



# PSYCHOLOGY

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General course

**Year 12 syllabus – What’s changing: Rationale and Aims  
For teaching in 2027**

## **Acknowledgement of Country**

Kaya. The School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) acknowledges that our offices are on Whadjuk Noongar boodjar and that we deliver our services on the country of many traditional custodians and language groups throughout Western Australia. The Authority acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We offer our respect to Elders past and present.

## **Background**

As part of the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) Refreshment for reviewing the nomenclature of courses, the Authority has updated the rationale and aims of each syllabus.

The revised rationale and aims are aligned with the mapping of the general capabilities to provide clear connections between the rationale, aims and syllabus content. The rationale outlines what the subject is about and why it is important. It describes what students can expect to study in the course, along with the knowledge, skills and understandings they will develop throughout the course. It also explains how these can be applied in everyday life and references potential future pathways, outlining how students might connect what they learn in the course to further education, training and employment opportunities.

## **Important information**

### **WACE Refreshment: Reviewing the nomenclature of courses**

This document contains information that will be included in the syllabus effective from 1 January 2027.

Users of the syllabus are responsible for checking its currency.

Syllabuses are formally reviewed by the Authority on a cyclical basis, typically every five years.

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## Rationale

The Psychology General course deepens students' understanding of how people think, feel and act. They explore factors that influence human development and study an evidence-based discipline that follows the principles of science inquiry, ensuring rigorous investigation into human behaviour. Psychology helps us understand the complexities of human nature, both at an individual level and in larger social contexts. Understanding psychological principles improves relationships, promotes personal development and contributes to societal wellbeing by providing insights into how people interact, communicate and function across different environments.

Students explore the psychological factors that influence individuals, such as cognition, personality and the biological bases of behaviour. They learn how individuals function within groups, studying topics like socialisation, moral development, attitude formation and communication. The course expands on theories of personality, introducing influential theorists and exploring how personality affects motivation and performance. Students examine different states of consciousness, as well as factors influencing friendships and conflict resolution. The course also delves into some of the functions of the brain, including the four lobes of the cerebral cortex, using brain scanning techniques and case studies to link brain activity to behaviour. In developmental psychology, students will study theories of cognitive and moral development. Group behaviour, such as conformity, group polarisation and the bystander effect, will also be covered, along with the causes and approaches to resolve prejudice. Students will continue to develop their research skills, learning about ethical considerations in psychological research, data collection methods and experimental design.

Through the study of psychology, students develop a deep understanding of psychological concepts and acquire research skills, learning how to design and evaluate scientific studies, interpret data and apply empirical methods. They develop critical thinking skills as they analyse and assess psychological phenomena and study the complexities of human behaviour. They enhance their communication skills, improving personal interactions both within the field of psychology and in everyday situations. The course also fosters students' self-understanding, providing them with insights into their personal development and the ways in which they relate to others and the world around them.

The knowledge gained from this course can be applied in a variety of real-world situations, both personal and professional. In terms of personal development, it helps students reflect on themselves and improve their relationships. The course also equips them to understand and address societal issues, such as improving communication and fostering cooperation within communities and organisations, ultimately contributing to positive social impact.

The course provides a strong foundation that is highly relevant to further education and career development in diverse sectors including human resources, marketing, sales, media, management, healthcare and education by equipping them with valuable insights into human behaviour and effective communication strategies. Additionally, the course develops essential research skills and the ability to critically analyse data, both of which are highly sought after in many industries.

## Aims

The Psychology General course aims to develop students’:

- understanding of how human behaviour can be defined, and the relationship between the internal and external factors that influence how humans think, feel and act
- understanding of the different theoretical approaches to the various areas or domains of psychology
- understanding that psychology provides scientific explanations of behaviour with particular principles, procedures and approaches to data
- ability to develop and select questions and ideas or hypotheses and plan and conduct research to test these ideas in a reliable, valid and ethical way
- ability to collect, record, classify, quantify and process data and information in organised, logical and ethical ways
- ability to interpret and evaluate findings in relation to ideas or hypotheses being tested and reflect on the design of the research
- ability to use psychological knowledge and understandings to explain thoughts, feelings and behaviour
- knowledge and understandings reflecting the values of the discipline of psychology
- ability to explore and interpret human behaviour in the everyday world using psychological theory and principles
- use of psychological discourse
- ability to interpret information received and communicate feelings, thoughts and ideas with purpose, understanding and critical awareness
- ability to explain psychological understandings to a range of audiences for a range of purposes.