



DESIGN

ATAR 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 Design ATAR course examines how design is a fundamental literacy that supports the conception and visualisation of ideas. The course empowers students to identify, understand, interpret, create and communicate through visual and tactile means, and influence everyday life for individuals, societies and the natural world. It explores how designers have the opportunity to improve and transform the world in which we live through good design, fostering and promoting innovation, while delivering sustainable solutions for specific purposes and audiences.

In the course, students apply design theory, actively engaging in an agile design process through a critical lens of research, history, culture and experience. In the design process, students identify a perceived need, problem or opportunity that is then articulated in a design brief. They develop concepts and ideas through the application of Design Thinking, incorporating a variety of tools, methods and strategies that are shaped by considerations of aesthetics and functionality, as well as social, cultural, historical, environmental and economic factors. Through the Design Thinking approach, students are encouraged to engage a user-centred design process that is iterative and prototype driven.

Students develop their problem-solving skills by unravelling open-ended problems with a variety of potential outcomes. They are encouraged to make design decisions that demonstrate skills in analysis, judgement and synthesis, while simultaneously developing their technical skills.

Students develop extensive communication and critical thinking skills through design work, design process and presentation mediums when discovering design solutions. Through the agile design process, students analyse problems, devising creative, innovative strategies and communicating high order designed solutions to real-world problems. Students are empowered to better interact with their environment and become more discerning consumers of visual information, helping them recognise when design is used to inform, entertain or persuade. The knowledge and skills developed through the course supports critical thinking, problem-solving and authentic communication skills that are industry-relevant and can be applied to real-world situations.

The course equips students with highly transferrable knowledge and skills for further education and employment pathways within a range of industries. These skills, in partnership with industry-specific knowledge, provide students with opportunities to work in a range of design-related fields. Areas of work and careers could include graphic designer, interior designer, fashion designer, computer-aided (CAD) engineer, web designer, architecture, product designer, industrial designer, media and arts, publishing, branding, advertising, creative media, animation, game design, photojournalism and content creator.

Aims

The Design ATAR course aims to develop students’:

- knowledge and understanding of design language, terminology and frameworks
- ability to understand and apply linear and iterative design processes
- ability to use design inquiry methods creatively and critically, and make and justify discerning design choices
- ability to identify and explore open-ended design challenges, and to propose a variety of potential outcomes, considering social, cultural, historical, environmental and economic factors
- ability to manipulate and organise design elements, design principles and selected media and materials to communicate ideas for specific audiences.