GEOGRAPHY

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 Geography General course draws on students' curiosity about the diversity of the world's places and their peoples, cultures and environments. It enables them to appreciate the complexity and diversity of our world, and to promote a more sustainable way of life and awareness of social and spatial inequalities. Geography provides an integrative way of exploring, analysing and applying the principal geographical concepts of place, space, environment, interconnection, sustainability, scale and change to provide a deeper knowledge and understanding of the processes shaping our world.

Students investigate and analyse key challenges and opportunities for local, regional, national and global communities. They explore the interactions between natural and human systems, considering cultural, social and environmental factors that influence sustainability decisions and reflect differing values and levels of commitment to sustainable development. Students gain insight into recent and potential future developments, including hazard risk management, the unequal distribution of resources, cultural diffusion and sustainable development practices.

The course highlights the interconnectedness of locations and the significance of spatial concepts such as location, distance and proximity. It develops students' communication skills through spatial and visual representation, interpretation and analysis of data and the clear articulation of findings. Students develop inquiry skills by collecting primary data through observation, surveys and fieldwork, and by gathering and interpreting secondary data from various sources. They learn to use geospatial and digital technologies to investigate spatial patterns and processes.

The course develops practical and transferable skills that are valuable in both daily life and professional settings, including teamwork, problem-solving and critical thinking. It fosters students' ability to critically assess information, consider multiple perspectives and develop evidence-based conclusions. It encourages them to engage as responsible global citizens and reflect on their role in ecological sustainability and community wellbeing.

The course prepares students to tackle global challenges and opens doors to fields like environmental science, urban planning and resource management. Learning spatial technologies, such as GPS and GIS, prepares students for roles in environmental protection, city development, tourism, agriculture, logistics and disaster management. Critical thinking, research, data analysis and communication skills enhance employability in roles such as market research analyst, policy advisor, GIS technician, cartographer, conservation officer, meteorologist and demographer.

Aims

The Geography General course aims to develop students’:

- understanding and application of the concepts of place, space, environment, interconnection, sustainability, scale and change through inquiries into geographical phenomena and issues
- inquiry and analytical skills to investigate interactions between natural and cultural environments using geographical inquiry methods to make informed decisions
- ability to identify, evaluate and justify alternative and innovative responses to the geographical challenges facing humanity, and propose and justify actions, considering environmental, social and economic factors
- responsible citizenship by exploring the impact of human activities on the environment and society, to encourage informed decision-making about where and how to live, work, and contribute to sustainable communities
- communication and critical thinking by interpreting and analysing geographical data, evaluating different perspectives and effectively communicating findings to diverse audiences
- preparation for future careers and studies by developing transferable skills applicable to careers in urban planning, environmental management, tourism, agriculture, mining, education, foreign affairs and other geography-related fields.

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 – Natural and ecological hazards

In this unit, students explore the management of hazards and the risks they pose to people and environments. Risk management is defined in terms of preparedness, mitigation and/or prevention.

Unit 4 – Global networks and interconnections

In this unit, students explore the economic and cultural transformations taking place in the world, the spatial outcomes of these processes, and their social and geopolitical consequences that will enable them to better understand the dynamic nature of the world in which they live.

Each unit includes:

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

The content in each unit is divided into an overview and one or more depth studies. The content descriptions associated with the overview are designed to be taught at a broad level and in a short timeframe. The content descriptions associated with the depth study are designed to be taught in a more focused and detailed way, and therefore take more time to teach.

Organisation of content

The course is divided into two interrelated strands: Geographical Knowledge and Understanding, and Geographical Inquiry and Skills.

Geographical Knowledge and Understanding

Geographical knowledge refers to the facts, generalisations, principles, theories and models developed in Geography. This knowledge is dynamic and its interpretation can vary. Opinions and conclusions must be supported by evidence and logical argument.

Geographical understanding is the ability to see the relationships between items of knowledge and construct explanatory frameworks to illustrate these relationships. It is also the ability to apply this knowledge to new situations or to solve new problems.

Geographical Inquiry and Skills

This strand is about the skills required to conduct a geographical inquiry and the geographical skills needed to find and communicate information and data. It contains two sub-strands: Geographical Inquiry Skills and Geographical Skills.

Geographical inquiry is a process undertaken by individual students or groups to investigate geographical questions, information, data, problems or issues to deepen their understanding. This process requires students to apply the following geographical inquiry skills:

- observing, questioning and planning
- collecting, recording, evaluating and representing
- interpreting, analysing and concluding
- communicating
- reflecting and responding.

Inquiries may vary in scale and geographic context.

When using geographical information and data and communicating, students develop the following geographical skills:

- mapping skills (use of maps and atlases)
- remote sensing skills (use of remote sensing products, such as ground level photographs, aerial photographs, radar imagery and satellite imagery)
- geographical and statistical data skills (use of geographical and statistical data in formats, such as tables, graphs, maps and diagrams)
- skills in the use of and information and communication technology geographical information systems in a geographical context
- fieldwork skills (use of fieldwork observations and measurements).

Relationships between the strands

The two strands are interrelated and the content has been written in a way that enables integration of the strands in the development of a teaching and learning program. The Geographical Knowledge and Understanding strand provides the contexts through which particular inquiries and skills are to be developed. The same set of geographical skills has been included in each of the four units to provide a common focus for the teaching and learning of content in the Geographical Knowledge and Understanding strand.

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 Geography General course.

Critical and creative thinking

Students develop strong thinking skills in the course to understand how people and the environment interact. They learn to look at problems from different angles, think creatively and test solutions. They practise thinking about big ideas like sustainability and how things change over time. When students study geographical questions, they learn to ask productive questions to start their research; look at information from different sources and viewpoints; find patterns and connections; make predictions; decide if information is trustworthy; think about different solutions to problems; suggest actions to solve problems considering the environment, society and the economy; use diagrams to organise their thoughts; predict future conditions based on trends; and draw conclusions and make generalisations from information. Students learn to think independently and to explain their ideas clearly. They are encouraged to be curious and open-minded, and to use their creativity to find new solutions.

Digital literacy

Students develop digital literacy as they use online tools, including mapping technology, to explore geographical topics and problems. They support their inquiries into geographical phenomena and issues by using digital tools, including spatial technologies. They also use these tools to collect and analyse data, represent it in digital form, and access and manipulate databases. In addition, students analyse the quality of digital information and sources of information. They gather, analyse and show data digitally, and work with online databases. They also learn to check whether online information is accurate and reliable. Students create presentations and reports using a range of digital tools to share what they have learned. They develop an understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of using digital information and how information is shared online. Students also consider the ethical use of online information, especially data about people and places.

Intercultural understanding

Students build their intercultural understanding by exploring how different cultures respond to global and environmental challenges. They examine the spread and impact of cultural ideas, assess the effects of cultural change and learn to propose solutions that are respectful and sustainable across diverse communities. Through case studies on hazards, globalisation and regional development, students apply geographical tools and inquiry to real-world issues, deepening their global awareness.

Literacy

Students learn to understand and communicate about the world by using reading, writing and speaking skills. They work with diverse types of information, like diagrams, maps, websites and pictures, to learn about geographical topics. Students practise gathering, organising and analysing information, and sharing their ideas and opinions clearly. They also learn to understand how maps, graphs and images communicate information. Students conduct investigations by gathering information from primary and secondary sources, following ethical guidelines. They develop skills to communicate geographical ideas using maps, graphs, and written responses, using geographical terminology.

Numeracy

Students develop numeracy skills in the course to describe patterns and connections using graphs and maps, and work with numbers to understand how things change over time. During fieldwork and practical exercises, such as source and map analysis, students analyse and interpret quantitative data. They learn to use basic mathematics to calculate map scales, distance and area and to read contour lines to understand the shape and steepness of land. They use online tools like Google Earth and maps to analyse relationships, patterns and trends, and make predictions.

Addressing the other General Capabilities

Although the following General Capabilities have not been identified as a focus in the Geography General 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

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	Geography (GEGEO)	General	✓	✓			✓	✓	
Year 12	Geography (GTGEO)	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 that students face in a globalised world. Teachers may find opportunities to incorporate the priorities into the teaching and learning program for the Geography 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

In the Geography General course, there are a range of opportunities to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. Students can, for example, investigate how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples may be unequally affected by natural and ecological hazards or by the use of natural resources.

More broadly, students develop a range of capabilities that enable them to independently construct informed responses to the range of geographical issues involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia

In the Geography General course, students investigate a wide range of contexts that draw on Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia. This priority can be addressed through the study of natural and ecological hazards and how the risks associated with such occurrences can be managed to eliminate or minimise harm to people and the environment. It can also be achieved through a study of the development of sustainable resource use, particularly in Asia and Australia.

Sustainability

Students explicitly address sustainability in Geography through an investigation of the approaches to sustainability and through an evaluation of alternative responses to geographical issues and phenomena. In doing so, they use economic, social and environmental criteria, to frame investigative questions and measure the capacity of something to be maintained indefinitely into the future.

Unit 3 – Natural and ecological hazards

Unit description

Natural and ecological hazards represent potential sources of harm to human life, health, income and property, and may affect elements of the biophysical, managed and constructed elements of environments.

This unit focuses on understanding how these hazards and their associated risks are perceived and managed at local, regional and global levels. Risk management, in this particular context, refers to prevention, mitigation and preparedness. Prevention is concerned with the long term aspects of hazards and focuses on avoiding the risks associated with their reoccurrence. Mitigation is about reducing or eliminating the impact if the hazard does happen. Preparedness refers to actions carried out prior to the advance notice of a hazard to create and maintain the capacity of communities to respond to, and recover from, natural disasters. Preparedness starts at the local community level but may branch out to national and international levels through measures, such as planning, community education, information management, communications and warning systems.

Building on their existing geographical knowledge and understandings, students explore natural hazards, including atmospheric, hydrological and geomorphic hazards; for example, storms, cyclones, tornadoes, frosts, droughts, bushfires, flooding, earthquakes, volcanoes and landslides. They will also explore ecological hazards; for example, environmental diseases/pandemics (toxin-based respiratory ailments, infectious diseases, animal-transmitted diseases and water-borne diseases) and plant and animal invasions.

Students develop an understanding about using and applying geographical inquiry tools, such as spatial technologies, and skills, to model, assess and forecast risk, and to investigate the risks associated with natural and ecological hazards. The potential for fieldwork depends on the hazard selected, such as a visit to the town of Meckering to study earthquakes or the impact of a specific cyclone, flood or bushfire on a town or region.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this unit, students:

- understand the nature and causes of natural and ecological hazards
- understand the nature of the risks to be managed, such as loss of property/life, effects on infrastructure, jobs, economy, and physical and mental health
- understand that places and environments are influenced by both natural and ecological hazards
- understand the complexity of human-environment interdependence in relation to natural and ecological hazards
- demonstrate a knowledge of the concept of risk management
- understand and apply key geographical concepts, including place, space, environment, interconnection, sustainability, scale and change, as part of a geographical inquiry
- apply geographical inquiry skills and a range of other geographical skills, including spatial technologies and fieldwork, to investigate natural and ecological hazards.

Unit content

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

Geographical Knowledge and Understanding

Overview of natural and ecological hazards

- an overview of the nature of natural and ecological hazards with particular reference to:
 - the concept of hazard geography
 - identification and classification of natural hazards (atmospheric, hydrological and geomorphic)
 - examples of natural hazards, including storms, cyclones, hurricanes, typhoons, tornadoes, frosts, droughts, bushfires, flooding, earthquakes, volcanoes, landslides
 - ecological hazards, including environmental diseases/pandemics (toxin-based respiratory ailments, infectious diseases, animal-transmitted diseases and water-borne diseases), and plant and animal invasions
- the concepts of risk and hazard management as applied to natural and ecological hazards
- the spatial and temporal distribution, magnitude, duration, frequency, probability and scale of spatial impact of natural and ecological hazards at a global scale
- the role of spatial technologies in the study of natural and ecological hazards

Students complete **two** depth studies which are taught with the requisite geographical inquiry skills and additional geographical skills described as part of this unit.

Depth study one

Using fieldwork and/or secondary sources, students investigate **one** natural hazard and the means by which the risks associated with the hazard are being managed. The scale of study is determined by the nature of the natural hazard selected.

Students study the hazard in order to investigate:

- the nature and causes of the hazard
- the nature of the risks to be managed such as:
 - loss of property/life
 - effects on infrastructure, jobs and the economy
 - the impact on physical and mental health
- the space and time distribution of the hazard and how an understanding of biophysical and human processes can be used to explain the patterns that are identified
- the magnitude, duration, frequency, probability and scale of spatial impact of the hazard
- the physical and human factors that explain why some places and people are more vulnerable to the hazard than others
- the means by which the activities of people can intensify the impacts of the hazard, such as:
 - land clearance and its impact on the intensity and frequency of flooding
 - removal of coastal dune barrier systems
 - building of settlements on low lying coastlines threatened by tsunamis
 - using construction techniques unable to withstand seismic activity
- the environmental, economic and social impacts of the hazard in a developed country, such as Australia compared with at least one less developed country or region.

Depth study two

Using fieldwork and/or secondary sources, students investigate **one** ecological hazard and the means by which the risks associated with the hazard are being managed. The scale of study is determined by the nature of the ecological hazard selected.

Students study the hazard in order to investigate:

- the nature and causes of the hazard
- the nature of the risks to be managed such as:
 - loss of property/life
 - effects on infrastructure, jobs and the economy
 - the impact on physical and mental health
- the space and time distribution of the hazard, and how an understanding of biophysical and human processes can be used to explain the patterns that are identified
- the magnitude, duration, frequency, probability and scale of spatial impact of the hazard
- the physical and human factors that explain why some places and people are more vulnerable to the hazard than others
- the means by which the activities of people can intensify the impacts of the hazard such as:
 - deliberate or accidental introduction of foreign plant or animal species to natural ecosystems
 - global transport systems, human settlement and agriculture facilitating the spread of infectious diseases
- the environmental, economic and social impacts of the hazard in a developed country, such as Australia compared with at least one less developed country or region.

Geographical Inquiry and Skills

All the following skills should be taught during the unit. Relevant skills will be emphasised for each depth study.

Geographical inquiry skills

Observing, questioning and planning

- formulate geographical inquiry questions
- plan a geographical inquiry with clearly defined aims and appropriate methodology

Collecting, recording, evaluating and representing

- collect geographical information incorporating ethical protocols from a range of primary (interviews, questionnaires, student's own experiences, and field observations) and secondary sources (online maps, websites, spatial software applications, print resources and visual media)
- record observations in a range of graphic representations using spatial technologies and information and communication technologies
- evaluate the reliability, validity and usefulness of geographical sources and information
- acknowledge sources of information and use an approved referencing technique

Interpreting, analysing and concluding

- analyse geographical information and data from a range of primary and secondary sources and a variety of perspectives to draw reasoned conclusions and make generalisations
- identify and analyse relationships, spatial patterns and trends and makes predictions and inferences

Communicating

- communicate geographical information, ideas, issues and arguments using appropriate written and/or oral, cartographic, multimodal and graphic forms
- use geographical language in appropriate contexts to demonstrate geographical knowledge and understanding

Reflecting and responding

- apply generalisations to evaluate alternative responses to geographical issues at a variety of scales
- propose individual and collective action, taking into account environmental, social and economic factors and predict the outcomes of the proposed action

Geographical skills**Mapping skills** (use of maps and atlases)

- identify and interpret a variety of topographic maps, thematic maps (physical, political, and social maps, overlay maps, synoptic charts and climate maps) and statistical maps (proportional circle and dot distribution maps) at different scales (local, national and global)
- understand and interpret marginal information represented on maps (title, conventional signs contained in the legend, north point, numerical and linear scales)
- establish position on a map using alphanumeric grid coordinates, eastings and northings, four figure area references, six figure grid references, and latitude and longitude expressed in degrees and minutes
- establish direction on a map using general compass directions (8 points) and bearings
- interpret and express scale in written, linear and ratio (representative fraction) formats, and convert scale from one format to another
- apply the map scale to basic calculations to determine distance and area
- interpret relief on a map using contours and spot heights to describe the steepness and shape of a slope (concave, convex and uniform)
- identify different relief features (landforms, including hills, valleys, plains, spurs, ridges, escarpments, saddles, cliffs) and different types of natural vegetation cover and hydrological features
- construct simple annotated sketch maps using map conventions (border, title, legend, north point and approximate scale)
- identify and interpret natural features and cultural features on a map
- describe the site and situation of places
- identify and describe spatial patterns, including land use, settlement and transport
- identify and describe spatial relationships between natural and cultural features

Remote sensing skills (use of remote sensing products, such as ground level photographs, aerial photographs, radar imagery and satellite imagery)

- identify and describe natural and cultural features and their patterns on the Earth's surface using ground level photographs, aerial photographs (vertical and oblique), radar imagery and satellite imagery (Landsat, weather satellites and Google Earth)
- compare the different types of information available from remote sensing products with the information depicted on a topographic map
- use remote sensing products as an aid to interpreting natural and cultural features shown on topographic maps
- determine direction on remote sensing products
- apply scale to the calculation of distance on remote sensing products
- interpret the difference in scale between a photograph and a topographic map of the same place

Geographical and statistical data skills (use of geographical and statistical data in formats, such as maps, tables, graphs and diagrams)

- calculate and interpret descriptive statistics, including central tendency (arithmetic mean, median, mode) and variation (maximum, minimum and range)
- interpret and apply data from different types of statistical maps (isopleth/isoline, choropleth, proportional circle and dot distribution maps)
- interpret and construct tables and graphs, including: picture graphs; line and bar graphs; scattergrams; climatic graphs; pie graphs; flowcharts and population pyramids
- use simple systems and flow diagrams to organise thinking about relationships
- extrapolate trends over time to forecast future conditions

Skills in the use of information and communications technology and geographical information systems (in a geographic context)

- use the internet as a tool for geographical research
- use simple applications, software and online resources (including Google Earth and Google Maps) to access atlases and remote sensing products (photographs, radar imagery and satellite imagery) for the purpose of identifying and describing spatial patterns and relationships
- access common databases, such as the Bureau of Meteorology, for spatial and statistical information
- use geospatial technologies, including global positioning systems (GPS), to collect and map spatial data
- use simple geographical information systems (GIS) products in description and analysis relevant to the unit content

Fieldwork skills (use of field observations and measurements)

- collect primary data using field techniques, including: surveys and interviews, observing and recording, listening, questioning, sketching and annotating, measuring and counting, photographing and note-taking
- collate field data using techniques, including: listing, tabulating, report writing, graphing, constructing diagrams and mapping
- analyse and interpret primary data

Unit 4 – Global networks and interconnections

Unit description

This unit focuses on the process of international integration (globalisation) and is based on the reality that we live in an increasingly interconnected world. It provides students with an understanding of the economic and cultural transformations taking place in the world today, the spatial outcomes of these processes, and their political and social consequences. This is a world in which advances in transport and telecommunications technologies have not only transformed global patterns of production and consumption, but also facilitated the diffusion of ideas and cultures. The unit explains how these advances in transport and communication technology have lessened the friction of distance and have impacted at a range of local, national and global scales. Cultural groups that may have been isolated in the early twentieth century are now linked across an interconnected world in which there is a 'shrinking' of time and space. Of particular interest are the ways in which people adapt and respond to these changes.

Students have the opportunity to explore the ideas developed in the unit through an investigation of the changes taking place in the spatial distribution of the production and consumption of a selected commodity, good or service and the study of an example of cultural diffusion, adoption and adaptation. They also investigate the ways people embrace, adapt to, or resist the forces of international integration.

While the scale of the study in this unit begins with the global, locally based examples can be used to enhance students' conceptual understanding. The scale of the study for both depth studies, unless specified, can range from local to global, as appropriate.

Students develop an understanding about using and applying geographical inquiry methods, tools (such as spatial technologies), and skills to investigate the transformations taking place throughout the world.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this unit, students:

- understand the nature and causes of international integration and its spatial, economic, political and social consequences
- understand the ways people embrace, adapt to and resist the forces of international integration
- understand and apply key geographical concepts, including place, space, environment, interconnection, sustainability, scale and change, as part of a geographical inquiry
- think geographically, based on an understanding of the complexities of an increasingly interdependent world
- apply geographical inquiry skills and a range of other geographical skills, including spatial technologies and fieldwork, to investigate the complexity of the integrated world.

Unit content

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

Geographical Knowledge and Understanding

Overview of globalisation

- define the concepts of globalisation, diffusion, adaptation and sustainability
- processes of globalisation in relation to changes in the spatial distribution of the production and consumption of commodities, goods and services
- advances in transport and telecommunication technologies as a factor of globalisation
- the economic and cultural importance of world cities
- the social, economic and environmental impacts of increased globalisation

Students complete **two** depth studies which are taught with the requisite geographical inquiry skills and additional geographical skills described as part of this unit.

Depth study one

Using fieldwork and/or secondary sources students investigate the reasons for and consequences of the changing spatial distribution of production and consumption (and, where appropriate, reuse) of **at least one** example of a commodity, good or service from **one** of the following groups:

- a mineral ore or fossil-based energy resource – iron ore, coal, bauxite, natural gas or oil

OR

- a food or fibre-based commodity – wheat, timber, wine, rice, sugar, beef, seafood, cotton or wool

OR

- a complex manufactured good – consumer electronics, automobiles, engineered wood products, a clothing brand or soft drink/food processing

OR

- tourism – business, eco-tourism or recreational

For the selected commodity, good or service investigate, where applicable:

- the nature of the commodity, good or service
- the process of diffusion of the commodity, good or service and its spatial distribution
- the changes occurring in the spatial distribution of the production and consumption of the commodity, good or service
- the role played by technological advances in transport and/or telecommunications in facilitating these changes in spatial distribution
- the role played by governments and enterprises in the internationalisation of the production and consumption of the commodity, good or, service, such as the reduction or elimination of the barriers to movement between countries
- the implications of these changes in the production and distribution of the commodity, good or, service for people and places at a variety of scales
- the ways people and places embrace, adapt to, or resist the diffusion of the commodity, good or service.

Depth study two

Using fieldwork and/or secondary sources, students investigate an example of the diffusion, adoption and adaptation of **at least one** of the following elements of culture and its consequences for the cultural geography of places (this list is not exhaustive):

- fashion

OR

- a sport or leisure activity

OR

- music

OR

- religion

OR

- language

OR

- architecture

OR

- political/social ideas

For the selected element(s) of culture investigate, where applicable:

- the process of diffusion of the element of culture and its spatial distribution
- the role played by technological advances in transport and/or telecommunications in the diffusion of the element of culture
- the role played by transnational institutions and/or corporations in the dispersion of the element of culture
- the role played by media and emerging technologies in the generation and dispersion of the element of culture
- the ways people embrace, adapt to, or resist the forces of international cultural integration
- the social, economic and environmental implications of the changes to the element of culture.

Geographical Inquiry and Skills

All the following skills should be taught during the unit. Relevant skills will be emphasised for each depth study.

Geographical inquiry skills

Observing, questioning and planning

- formulate geographical inquiry questions
- plan a geographical inquiry with clearly defined aims and appropriate methodology

Collecting, recording, evaluating and representing

- collect geographical information incorporating ethical protocols from a range of primary (interviews, questionnaires, student's own experiences, and field observations) and secondary sources (online maps, websites, spatial software applications, print resources and visual media)
- record observations in a range of graphic representations using spatial technologies and information and communication technologies
- evaluate the reliability, validity and usefulness of geographical sources and information
- acknowledge sources of information and use an approved referencing technique

Interpreting, analysing and concluding

- analyse geographical information and data from a range of primary and secondary sources and a variety of perspectives to draw reasoned conclusions and make generalisations
- identify and analyse relationships, spatial patterns and trends and makes predictions and inferences

Communicating

- communicate geographical information, ideas, issues and arguments using appropriate written and/or oral, cartographic, multimodal and graphic forms
- use geographical language in appropriate contexts to demonstrate geographical knowledge and understanding

Reflecting and responding

- apply generalisations to evaluate alternative responses to geographical issues at a variety of scales
- propose individual and collective action, taking into account environmental, social and economic factors and predict the outcomes of the proposed action

Geographical skills

Mapping skills (use of maps and atlases)

- identify and interpret a variety of topographic maps, thematic maps (physical, political, and social maps, overlay maps, synoptic charts and climate maps) and statistical maps (proportional circle and dot distribution maps) at different scales (local, national and global)
- understand and interpret marginal information represented on maps (title, conventional signs contained in the legend, north point, numerical and linear scale)
- establish position on a map using alphanumeric grid coordinates, eastings and northings, four figure area references, six figure grid references, and latitude and longitude expressed in degrees and minutes
- establish direction on a map using general compass directions (8 points) and bearings
- interpret and express scale in written, linear and ratio (representative fraction) formats, and convert scale from one format to another
- apply the map scale to basic calculations to determine distance and area
- interpret relief on a map using contours and spot heights to describe the steepness and shape of a slope (concave, convex and uniform)
- identify different relief features (landforms, including hills, valleys, plains,, spurs, ridges, escarpments, saddles, cliffs) and different types of natural vegetation cover and hydrological features
- construct simple annotated sketch maps using map conventions (border, title, legend, north point and approximate scale)
- identify and interpret natural features and cultural features on a map
- describe the site and situation of places
- identify and describe spatial patterns, including land use, settlement and transport
- identify and describe spatial relationships between natural and cultural features

Remote sensing skills (use of remote sensing products, such as ground level photographs, aerial photographs, radar imagery and satellite imagery)

- identify and describe natural and cultural features and their patterns on the Earth's surface using ground level photographs, aerial photographs (vertical and oblique), radar imagery and satellite imagery (Landsat, weather satellites and Google Earth)
- compare the different types of information available from remote sensing products with the information depicted on a topographic map
- use remote sensing products as an aid to interpreting natural and cultural features shown on topographic maps
- determine direction on remote sensing products
- apply scale to the calculation of distance on remote sensing products
- interpret the difference in scale between a photograph and a topographic map of the same place

Geographical and statistical data skills (use of geographical and statistical data in formats, such as maps, tables, graphs and diagrams)

- calculate and interpret descriptive statistics, including central tendency (arithmetic mean, median, mode) and variation (maximum, minimum and range)
- interpret and apply data from different types of statistical maps (isopleth/isoline, choropleth, proportional circle and dot distribution maps)
- interpret and construct tables and graphs, including: picture graphs; line and bar graphs; scattergrams; climatic graphs; pie graphs; flowcharts and population pyramids
- use simple systems and flow diagrams to organise thinking about relationships
- extrapolate trends over time to forecast future conditions

Skills in the use of information and communications technology and geographical information systems (in a geographic context)

- use the internet as a tool for geographical research
- use simple applications, software and online resources (including Google Earth and Google Maps) to access atlases and remote sensing products (photographs, radar imagery and satellite imagery) for the purpose of identifying and describing spatial patterns and relationships
- access common databases, such as the Bureau of Meteorology, for spatial and statistical information
- use geospatial technologies, including global positioning systems (GPS), to collect and map spatial data
- use simple geographical information systems (GIS) products in description and analysis relevant to the unit content

Fieldwork skills (use of field observations and measurements)

- collect primary data using field techniques, including: surveys and interviews, observing and recording, listening, questioning, sketching and annotating, measuring and counting, photographing and note-taking
- collate field data using techniques, including: listing, tabulating, report writing, graphing, constructing diagrams and mapping
- analyse and interpret primary data

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 Geography General Year 12 syllabus and the weighting for each assessment type.

Assessment table – Year 12

Type of assessment	Weighting
Geographical inquiry Students plan and conduct investigations, process and translate information, and communicate findings following ethical protocols and procedures. Both primary and secondary information sources are used. Formats can include: investigation, assignment, report, and/or an oral or multimedia presentation.	30%
Fieldwork/practical skills Fieldwork involves students actively engaged in collecting primary data. Practical skills involve the collection and interpretation of data from a number of sources. Formats can include: excursions, map interpretation, and/or data analysis.	30%
Tests Questions can require students to respond to stimulus material. Formats can include: multiple-choice questions, short responses, sectionalised extended responses, and/or a combination of these.	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. This validation process can involve a task, for example, short closed and/or open questions, questions requiring the analysis of data or an extended response, which is completed in class after the final presentation is submitted.

Externally set task

All students enrolled in the Geography 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 five questions
	Questions can require students to refer to source 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 Geography 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	Geographical knowledge and understandings Presents accurate discussions providing detailed information about features, activities, spatial patterns and associations, processes, relationships and/or factors. Makes relevant references to geographical concepts and/or theories.
	Geographical terminology and concepts Uses geographical terminology accurately and applies geographical concepts to develop relevant responses.
	Geographical skills Applies correct geographical thinking, skills and processes, and makes clear links between them. Accurately applies mapping and/or diagrammatic skills and processes in a variety of contexts to support responses. Presents organised effective responses, including extended answers with well-developed sentences and paragraphs.
	Use of supportive evidence Selects and correctly applies a range of appropriate supporting evidence, including examples, quotations, sources, statistics, data, maps and/or sketches when developing responses.
B	Geographical knowledge and understandings Presents accurate generalised discussions providing information about features, activities, spatial patterns and associations, processes, relationships and/or factors. Makes some general, accurate references to geographical concepts and/or theories.
	Geographical terminology and concepts Uses relevant geographical terminology and concepts to develop responses.
	Geographical skills Applies geographical thinking, skills and processes, and makes some links between them. Accurately applies mapping and/or diagrammatic skills and processes to support responses. Presents responses, including extended responses with sentences and paragraphs that address the question.
	Use of supportive evidence Selects and correctly applies supporting evidence, including examples, quotations, sources, statistics, data, maps and/or sketches when developing responses.

C	Geographical knowledge and understandings Presents brief discussions providing basic information about features, activities, spatial patterns and associations, processes, relationships and/or factors. Makes occasional reference to geographical concepts and/or theories.
	Geographical terminology and concepts Uses some geographical terminology and concepts to develop responses.
	Geographical skills Applies some correct geographical thinking, mapping and/or diagrammatic skills and processes that are mostly correct. Accurately applies a small range of skills and processes to support responses. Presents mostly unstructured responses and may include irrelevant information in responses.
	Use of supportive evidence Selects and applies some generalised supporting evidence, including examples, quotations, sources, statistics, maps and/or sketches when developing responses.
D	Geographical knowledge and understandings Presents basic discussions with little detail and no suitable examples. Makes limited reference to geographical concepts and/or theories.
	Geographical terminology and concepts Makes limited use of geographical terminology and concepts.
	Geographical skills Applies limited geographical thinking, mapping and/or diagrammatic skills and processes. Makes limited use of mapping skills and/or processes in some contexts to support responses. Presents mostly unstructured responses, may include incorrect or irrelevant information.
	Use of supportive evidence Makes limited use of evidence to support statements and generalisations.
E	Does not meet the requirements of a D grade and/or has completed insufficient assessment tasks to be assigned a higher grade.

Appendix 2 – Glossary

This glossary is provided to enable a common understanding of the key terms in this syllabus.

Adaptation

Alteration or adjustment in response to a changed environment.

Biophysical processes

The atmospheric, biological, chemical and physical processes that take place in the lithosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere and biosphere. They can be further broken down, for example, soil forming processes, mass wasting, cloud forming processes, fluvial processes, marine processes, glacial processes and biogeochemical cycling.

Change

The concept of change involves both time and space. Geographical phenomena are constantly changing, and can often be best understood by investigating how they have developed over time periods ranging from a few years to thousands of years. This is important in helping students to understand what is happening around them and see their world as dynamic.

Cultural internationalisation

The increasing integration of the different cultures found throughout the world and the diffusion of a dominant 'global culture'. It can be argued that the hybridisation of culture is an outcome of the process.

Diffusion

This is the transfer or dispersal of cultural elements from one group of people to other groups of people.

Ecological hazard

A biological or chemical hazard that has the potential to impact adversely on the wellbeing of people or on the environment more generally. Ecological hazards include both biological and chemical agents. Biological factors lead to infectious diseases. While many of these diseases have proven difficult to eradicate, enough is known about them to mount interventions that drastically reduce their incidence. Chemical hazards can cause immediate, dangerous health effects and can also contribute to chronic, or long-term, problems. In contrast to infectious diseases, our understanding of the consequences of chemical exposure for people's health, especially very low level exposures typically found in the environment, remains incomplete.

Economic integration

An outcome of the reduction or elimination of the barriers to the flow of goods, services and factors of production between nations. The stated aims of economic integration are a reduction in the costs incurred by both consumers and producers, as well as to increase trade between countries.

Economic restructuring

Significant and enduring changes to the nature and structure of an economy.

Ecosystem

A community of plants and animals in a non-living environment.

Environment

The term 'environment', where unqualified, means the living and non-living elements of the Earth's surface and atmosphere. It includes human changes to the Earth's surface, for example, croplands, planted forests, buildings and roads.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork is an integral part of geographical learning. It provides a planned opportunity for students to engage with the environment – to observe and investigate in the ‘real world’ the geographical phenomena, issues and processes studied in the classroom. It also enables students to explore different perspectives or points of view on important geographical issues. There are multiple approaches to fieldwork ranging from the observational to the fully participatory. Fieldwork can be undertaken in a range of settings including the school grounds. It includes ‘virtual fieldwork’ – the use of the internet to virtually visit a site and engage in a guided geographical inquiry. A virtual field trip provides students with the opportunity to investigate geographical phenomena not normally accessible due to distance or cost.

Geographical inquiry methodologies

An approach to the study focused on the development of a wide variety of skills, such as observing, reading, gathering, organising, preparing, presenting, analysing, interpreting and synthesising geographic information from a variety of sources including spatial technologies and fieldwork. In short, it involves the skills needed to formulate questions and initiate, plan and implement an inquiry relevant to a geographical issue, process or phenomenon.

Geographical processes

The combination of physical and human forces that form and transform our world.

Global distribution

The spatial distribution of geographical phenomena throughout the world, for example, megacities, earthquake hazards, deforestation and fashion design.

Globalisation

The increased interconnectedness and interdependence of people and countries resulting from the expanding integration of trade, finance, people, and ideas in one global marketplace. Advancements in technology, communication, science, transport and industry have accelerated the pace of this integration over the past few decades.

Hazards

These are phenomena that occur when the forces of nature combine to become destructive and have potential to damage the environment and endanger communities.

Hybridisation of cultures

The process by which cultures around the world adopt a certain degree of homogenised global culture while clinging to aspects of their own traditional cultures.

Interconnection

The concept of interconnection emphasises that no object of geographical study can be viewed in isolation. It is about the ways in which geographical phenomena are connected to each other through environmental processes, the movement of people, flows of trade and investment, the purchase of goods and services, cultural influences, the exchange of ideas and information, political power and international agreements. Interconnections can be complex, reciprocal or interdependent, and have a strong influence on the characteristics of places. An understanding of the significance of interconnection leads to holistic thinking and helps students to see the various aspects of Geography as connected rather than separate bodies of knowledge.

International integration

Refers to a process whereby the nature of the relationship among economic and cultural entities changes in ways that erode the autonomy or uniqueness of individual nation states and makes them part of a larger aggregation.

Liveability

The quality of space and the built environment. The concept of liveability has been linked to a range of factors, for example, quality of life, health, sense of safety, access to services, cost of living, comfortable living standards, mobility and transport, air quality and social participation.

Mitigation

The ability to moderate the severity of a hazard or similarly adverse occurrence.

Natural hazard

Atmospheric, hydrological and geomorphic processes and events in our environment that have the potential to affect people adversely.

Natural system

A set of naturally occurring interrelated parts with distinct inputs, throughputs and outputs.

Perspective

A way of viewing the world, the people in it, their relationships to each other and their relationships to communities and environments.

Place

Places play a fundamental role in human life. The world is made up of places, from those with largely natural features, for example, an area of rainforest, to those with largely constructed features, such as the centre of a large city. They are where we live and grow up. Our most common relationships are likely to be with people in the same place. The environmental and human qualities of places influence our lives and life opportunities. Places are, therefore, cultural constructs. They are sites of biodiversity, locations for economic activity, centres of decision making and administration, sites for the transmission and exchange of knowledge and ideas, meeting places for social interaction, sources of identity, belonging and enjoyment, and areas of natural beauty and wonder. They are where major events occur, from natural disasters and financial crises to sporting events. Places can also be laboratories for the comparative study of the relationships between processes and phenomena, because the uniqueness of each place means that similar processes and influences can produce different outcomes in different places. The importance of Country/Place to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples is an example of the interaction between culture and identity, and shows how places can be invested with spiritual and other significance.

Resilience

The ability to recover or adjust in response to a changed situation.

Risk management

In this curriculum it is defined in terms of preparedness, mitigation and/or prevention of a natural or ecological hazard. Preparedness involves planning the interventions required to prevent or mitigate the effects of a hazard. Mitigation involves the implementation of the strategies to eliminate or minimise the effects of these hazards. Adaptation involves adjusting to the changed environmental circumstances.

Scale

The concept of scale is used to analyse phenomena and look for explanations at different spatial levels, from the personal to the local, regional, national and global. Different factors can be involved in explaining phenomena at different scales, for example, in studies of vegetation, climate is the main factor at the global scale but soil and drainage may be the main factors at the local scale. Deciding on the appropriate scale for an inquiry is therefore important. Scale is also involved when geographers look for explanations or outcomes at different levels. Local events can have global outcomes, for example, the effects of local actions, such as permanent vegetation removal on global climate. National and regional changes can also have local outcomes, as in the effects of economic policies on local economies. Scale, however, may be perceived differently by diverse groups of people and organisations, and can be used to elevate or diminish the significance of an issue, for example, by labelling it as local or global.

Social exclusion

The processes by which individuals and even entire communities are systematically blocked from rights, opportunities and resources, for example, housing, employment, healthcare, civic engagement, democratic participation and due process that are normally available to members of society and which are key to social integration.

Social justice

The concept that all people have the right to fair treatment and equal access to the benefits of society.

Socio-spatial inequality

Social and economic inequalities across space. This includes unequal access to essential goods and services depending on the area or location in which a person lives.

Space

The concept of space includes location, spatial distribution and the organisation of space. Location plays an important role in determining the environmental characteristics of a place, the viability of an economic activity or the opportunities open to an individual, but the effects of location on human activities also depend on the infrastructure and the technologies that link places, and the ways in which these are managed by businesses and governments.

Spatial distribution, the second element in the concept of space, underlies much geographical study. The geographical characteristics of places have distributions across space that form patterns, and the analysis of these patterns contributes to an understanding of the causes of these characteristics and of the forms they take in particular places. Spatial distributions also have significant environmental, economic, social and political consequences. Students learn to identify and evaluate these consequences and the policies that could be adopted to respond to them.

The organisation of space concerns how it is perceived, structured, organised and managed by people within specific cultural contexts, and how this creates particular types of spaces.

Spatial association

The relationship between the distribution patterns of different phenomena on the Earth's surface.

Spatial distribution

The arrangement of geographical phenomena or activities across the Earth's surface.

Spatial interaction

The effects of movement or flows of air, water, material, life forms, people, goods or information between different locations on the Earth's surface.

Spatial technologies

Any software or hardware that interacts with real world locations. The use of spatial technologies forms the basis of many geographers' work practice. Global positioning systems (GPS), Google Earth, geographic information systems (GIS) and the use of satellite images are the most commonly used spatial technologies to visualise, manipulate, analyse, display and record spatial data.

The use of spatial technologies is integral to the inquiry and skills process. The spatial technology application links geographic locations to information about them in order to:

- find information about places across the globe or locally
- analyse relationships between locations
- make decisions on the location of facilities
- map the demographics of target markets
- integrate maps with information from a variety of sources.

Sustainability

Meeting the needs of current and future generations through simultaneous environmental, social and economic adaptation and improvement.

Temporal distribution

The distribution of geographical phenomena over time.

Thinking geographically

To think geographically involves the application of the discipline's organising concepts to investigation of geographical issues and phenomena. It is conceptual knowledge - the ideas we use to enhance our knowledge and understanding of the world. The organising concepts in senior secondary Geography are place, space, environment, interconnection, sustainability, scale and change.

Variety of scales

The geographical view of processes and phenomena at different levels on a continuum from the local to the international and global scales. It may include: comparative studies at the same scale; studying the same issue and phenomenon at a range of scales; or seeking explanations at a different scale to the one being studied.

Vulnerability

The susceptibility to harm or change.

World city

World cities (sometimes referred to as global cities) are centres of global economic and cultural authority. They are the places where the world's most important financial and corporate institutions are based and where decisions that 'drive' the global economy are made. They also play a globally significant role in the production and dissemination of knowledge (i.e. news, entertainment) and art. They are the centres of research and innovation.

