



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

# **ABORIGINAL AND INTERCULTURAL STUDIES**

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ATAR course

**Year 12 syllabus – What’s changing: General capabilities**

**For teaching in 2027**

## **Acknowledgement of Country**

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

## **Background**

As part of the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) Refreshment to investigate the assessment and reporting of the general capabilities on the Western Australian Statement of Student Achievement (WASSA), the Authority has updated the statements about the general capabilities in each syllabus.

The Authority has mapped the general capabilities through the unit content and assessment types for each of the WACE courses. Students will have the opportunity to develop the general capabilities identified in the course through the teaching, learning and assessment programs. These general capabilities will be reflected on the WASSA.

## **Important information**

### **WACE Refreshment: Investigating the assessment and reporting of the general capabilities on the Western Australian Statement of Student Achievement (WASSA)**

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

Users of the syllabus are responsible for checking its currency.

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

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## Representation of the general capabilities

The general capabilities encompass the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that will assist students to live and work successfully in the twenty-first century. Teachers should find opportunities to incorporate the following capabilities into the teaching and learning program for the Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies ATAR course. The general capabilities are not assessed unless they are identified within the specified unit content.

### Critical and creative thinking

Critical and creative thinking underpin the inquiry process in the course, as students refine focus questions and analyse sources by assessing their origin, purpose, reliability and bias. By examining diverse perspectives on historical and contemporary issues, they develop a deeper understanding of complex topics, identify relationships between sources and use evidence to support arguments effectively. Students analyse, evaluate and compare perspectives in written, visual and multimedia materials, and communicate findings using respectful and inclusive language.

### Ethical understanding

Students develop ethical understanding in the course by exploring diverse perspectives and the motivations behind historical and contemporary actions. They critically engage with films and documentaries on First Nations rights, analysing human rights and social justice issues. They examine values, rights, responsibilities and ethical norms in order to understand how these shape behaviours and perspectives. They develop ethical scholarship practices through respect for cultural research protocols, acknowledgment of diverse perspectives and critical reflection. Students evaluate and communicate findings using respectful and inclusive language, recognising that new perspectives continue to shape understanding. Through this process, they refine their ability to navigate ethical dilemmas and make informed, culturally sensitive decisions.

### Intercultural understanding

Intercultural understanding is central to the Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies ATAR course. Students explore diverse cultural beliefs, values and perspectives, developing insight into identity, heritage and the evolving role of First Nations knowledge and traditions in contemporary society. They investigate how cultural expressions such as art, performance, language and storytelling are used to celebrate, challenge and communicate identity and values. Through inquiry, students explore the distinctiveness of Australian First Nations Peoples as the world's oldest living continuous cultures. They examine the impacts of colonisation, including the Stolen Generations and the *Aborigines Act 1905 (WA)*, and analyse differing perspectives on reconciliation and truth-telling in Australia and globally. By engaging with diverse perspectives and intercultural experiences, students build empathy, adaptability, and the ability to communicate and respond respectfully in a multicultural society.

### Literacy

Literacy development is integrated in the course through research, source analysis and communication tasks. Students conduct investigations using primary and secondary sources, particularly privileging the voices of First Nations Peoples. This includes working with oral histories, narratives, government documents, articles, poetry, song lyrics and visual media. By analysing these sources with cultural awareness and sensitivity, students refine their ability to critically assess perspectives, draw evidence-based conclusions and articulate informed responses. They also complete short answer tasks where they engage with written, graphic and multimedia syllabus content and source material, identifying, defining, describing, explaining, comparing, analysing and discussing key ideas.

## Personal and social capability

The course develops students' personal and social capability by enhancing their communication skills as they engage in both independent and collaborative research. They explore the perspectives and experiences of invasion and colonisation, focusing on topics such as frontier wars, massacres, dispossession, language and cultural disruption, and interactions between First Nations Peoples and colonisers. They analyse a case of cultural heritage destruction, investigating its causes, government responses and broader public reactions at local, national and global levels.

Through inquiry, students evaluate data, draw evidence-based conclusions, and consider multiple perspectives. They communicate findings using appropriate formats, cultivating their use of respectful and inclusive language. Ethical scholarship is emphasised, requiring students to acknowledge cultural variations in research protocols and adopt culturally appropriate communication practices. By engaging with these processes, students develop a deeper awareness of community issues, enhance their capacity for empathy and refine their ability to communicate in a culturally sensitive and ethical manner.

## Addressing the other general capabilities

Although the following general capabilities have not been identified as a focus in the Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies ATAR Year 12 syllabus, teachers may find opportunities to incorporate these capabilities 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 ATAR course

A representation of the general capabilities for the two years is summarised in the table below.

Year	Course	Course type	General capabilities						
			CCT	DL	EU	IU	L	N	PSC
Year 11	Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies (AEAIS)	ATAR	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
Year 12	Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies (ATAIS)	ATAR	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓

### Key

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