Government of **Western Australia**
**School Curriculum and Standards Authority**

# ABORIGINAL AND INTERCULTURAL 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 Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies General course provides students with a deeper understanding of the world's oldest living continuous cultures and their ongoing significance in contemporary Australia. Students learn about the reciprocal relationship between First Nations Peoples and Country, including the importance of Country and cultural expression in shaping identity and heritage. The course focuses on cultural resilience, self-determination and reconciliation, with a strong emphasis on cultural safety and responsiveness to ensure respectful engagement with First Nations histories, voices and perspectives.

Students investigate the interrelationship between First Nations Peoples and the environment. They learn the important role that Country and the environment play in the lives, cultures and identities of First Nations Peoples, including education and knowledge sharing, ceremony and celebration, economic opportunities and management of contemporary environmental threats. The course includes comparative studies of the historical and contemporary experiences of First Nations Peoples in Australia and globally, encouraging students to analyse social, political, economic and environmental issues through an intercultural lens. The importance of ethical considerations, including awareness of intellectual and cultural property, is emphasised.

Students develop critical thinking, cultural awareness and ethical research skills as they use resources produced by or developed in consultation with First Nations Peoples, which provide First Nations voices and a range of perspectives. They investigate the diverse ways First Nations Peoples express and maintain their cultures, as well as the importance of protecting cultural heritage. Through exploring ideas of cultural resilience and reconciliation, students learn how to engage respectfully with diverse perspectives and participate in informed discussions on identity, heritage and social justice.

Students apply their learning through social action projects that promote awareness and respect for First Nations histories, cultures and contributions. By developing intercultural understanding, students gain essential skills for contributing to society as responsible global citizens. These skills can be applied in personal and professional settings, including advocating for social justice and celebrating First Nations Peoples' contributions. Students translate their knowledge into action through projects involving community engagement, advocacy or education. These initiatives enhance cultural understanding, support reconciliation and contribute to the protection of First Nations cultures. Students develop skills in reflection and evaluation, ensuring ongoing learning and impact.

The course helps students build skills and knowledge that open up exciting pathways for further education and careers in fields such as teaching and education support, social work, psychology, community and youth services, public health, environmental and land management, cultural liaison and advisory roles, media and storytelling, and the arts and humanities. Students gain transferable skills in critical thinking, ethical engagement, respectful communication and cultural responsiveness, supporting active citizenship and lifelong learning.

# Aims

The Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies General course aims to develop and further build students':

- knowledge and understanding of Australian First Nations Peoples as the oldest living continuous cultures in the world
- awareness of the ways First Nations Peoples' identities are expressed through unique ways of being, knowing and doing
- understanding that there are different and changing perspectives of history and that these inform and influence people's actions
- understanding that members of different cultures have different world views as a result of their beliefs, values, practices and experiences
- appreciation of the diversity and richness of Australian First Nations Peoples' histories and cultures
- critical thinking skills, including ethical research skills
- empathy and respect for the ways people think, feel and act
- growth as active and informed advocates for anti-racism and a just and inclusive world
- engagement in reconciliation, respect and recognition of the world's oldest living continuous cultures.

# 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 enables students to explore the relationship Australian First Nations Peoples and other First Nations Peoples around the world have with Country and the environment. They learn the important role Country and the environment play in the lives, cultures and identity of First Nations Peoples, from education and knowledge sharing, ceremony and celebration, management of contemporary environmental threats and economic opportunities.

### Unit 4

This unit enables students to explore the idea of cultural resilience and reconciliation. They learn that cultural change results from a range of external and internal factors and may be welcomed or resisted. Students explore how individuals and groups show self-determination, resilience and actively participate in growing reconciliation in Australia and globally.

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

The content in each unit is divided into an overview and two 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. The depth studies are designed to be contextualised for the community in which the course is being delivered.

The unit content that is listed after 'e.g.' is provided as suggested examples to guide teachers on relevant topics, which could be used to teach the content descriptions; teachers are not restricted to just the listed examples. Unit content that is referred to in a content description after 'including' is assessable content.

## 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 Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies General course.

### Critical and creative thinking

Critical and creative thinking skills are fundamental to the inquiry process in the course, as students investigate issues related to First Nations Peoples. Students develop the ability to question, analyse and interpret information by identifying gaps or bias in sources.

Creative thinking is encouraged through social action projects, where students apply their knowledge to advocate for First Nations Peoples' rights. Working individually or collaboratively, they design and implement meaningful initiatives that promote awareness, respect and education within their school and broader community. By integrating critical and creative thinking with ethical research, students develop an appreciation of First Nations Peoples' histories, cultures and contributions while actively participating in reconciliation and social justice efforts.

### Ethical understanding

Students develop ethical understanding in the course by exploring diverse perspectives on past and present actions, recognising the values, rights, responsibilities and ethical norms that shape decisions. They examine key concepts such as activism, self-determination and reconciliation, privileging First Nations voices to understand historical and contemporary struggles. Through case studies of First Nations-led activism, students investigate catalysts for change, key figures and ongoing challenges. They explore ethical issues related to colonisation, dispossession and reconciliation, reflecting on how these shape attitudes and policies today.

Students recognise influences on ethical behaviour and perspectives, considering factors such as cultural background, societal values and historical injustices. By designing and implementing meaningful social action projects, students apply their learning to promote awareness and respect for First Nations cultures. These projects encourage ethical engagement with reconciliation and sustainability, fostering partnerships between First Nations and non-First Nations communities. Reflection and evaluation ensure students continuously assess their ethical choices and their impact on society.

## Intercultural understanding

Students develop intercultural understanding by exploring diverse perspectives, recognising bias and critically analysing historical and contemporary sources. Their engagement with First Nations voices, histories, and cultural expressions fosters empathy and their awareness of multiple perspectives. By examining the impact of colonisation, dispossession and assimilation policies, students reflect on cultural continuity and apply ethical and culturally appropriate communication approaches. They investigate First Nations-led organisations focused on sustainability and conservation, analysing contributions to society, successful partnerships and global Indigenous perspectives.

Students conduct research using culturally responsive sources, respecting protocols and adopting ethical scholarship practices. They collect, evaluate and communicate findings using respectful and inclusive language. Inquiry-based learning privileges First Nations perspectives, ensuring cultural sensitivity. Applying their knowledge, students design and implement meaningful social actions that honour First Nations histories and cultures. These initiatives educate peers, teachers and communities while fostering reconciliation and respect. Reflection and evaluation are integral, ensuring deeper learning and meaningful impact.

## Literacy

Literacy development is embedded throughout Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies as students engage with diverse texts—oral histories, cultural expressions and academic sources—to build skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening. They learn to interpret multiple perspectives, use inclusive language and communicate respectfully. Students conduct inquiries and evaluate sources, then present their findings in written, oral and multimodal formats such as reports, speeches and presentations. These literacy skills are further developed through social action projects, where students individually or collaboratively plan, design and implement a culturally appropriate and meaningful social action using formats like video, debates, role-play and educational resources. Students also analyse a variety of texts to communicate reflective responses and oral presentations.

## Personal and social capability

Students develop personal and social capability through research and social action projects, fostering empathy, respect and cultural awareness. By engaging with First Nations communities and perspectives, they examine the effects of colonisation and other historical and contemporary issues. They evaluate diverse viewpoints, using ethical research methods to analyse sources that privilege First Nations voices.

Students explore reconciliation in Australia, including the contributions of organisations, businesses and individuals to reconciliation and environmental sustainability, as well as global First Nations perspectives on cultural and environmental issues.

Through social action, students apply their learning to design and implement culturally appropriate initiatives that respect and promote First Nations histories and cultures while educating the broader community. They demonstrate effective collaboration, communication and goal-setting, incorporating planning, evaluation and reflection to assess the impact of their actions. They share their findings through written, oral or multimodal formats, refining their communication and problem-solving skills.

## Addressing the other General Capabilities

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

- Digital literacy
- Numeracy

Such opportunities may occur through the application of different contexts, pedagogical practices and/or assessment strategies that relate to the syllabus as part of the teaching and learning program.

## Summary representation of the General Capabilities in the Aboriginal and Intercultural 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 | Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies (GEAIS) | General | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Year 12 | Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies (GTAIS) | 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 Aboriginal and Intercultural 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

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures priority is integral to the Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies General course. It celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories as part of the shared history belonging to all Australians. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority provides opportunities for all students to deepen their knowledge of Australia by learning about the world's oldest continuous living cultures. Through the Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies General course, students learn that contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are strong, resilient, rich and diverse.

This course provides the opportunity to examine historical perspectives from an Australian First Nations Peoples' viewpoint through investigating key policies and political movements over the last two centuries. Students have the opportunity to develop an awareness of the significant roles of Australian First Nations Peoples in Australian society.

## Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia

Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia reinforces understanding of the diversity of cultures and peoples living in Australia, fosters social inclusion and cohesion, and allows consideration of a variety of perspectives.

## Sustainability

Sustainability addresses the ongoing capacity of Earth to maintain all life. The Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies General course examines the beliefs, values and traditions that have influenced the complex interrelations between people and their environment (Country/Land/Water). These beliefs, values and traditions provide the basis for exploring long-term and short-term human impacts or consequences on the natural environment in a range of cultural contexts. This in turn forms the basis for developing and articulating values pertaining to ecological sustainability.

# Principles and protocols for teaching and learning

The following principles and protocols should be used in the development and delivery of this course:

## Cultural safety and responsiveness

- Recognise and engage with local community members, Elders and/or First Nations Peoples educators.
- Use credible resources produced by or developed in consultation with First Nations Peoples, which provide an active First Nations People voice and a range of perspectives.
- Respect and acknowledge that ownership and teaching of First Nations Peoples' histories and cultures, (e.g. traditional practices, spiritual and sacred knowledge) remains with First Nations families and communities.
- Build on the knowledge, skills and prior experiences that Australian First Nation students bring with them to the classroom to ensure learning is relevant, connected and appropriate to achieve education success. (Adapted from: Department of Education WA, 2015)
- Recognise and acknowledge that Australia's First Nations Peoples form significant, diverse and resilient living communities within contemporary society.
- Create welcoming and supportive learning environments that respect the cultures, languages, experiences and world views of all students. (Adapted from: Department of Education WA, 2015)
- Have the confidence and capability to pursue teaching and learning about, and with, Australian First Nations Peoples.

## Teaching and learning program

- The teaching and learning program of the course needs to be contextualised for the community in which the course is being delivered.
- While the course uses the terms 'First Nations Australians' and 'Australian First Nations Peoples,' it is important to use the language and terms preferred in a particular area or location.
- In this course, the term Australian First Nations Peoples includes both Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. The term First Nations Peoples is inclusive of both Australian First Nations Peoples and First Nations Peoples from countries other than Australia. Where the focus is on First Nations peoples from countries other than Australia the term international First Nations Peoples is used.
- Include where possible, and within the bounds of the syllabus, case studies, examples and issues that align with the locality of the school delivering the course.
- Ensure that learning is built on and includes local, regional and national cultural knowledge and experience of Australian First Nations Peoples in partnership with local communities. (Council of Australian Governments Education Council, 2019)
- Use other courses students are undertaking (e.g. EALD, VET courses such as Coastal and Land Management, Indigenous Rangers programs etc.) for cross-curricular learning opportunities, encouraging and supporting students to connect cultural, societal and historical knowledge.

When selecting resources, teachers need to:

- consult with local community members and/or First Nations Peoples educators, if possible, about the terminology, resources and texts that can or cannot be used, and whether they may be accessed by some or all students
- use respectful and inclusive language and terminology, such as those included in *A guide to using respectful and inclusive language and terminology* https://www.narragunnawali.org.au/about/terminology-guide
- analyse the resources using a framework of questions, such as those listed in *Evaluating Resources Guide* https://www.narragunnawali.org.au/about/subject-guides.

# Unit 3

## Unit description

The focus for this unit is the relationship First Nations Peoples in Australia and internationally have with the environment. Students will study the important role that Country and the environment play in the lives, cultures and identities of First Nations Peoples. This unit explores how the diversity of environments around Australia and internationally influences First Nations Peoples' skills, knowledge and practices in adapting to changes to the environments over time.

Within this broad area, students investigate the relationship between the environment, education, knowledge sharing, spiritual connection and wellbeing, ceremony and celebration, management of contemporary environmental threats and economic opportunities.

## Unit content

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

**Overview of connection to and caring for Country**

- define the following key terms and concepts as they relate to and by privileging First Nations Peoples' voice and perspectives:
  - Country
  - Ownership and Custodianship of Country
  - Native Title
  - World view
  - Lore
  - Songlines
  - Significant/Sacred sites
  - Stewardship
  - Sustainability
- the doctrine of *terra nullius* and its consequences for the legal status and land rights of Australian First Nations Peoples
- Australian First Nations Peoples' cultural and spiritual connections to Country, including:
  - maintenance of cultural identity
  - Lore
  - cultural knowledge
  - family
  - Kinship roles and obligations
  - caring for Country
- world views and cultural perspectives on the environment of **two** international First Nations Peoples from around the world
- **two** examples of Australian First Nations Peoples' seasonal calendars and the way the seasons impact on Aboriginal lifestyle and culture, e.g. travel, food supply, ceremonies, use of land and waterways
- importance of astronomy for Australian First Nations Peoples, including navigation, animal and plant behaviours, celebrations, stories, weather, links to ancestors

- interrelationship between language, culture and Country, including:
  - the significance of place names, including **two** specific examples
  - the importance of restoring and using First Nations place names

### Depth Study 1

Through community experiences and/or secondary sources, and by privileging First Nations Peoples' voices and perspectives, students investigate **two** First Nations Peoples' continuous practices in caring for Country.

For **one** Australian First Nations Peoples and **one** international First Nations Peoples, investigate:

- **two** examples of sustainability practices used to care for Country, such as:
  - management of waterways and seas, e.g. rising sea levels
  - fire management
  - control of introduced and feral species, i.e. animals/plants
- **two** examples of how First Nations Peoples' caring for Country knowledge is being taught and shared
- how First Nations Peoples' practices of sustainability and caring for Country contribute to broader societal conservation practices
- **two** successful partnerships between First Nations Peoples and non-First Nations Peoples in caring for Country
- **one** environmental and **one** cultural issue concerning the use and management of natural resources.

### Depth Study 2

Through community experiences and/or secondary sources, and by privileging First Nations Peoples' voices and perspectives, students investigate **two** organisations, businesses and/or enterprises, which are based on Australian First Nations Peoples' skills and knowledge of sustainability, environmental protection, conservation or care of Country.

Select **two** Australian First Nations Peoples' organisations, businesses and/or enterprises, such as:

- tourism experiences
- commercial production of foods and medicines
- care and protection of heritage and significant sites
- Land and Seas Council Organisations
- ranger programs.

For the **two** selected organisations and/or enterprises, investigate:

- the background and reasons for the establishment of the organisation/enterprises
- the benefits of the organisations, businesses and/or enterprise for Australian First Nations Peoples, including:
  - social
  - economic
  - environmental
  - culture and identity
  - political
- contributions of the organisations, businesses and/or enterprise to the broader Australian society and the environment.

## Intercultural Skills

### Research

- construct a set of focus questions to investigate a specific topic/issue
- plan an inquiry and/or social action with clearly defined aims, using appropriate methodologies
- collect, record and organise information and/or data from relevant culturally responsive resources

### Analysis and use of sources

- identify the origin, purpose and context of primary sources and/or secondary sources
- evaluate the usefulness of different sources
- recognise different perspectives presented in a variety of different primary and/or secondary sources
- identify and use evidence from different sources to support a point of view
- propose individual and collective action in response to contemporary events, challenges, developments, issues, problems

### Evaluating and communicating

- draw conclusions and develop explanations using evidence taking into account different perspectives
- communicate findings using formats appropriate to purpose, including written, oral or multimodal presentations
- use respectful and inclusive language and terminology
- justify a course of action, and predict the potential outcome of the proposed action
- identify and practise ethical scholarship when conducting research, including:
  - respect variation between cultural groups of processes and protocols for collecting, acknowledging and communicating information
  - adopt protocols and conventions to communicate in culturally appropriate ways
  - apply appropriate referencing techniques accurately and consistently

### Reflection

- acknowledge differences in personal perspectives, interpretations and world views when developing a response
- reflect on own learning to review original understandings

# Unit 4

## Unit description

The focus of this unit is the importance of self-determination for First Nations Peoples and the ongoing resilience demonstrated by First Nations Peoples in the face of invasion, displacement, government policy and other cultural interactions.

This unit explores how all Australians can contribute to reconciliation and the range of ways that First Nations people and their allies have changed and resisted change, through a variety of methods such as political activism, education and social media campaigns, in order to maintain a strong sense of identity and connection to culture. Students consider the positive impact that different cultural perspectives have on extending our knowledge and understanding of the world.

## Unit content

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

**Overview of Resilience and Reconciliation**

- define the following key terms and concepts as they relate to and by privileging First Nations Peoples' voices and perspectives
  - activism
  - resilience
  - treaty
  - protection
  - assimilation
  - Makarrata
  - self-determination
  - autonomy
  - Reconciliation
- select **two** Government policies and/or laws and explain their impact on Australian First Nations Peoples, e.g. protection, assimilation, the Commonwealth right to vote 1962, the 1967 Referendum, the Woodward Royal Commission 1973–74, the Mabo decision 1992, *the Native Title Act 1993*, the Wik decision 1996, *the Bringing Them Home Report 1997*, the Apology 2008, *the Aborigines Act WA 1905*
- select **one** significant example of Australian First Nations Peoples led civil activism, and examine the catalyst to the action, the key individuals and/or groups involved, the changes brought about, and any ongoing barriers or further change required, e.g. the 1963–64 NSW Freedom Rides, 1967 Referendum, activism in Redfern in the 1970s, Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, Aboriginal Tent Embassy, 1946 Pilbara Strike, 1966 Gurindji strike/Wave Hill Walk-Off, Timber Creek (Griffiths) compensation case, 2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart, Love and Thoms Case 2020
- select **one** example of civil activism led by First Nations Peoples internationally and examine the catalyst to the actions, the key individuals and/or groups involved, the changes brought about, and any ongoing barriers or further change required, e.g. Idle No More movement in Canada, The Longest Walk of the First Nations Peoples of North America, New Zealand Waitangi day

### Depth Study 1

Through community experiences and/or secondary sources, and by privileging First Nations Peoples' voices and perspectives, students investigate **one** Australian First Nations Peoples contemporary form of self-determination and autonomy.

Select **one** contemporary example of self-determination (this list is not exhaustive or prescriptive):

- Self-determination
  - Deadly Awards
  - Youth services
  - On Country First Nations rangers
  - First Nations Peoples owned tourism operators
  - Indigenous men's sheds
  - Healing centres
  - Health centres
  - Elders-in-Residence – Elders Advisory Groups
  - Elders Court
  - Native foods supply, marketing Farming native foods
  - First Nations Peoples controlled media/publishing – NITV, Living Black, Black Comedy, Noongar Radio, print media (Koori Times), Magabala Books
  - Community ownership – roadhouse, motels
  - Buy blak/Aboriginal contractors/Supply Nation
  - Women-led self-determination organisations
  - Art Resource centres

For the selected example of self-determination, investigate:

- key features of self-determination and autonomy for Australian First Nations Peoples
- the purpose of the selected example, and the goods and/or services provided
- the contribution of the selected example to the resiliency and continuation of Australian First Nations Peoples' cultural identity
- the economic, social, and/or environmental benefits of the selected example for:
  - Australian First Nations Peoples
  - the local community
  - the wider Australian community
- the importance of social justice, self-determination and reconciliation for First Nations Peoples.

### Depth Study 2

Through community experiences and/or secondary sources, and by privileging First Nations Peoples' voices and perspectives, students investigate reconciliation in Australia and at a global level, to explore how individuals and communities can actively contribute to reconciliation:

- what reconciliation means in Australia, including the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations, equality and equity, institutional integrity, historical acceptance, and unity
- the contemporary state of reconciliation in Australia (e.g. *2021 State of Reconciliation in Australia* report, *The Australian Reconciliation Barometer*)
- **one** example of a reconciliation action occurring with First Nations People in another country, e.g. United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

- expressions of changes in attitudes and perspectives towards reconciliation in the general community, including the factors that influence peoples' attitudes and perspectives
- actions that individuals, communities and organisations can take and are taking to contribute to reconciliation.

## Intercultural Skills

### Research

- construct a set of focus questions to investigate a specific topic/issue
- plan an inquiry and/or social action with clearly defined aims, using appropriate methodologies
- collect, record and organise information and/or data from relevant culturally responsive resources

### Analysis and use of sources

- identify the origin, purpose and context of primary sources and/or secondary sources
- evaluate the usefulness of different sources
- recognise different perspectives presented in a variety of different primary and/or secondary sources
- identify and use evidence from different sources to support a point of view
- propose individual and collective action in response to contemporary events, challenges, developments, issues, problems

### Evaluating and communicating

- draw conclusions and develop explanations using evidence taking into account different perspectives
- communicate findings using formats appropriate to purpose, including written, oral or multimodal presentations
- use respectful and inclusive language and terminology
- justify a course of action, and predict the potential outcome of the proposed action
- identify and practise ethical scholarship when conducting research, including:
  - respect variation between cultural groups of processes and protocols for collecting, acknowledging and communicating information
  - adopt protocols and conventions to communicate in culturally appropriate ways
  - apply appropriate referencing techniques accurately and consistently

### Reflection

- acknowledge differences in personal perspectives, interpretations and world views when developing a response
- reflect on own learning to review original understandings

# Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning that at the senior secondary years:

- provides evidence of student achievement
- identifies opportunities for further learning
- connects to the standards described for the course
- contributes to the recognition of student achievement.

Assessment for learning (formative) and assessment of learning (summative) enable teachers to gather evidence to support students and make judgements about student achievement. These are not necessarily discrete approaches and may be used individually or together, and formally or informally.

Formative assessment involves a range of informal and formal assessment procedures used by teachers during the learning process in order to improve student achievement and to guide teaching and learning activities. It often involves qualitative feedback (rather than scores) for both students and teachers, which focuses on the details of specific knowledge and skills that are being learnt.

Summative assessment involves assessment procedures that aim to determine students' learning at a particular time, for example when reporting against the standards, after completion of a unit/s. These assessments should be limited in number and made clear to students through the assessment outline.

Appropriate assessment of student work in this course is underpinned by reference to the set of pre-determined course standards. These standards describe the level of achievement required to achieve each grade, from A to E. Teachers use these standards to determine how well a student has demonstrated their learning.

Where relevant, higher order cognitive skills (e.g. application, analysis, evaluation and synthesis) and the General Capabilities should be included in the assessment of student achievement in this course.

All assessment should be consistent with the requirements identified in the course assessment table.

Assessment should not generate workload and/or stress that, under fair and reasonable circumstances, would unduly diminish the performance of students.

## School-based assessment

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

School-based assessment involves teachers gathering, describing and quantifying information about student achievement.

Teachers design school-based assessment tasks to meet the needs of students. As outlined in the

*WACE Manual*, school-based assessment of student achievement in this course must be based on the Principles of Assessment:

- Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning
- Assessment should be educative
- Assessment should be fair
- Assessment should be designed to meet its specific purpose/s
- Assessment should lead to informative reporting
- Assessment should lead to school-wide evaluation processes
- Assessment should provide significant data for improvement of teaching practices.

Summative assessments in this course must:

- be limited in number to no more than eight tasks
- allow for the assessment of each assessment type at least once over the year/pair of units
- have a minimum value of 5 per cent of the total school assessment mark
- provide a representative sampling of the syllabus content.

Assessment tasks not administered under test or controlled conditions require appropriate authentication processes.

## Assessment table – Year 12

| Type of assessment | Weighting |
|---|---|
| **Inquiry**<br>Students conduct investigations using ethical procedures, appropriate methodology and sources, and show cultural sensitivity and awareness to plan, conduct and communicate findings.<br><br>Students actively engage in collecting and using primary and secondary information sources, which privilege learning from First Nations Peoples, communities and/or other sources of First Nations Peoples' voices.<br><br>Formats can include: written or oral formats, such as an assignment, a research booklet, report, speech, interview, multimodal presentation, in-class self-evaluation and reflection of learning, in-class validation and/or a combination of these. | 25% |
| **Response**<br>This can include students' applying knowledge and skills to interpret, analyse, evaluate and respond to a variety of sources. Source materials can include: written texts (an extract from a government paper, a newspaper or journal article; or an extract from a narrative, a poem, a song lyric, a play script, or a letter); graphic materials (a photograph, a map, a graph, a diagram, a cartoon, or a drawing); and/or a film or a television show.<br><br>Formats can include: written or oral formats, such as short answers, extended answers written tests, multimodal presentation and/or a combination of these. | 30% |
| **Social action**<br>Students apply knowledge and understanding gained from First Nations Peoples, communities and/or other sources of First Nations Peoples voices, to individually or collaboratively plan, design and implement a culturally appropriate and meaningful social action. The social action must demonstrate their learning and respect for First Nations Peoples' histories and cultures and educate other students, teachers and/or community members.<br><br>Students must include evidence of planning, evaluation and reflection on what they have learnt and, on the outcome of the social action.<br><br>Formats can include: multimodal presentation, video clips, educational resources, children's book, speech, lyrics for a song, display boards, pamphlets, interviews, role-plays, panel discussions, museum display, debates, raps, poem, Reconciliation Action Plan. | 30% |
| **Externally Set Task**<br>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 must 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).

## Externally set task

All students enrolled in the Aboriginal and Intercultural 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 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.

## Reporting

Schools report student achievement, underpinned by a set of pre-determined standards, using the following grades:

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

The grade descriptions for the Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies General Year 12 syllabus are provided in Appendix 1. They are used to support the allocation of a grade. They can also be accessed, together with annotated work samples, 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.

The grade is determined by reference to the standard, not allocated on the basis of a pre-determined range of marks (cut-offs).

# Appendix 1 – Grade descriptions Year 12*

| | |
|---|---|
| A | **Knowledge and understandings**<br>Presents detailed discussions providing accurate information about the important role Country and the environment play in the lives, cultures and identity of First Nations Peoples.<br>Discusses, with reference to specific examples First Nations Peoples, continuous practices in caring for Country and provides accurate and detailed information about organisations, which are based on Australian First Nations Peoples' skills and knowledge of sustainability, environmental protection, conservation or care of Country.<br>Discusses the importance of self-determination and autonomy for First Nations Peoples and the ongoing resilience demonstrated by First Nations Peoples in the face of invasion, displacement, government policy and other cultural interactions.<br>Discusses how all individuals and communities can actively contribute to reconciliation. |
| | **Intercultural terminology**<br>Selects and applies culturally responsive terminology and concepts to develop comprehensive, accurate and relevant responses. |
| | **Intercultural skills**<br>Draws detailed and relevant conclusions using a range of supporting evidence, which takes into account different perspectives.<br>Selects and uses a wide range of appropriate formats to communicate findings, based on their effectiveness to suit audience and purpose.<br>Provides detailed and accurate evidence on the planning and implementation of culturally appropriate and meaningful inquiries and/or social actions, including detailed information evaluating and reflecting on the outcomes of the inquiry and/or social action.<br>Selects a diverse wide range of culturally responsive sources and applies appropriate referencing techniques accurately and consistently when conducting inquiries and/or social action. |

| | |
|---|---|
| B | **Knowledge and understandings**<br>Presents discussions providing accurate information about the important role Country and the environment play in the lives, cultures and identity of First Nations Peoples.<br>Explains, with reference to relevant examples First Nations Peoples, continuous practices in caring for Country and provides accurate information about organisations, which are based on Australian First Nations Peoples' skills and knowledge of sustainability, environmental protection, conservation or care of Country.<br>Explains the importance of self-determination and autonomy for First Nations Peoples and the ongoing resilience demonstrated by First Nations Peoples in the face of invasion, displacement, government policy and other cultural interactions.<br>Explains how all individuals and communities can actively contribute to reconciliation. |
| | **Intercultural terminology**<br>Selects and applies culturally responsive terminology accurately to develop relevant responses. |
| | **Intercultural skills**<br>Draws accurate and relevant conclusions using a range of supporting evidence, which takes into account different perspectives.<br>Uses a wide range of appropriate formats to communicate findings, based on their effectiveness to suit audience and purpose.<br>Provides detailed evidence on the planning and implementation of culturally appropriate and meaningful inquiries and/or social actions, including appropriate information evaluating and reflecting on the outcomes of the inquiry and/or social action.<br>Selects a diverse range of culturally responsive sources and applies appropriate referencing techniques accurately and consistently when conducting inquiries and/or social action. |

| | |
|---|---|
| C | **Knowledge and understandings**<br>Presents generalised brief discussions providing general information about the important role Country and the environment play in the lives, cultures and identity of First Nations Peoples.<br>Describes, with reference to relevant examples, First Nations Peoples' continuous practices in caring for Country and provides accurate information about organisations, which are based on Australian First Nations Peoples' skills and knowledge of sustainability, environmental protection, conservation or care of Country.<br>Explains briefly the importance of self-determination and autonomy for First Nations Peoples and the ongoing resilience demonstrated by First Nations Peoples in the face of invasion, displacement, government policy and other cultural interactions.<br>Describes how all individuals and communities can actively contribute to reconciliation. |
| | **Intercultural terminology**<br>Uses culturally responsive terminology and concepts to develop relevant responses. |
| | **Intercultural skills**<br>Draws relevant conclusions using some evidence, which recognises different perspectives.<br>Uses a range of appropriate formats to communicate findings, based on their effectiveness to suit audience and purpose.<br>Provides brief evidence on the planning and implementation of culturally appropriate and meaningful inquiries and/or social actions, including brief information explaining and reflecting on the outcomes of the inquiry and/or social action.<br>Selects culturally responsive sources and applies appropriate referencing techniques when conducting inquiries and/or social action. |

| | |
|---|---|
| D | **Knowledge and understandings**<br>Presents basic statements about the important role Country and the environment play in the lives, cultures and identity of First Nations Peoples. States some relevant examples of First Nations Peoples' continuous practices in caring for Country and provides generalised statements about organisations, which are based on Australian First Nations Peoples' skills and knowledge of sustainability, environmental protection, conservation or care of Country.<br>Provides generalised statements about the importance of self-determination and autonomy for First Nations Peoples and the ongoing resilience demonstrated by First Nations Peoples in the face of invasion, displacement, government policy and other cultural interactions.<br>States some ways all individuals and communities can actively contribute to reconciliation. |
| | **Intercultural terminology**<br>Uses limited culturally responsive terminology to develop mostly incorrect or irrelevant responses. |
| | **Intercultural skills**<br>States personal opinions using limited or inaccurate evidence, with little or no acknowledgement of different perspectives.<br>Uses simple formats to communicate findings and presents mostly unstructured responses.<br>Provides limited or no evidence of planning, implementing and/or reflecting on the inquiry and/or social action.<br>Uses limited culturally responsive sources and applies limited and/or inaccurate referencing techniques, when conducting inquiries and/or social action. |

| | |
|---|---|
| E | Does not meet the requirements of a D grade and/or has completed insufficient assessment tasks to be assigned a higher grade. |

* These grade descriptions will be reviewed at the end of the second year of implementation of this syllabus.

# Glossary

**Aboriginal enterprise**
An enterprise is an economically self-sustaining entity, such as a business or service. Aboriginal enterprises can be owned by individuals, communities, or as an extension of an Aboriginal organisation, and are usually staffed by Aboriginal people. Aboriginal enterprises can be social enterprises, or based on certain protocols such as benefit sharing.

**Assimilation**
When members of one cultural group acquire the language, practices and beliefs of another group, often losing aspects of their traditional culture in the process.

**Autonomy**
Acting independently, self-government.

**Community**
Community is about interrelatedness and belonging, and is central to Aboriginality. An Aboriginal person may belong to more than one language group and community. Important elements of a community are Country, family ties and shared experience. The use of 'community/ies' in the syllabus indicates that any one location may in fact consist of several communities.

**Country**
Used to describe a specific area of a nation or clan including physical, linguistic and spiritual features. Aboriginal communities' cultural associations with their Country may include or relate to languages, cultural practices, knowledge, songs, stories, art, paths, landforms, flora, fauna and minerals. These cultural associations may include custodial relationships with particular landscapes such as land, sea, sky, rivers as well as the intangible places associated with the Dreaming(s). Custodial relationships are extremely important in determining who may have the capacity to authentically speak for their Country.

**Colonisation**
Establishment of a colony or colonies in a country or area. Colonisation dispossessed Indigenous people of their traditional lands. In Australia, colonisation began with the First Fleet's arrival from Britain in 1788, and progressed over time with settlements in different states.

**Culture**
The accepted and traditionally patterned ways of behaving and a set of common understandings shared by members of a group or community. Includes land, language, ways of living and working and artistic expression, relationship and identity.

**Cultural expression**
Refers to different ways in which culture, history and society are conveyed.

**Custodians of the land**
People responsible for maintaining and passing on elements of cultural significance, e.g. knowledge, language, story, dance, imagery, song and ritual.

**Diversity**
Differences that exist within a group, e.g. age, sex, gender, gender expression, sexuality, culture, ethnicity, ability/disability, body shape and composition, spirituality, religion, learning differences, socioeconomic background, values and experience.

**Dreaming**
The Dreaming has different meanings for different Aboriginal groups. The Dreaming can be seen as the embodiment of Aboriginal creation, which gives meaning to everything; the essence of Aboriginal beliefs about creation and spiritual and physical existence. It establishes the rules governing relationships between the people, the land and all things for Aboriginal Peoples. Certain cultural aspects are also associated with specific Dreamings. The Dreaming is linked to the past, the present and the future. Where appropriate, refer to Aboriginal language names for the Dreaming.

**Dispossession**
Dispossession refers to Aboriginal Peoples being denied ownership and/or access to their land. The term is used in both the legal sense, e.g. terra nullius, and the practical sense, e.g. dislocation.

**Elders**
Elders are custodians of knowledge. They are chosen and accepted by their own communities and are highly respected.

**Identity**
A person's conception and expression of individuality and group affiliation; often connected to culture and language

**Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP)**
Includes, but is not limited to, objects, sites, cultural knowledge, cultural expression and the arts, that have been transmitted or continue to be transmitted through generations as belonging to a particular Indigenous group or Indigenous people as a whole or their territory (see intellectual property).

**Intellectual property**
Non-material assets such as forms of cultural expression that belong to a particular individual or community. Intellectual property rights are the bundle of rights that the law grants to individuals for the protection of creative intellectual, scientific and industrial activity, such as inventions. Such rights are for the protection of economic interest in novel, inventive and/or creative effort (see Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property, cultural ownership, copyright).

**Kinship**
A key aspect of Aboriginal cultures and values. It includes the importance of all relationships, and of being related to and belonging to Country (land).

**Land**
The term 'land' is used by Aboriginal Peoples to describe their spirituality, ecosystems, Dreaming(s), all living things, including totems, all physical factors such as sacred sites, water, air and geographical factors (see Country).

**Land management**
A process of developing land and monitoring its use in a sustainable way, usually for purposes of producing food and providing fibre for clothing and housing. Includes providing protection for flora and fauna, and preventing and controlling weeds (may include water management).

**Land rights**
The evolving struggle of Aboriginal Peoples, Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and international Indigenous Peoples for the absolute legal and moral acknowledgement of prior ownership of their land and recognition of all accompanying rights and obligations which flow from this association. Land Rights (capitalised) refers to the legislation (see land).

**Local Aboriginal community**
The local Aboriginal community is constituted by those people who acknowledge themselves as Aboriginal and who reside in the near locality. Aboriginal communities will have a rich and diverse history that has been seriously affected by dispossession and relations, which sees families with spiritual connection to Country residing beside those who have been forced to move from other locations. The notion of locality is complex and multilayered: schools should seek advice from a range of people and/or organisations representing local interests.

For the purpose of this course, the local Aboriginal community case study is to be the Aboriginal community/ies in which the school is located. The use of 'community/ies' in the syllabus indicates that any one location may in fact consist of several communities.

**Lore**
The learning and transmission of cultural heritage by observing customs, ceremonies and song cycles. Lore is connected to the Dreaming and provides protocols and practices for how people interact with Country, kinship and community.

The term 'Lore' must be used with care. Some individuals and groups could find this term offensive, and may prefer to use Aboriginal language terms or 'law'.

**Native title**
Native title is the recognition in Australian law that Indigenous people had a system of law and ownership of their lands before European settlement. It was first recognised in common law in the Mabo case (1992) by the High Court, which overturned the idea of terra nullius (that the continent belonged to no-one at the time of European arrival).The native title of a particular group depends on the law and customs of those people.

**Peoples**
The term 'Peoples' acknowledges the plurality and diversity of Aboriginal cultures, Torres Strait Islander cultures, and international Indigenous cultures.

**Perspectives**
A person's perspective is their point of view; the position from which they see and understand the world and events going on around them. People in the past may have had different points of view about a particular event, depending on their age, gender, social position and their beliefs and values. Historians also have perspectives and this can influence their interpretation of the past.

### Protocols

'Protocols' refers to appropriate ways of behaving, communicating and showing respect for diversity of history and culture. They involve appreciation of the knowledge, standing and status of people within both the local Aboriginal community and the school community. Protocols inevitably vary between communities, and between people within communities. In establishing a partnership between schools and Aboriginal communities it is especially important that protocols are acknowledged and respected.

### Reconciliation

A Commonwealth initiative to promote positive relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and the wider community, and to address the disadvantage faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. A capitalised 'Reconciliation' is used to refer specifically to the process as it applies to government policy.

### Revitalisation

The range of strategies for increasing knowledge and use of a language that is no longer spoken fluently across all generations. Also referred to as language revival.

### Self-determination

Self-determination involves the effective participation of Aboriginal Peoples in all decision making that affects them.

### Social justice

A principle that favours measures aimed at addressing inequities. It includes the rights of people to economic and social independence, and empowerment to determine the direction of their own futures. The processes and systems which shape the interaction between people, communities and governments and determine the degree of social justice achieved.

### Spirituality

In general, the term 'spirituality' refers to personal beliefs and associated practices, while the term 'religion' relates to a belief system and practices shared by a group. An individual may identify with both spirituality and religious affiliation.

For the purpose of this course, the terms 'spirituality' and 'spiritualities' refer to both the individual and collective aspects of Aboriginal Peoples' interconnectedness with the world. Spirituality is deeply linked to Country, Dreaming(s), kinship and identity, and often incorporates concepts associated with 'law' and/or 'lore', such as responsibilities and obligations. Spirituality is also related to a person's intrinsic journey, including learning and reflection.

### Songlines

'Songlines' is an English word for Dreaming tracks that trace the journeys of Ancestral spirits as they created the land, animals and laws. Songlines are recorded in songs, stories, dance and art. They carry significant spiritual, ecological, economic and cultural connection to the knowledge, customs, ceremony and Law of many language groups, including travel and trade routes, the location of waterholes and the presence of food. In many cases, songlines on the earth are mirrored by sky songlines which, together, allowed people to navigate the land and seas.
https://www.narragunnawali.org.au/storage/media/page/1c05630d10759b8377827af43ec61639.pdf

**Sovereignty**
The legal recognition of ownership of land and territory. Implicit in the concept is the right of self-government. Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have never ceded their sovereignty.

**Sustainability**
The concept of sustainability is about the capacity of the environment to continue to support our lives and the lives of other living creatures into the future. Sustainability is both a goal and a way of thinking about how to progress towards that goal. Progress towards environmental sustainability depends on the maintenance or restoration of the environmental functions that sustain all life and human wellbeing (economic and social).

**Terra Nullius**
A Latin term meaning 'land belonging to no one' The term terra nullius means 'nobody's land,' 'land belonging to no one,' or 'land without owners' and was problematically used to 'justify' colonial expansion and deny Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' relationship with, and rights to, their land.
https://www.narragunnawali.org.au/storage/media/page/c5ac1146c1cb95688bd9654e67a38186.pdf

**Torres Strait Islander Peoples**
People from the Torres Strait Islands are the traditional owners of the islands that lie between Cape York in northern Queensland and Papua New Guinea. Torres Strait Islander Peoples are the Indigenous people from these islands. Some Torres Strait Islander People live on the mainland. Torres Strait Islander Peoples' histories and cultures are distinct from Aboriginal Peoples' histories and cultures, and are generally referred to separately.

**Totems**
Natural objects inherited by clan or family members as their spiritual emblem, e.g. animals, plants.

**Traditional owners of land**
Term associated with original custodians of the land; an Aboriginal person who is recognised by their community as having ownership and knowledge of a particular area or 'country' often used in association with Australian Law.

**Wellbeing**
An overall measure of quality of life for individuals and society.

**Worldviews**
The concept of the world held by Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples in which each aspect of culture, identity and society is connected with all other aspects in the context of particular times, places and relationships.

**Zogo Time**
A worldview used among Torres Strait Islander language groups that affects beliefs, values and relationships with land, sea, sky, waterways, language and culture; also referred to as Augadth Time.

## Acknowledgments for Glossary

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies General Senior Syllabus 2019: Syllabus
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# Acknowledgements

**Principles and protocols for teaching and learning**

Dot point 4 & 6: Adapted from: Department of Education Western Australia. (2015). *Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework*. Retrieved February, 2024, from https://www.education.wa.edu.au/dl/jjpzned
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