



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

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SYLLABUS UNDER REVIEW

# ABORIGINAL AND INTERCULTURAL STUDIES

ATAR COURSE

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Year 12 syllabus

SYLLABUS UNDER REVIEW

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

**This syllabus is under review as of 2020.**

Users of this syllabus are responsible for checking its currency.

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

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## Rationale

Aboriginal histories and cultures are fundamental to the development of Australian identity and the formation of contemporary Australian society. The exploration of Aboriginal cultures, past and present and how Aboriginal Peoples interact with other sociocultural groups, provides a logical starting point for the exploration of cultural identity. In this course students explore and investigate the concept of culture, and how cultures interact with one another and with their environment.

Students learn about the diversity of Aboriginal societies and cross-cultural interaction between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians, past and present, using a process of social inquiry. They critically explore a wide range of political, social, historical, legal and environmental issues from an intercultural perspective. They analyse Aboriginal Peoples' experiences in contemporary Australian society, using a range of approaches. These include comparative studies, investigating the experiences of both Indigenous communities elsewhere in the world and different cultural communities within Australia. The importance of ethical considerations in the investigation of cultural and social issues is emphasised.

The Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies ATAR course provides for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students to explore 'shared histories' and involve themselves in active reconciliation. This course affirms the cultural experience and identity of Aboriginal students. All students have opportunities to learn from, and with, Aboriginal Peoples.

Understanding and valuing cultural diversity are key skills both for citizenship in contemporary multicultural Australia and for participation in an increasingly global community. The Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies ATAR course is intended to equip students with the knowledge, skills and values to be active citizens at the local, national and global levels. These skills are also highly valued in today's workplaces. The ability to work effectively in a culturally diverse environment is important in a wide range of vocational contexts.

## Course outcomes

The Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies ATAR course is designed to facilitate achievement of the following outcomes.

### Outcome 1 – Investigating cultural interaction

Students use their skills of inquiry to investigate aspects of culture.

In achieving this outcome, students:

- plan an investigation that uses methodology appropriate to the cultural contexts being investigated
- conduct the investigation by selecting and locating sources that provide evidence
- process and synthesise the information to develop interpretations of cultural experiences and views
- apply and communicate interpretations and findings in culturally appropriate ways.

### Outcome 2 – Cultural continuity and change

Students understand that cultural continuity and change result from a range of forces.

In achieving this outcome, students:

- understand the range of different impacts of forces for change on cultural groups
- understand that cultures have different and changing understandings of, and relationships with, the environment
- understand that there are different and changing versions of history and that these inform and influence people's actions.

### Outcome 3 – Identity and culture

Students understand that cultures allow individuals and groups to construct multiple, diverse and unique identities, based on their shared understandings of the world.

In achieving this outcome, students:

- understand that individuals develop identities by interpreting their roles, responsibilities and experiences as members of one or more cultural groups
- understand that members of different cultures have different world views as a result of their beliefs, values, practices and experiences
- understand that cultures are characterised by varying degrees of cohesion and diversity as they seek to maintain a sense of identity.

### Outcome 4 – Culture and citizenship

Students understand how they can help to build a just and sustainable society in the context of their own community and a culturally diverse world.

In achieving this outcome, students:

- understand specific social justice and equity issues in the context of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australia
- understand social justice and equity issues within their own community
- understand the skills and practices of citizenship in an intercultural context.

## 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 concepts of media representation within and between cultures in Australia and other countries. Students investigate the influence all forms of media have on contemporary society.

#### Unit 4

This unit enables students to explore the concepts of heritage and cultural identity in the context of Australia. Students investigate cultural practices, beliefs and values that contribute to understanding heritage and identity.

Each unit includes:

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

### 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 may find opportunities to incorporate the 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.

#### Literacy

Literacy presents those aspects of the Language and Literacy strands of the English curriculum that should also be applied in all other learning areas. While much of the explicit teaching of literacy occurs in the English learning area, it is strengthened, made specific and extended in other learning areas, such as Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies, as students engage in a range of learning activities with significant literacy demands. These literacy-rich situations are a part of learning in all curriculum areas. Paying attention to the literacy demands of the Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies ATAR course ensures that students' literacy development is strengthened so that it supports subject-based learning.

#### Numeracy

Numeracy is useful in the inquiry process, which requires students to recognise patterns and relationships. Students have opportunities to support their views with data, some of which is numerical in nature. They develop numeracy capability when they analyse, interpret and draw conclusions from statistical information, for example in relation to change over time.

## Information and communication technology capability

Information and communication technology (ICT) capability is important in the inquiry process, particularly in relation to investigation, analysis and communication. Students use digital tools and strategies to locate, access, process and analyse information. They use ICT skills and understandings to investigate and identify different perspectives and sources of evidence and to communicate information. Students have opportunities to scrutinise websites and the perspectives they convey, including how and why such sites are constructed, the audiences they serve and their goals. They develop an understanding of the issues involved in the use of ICT when practising ethical scholarship as part of the inquiry process.

## Critical and creative thinking

Critical and creative thinking is integral to the inquiry process. There are opportunities for students to delve deeply and broadly into the implications of any missing or questionable information in their investigation of issues. The demands of investigation include the ability to pose questions, interrogate, select and cross-reference sources, and develop interpretations based on an assessment of the evidence and reasoning. Students identify possible weaknesses in their own positions, and analyse, evaluate and synthesise alternative perspectives.

## Personal and social capability

Personal and social capability skills are developed and practised in Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies by students enhancing their communication skills and participating in group-work. Students have opportunities to work both collaboratively in teams and also independently as part of their learning and research in the Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies ATAR course. Through the study of individuals and groups, students develop their ability to appreciate the perspectives and experiences of others. Students develop increasing social awareness through the study of relationships between individuals and diverse social groups in the modern world.

## Ethical understanding

Ethical understanding provides opportunities for students to explore and understand the diverse perspectives and circumstances that shaped the actions and possible motivations of people in the past compared with those of today. Students have opportunities both independently and collaboratively to explore the values, beliefs and principles that were the basis for the judgements and actions of people in the past, and of those of today.

## Intercultural understanding

Intercultural understanding is a vital part of learning in the Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies ATAR course. Students explore the different beliefs and values of a range of cultural groups and develop an appreciation of the diversity in the modern world. They have opportunities to develop an understanding of the nature, causes and consequences of conflict, dispossession and interdependence. Students develop an understanding of different contemporary perspectives, the historical contexts for those perspectives, their influence on the relationships between different groups within society, and how they contribute to individual and group actions in the contemporary world.

## Representation of the cross-curriculum priorities

The cross-curriculum priorities address contemporary issues which students face in a globalised world. Teachers may find opportunities to incorporate the priorities into the teaching and learning program for the Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies ATAR 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 ATAR course. The course celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories as part of the shared history belonging to all Australians.

This course provides the opportunity to examine historical perspectives from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 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 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 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 ATAR 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 curriculum planning

### Selection of resources

The selection of resources and their use can be culturally sensitive and controversial. When selecting resources teachers need to:

- consult with local community members about the resources/texts that can or cannot be used and if they may be accessed by some or all students
- analyse the resources using a framework of questions, such as those listed in:
  - *A Resource Guide for Aboriginal Studies and Torres Strait Islander Studies* (1995), Melbourne, Education Services Australia
- use reference resources that guide selection policies about the use of resources, such as:
  - Government of South Australia Department for Education and Child Development – *Evaluating resources with an Aboriginal focus* at [www.lmrc.sa.edu.au/default.asp?id+43748&navgrp=634](http://www.lmrc.sa.edu.au/default.asp?id+43748&navgrp=634)
  - Dunkle, Margaret (1994), *Black in Focus: A Guide to Aboriginality in Literature for Young People*. This resource focuses on giving advice about fictional stories.

### Teaching and learning of sensitive topics and controversial issues

Teachers need to plan for sensitive topics and controversial issues by establishing ground rules for themselves and the classroom processes. The practices and protocols for doing this can be found in resources, such as:

- National Trust of Australia (WA): Education and Learning  
*Teaching Aboriginal History – Values and Sensitivities* (an example for teaching in the Pilbara) at [www.valuingheritage.com.au/Year\\_7\\_Burru\\_Peninsula.html](http://www.valuingheritage.com.au/Year_7_Burru_Peninsula.html)
- *British Columbia Planning Guide and Framework – Development of Aboriginal Learning Resources* at [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/)

Elders, where possible, need to be recognised and consulted. They must be valued and shown respect at all times.

## Unit 3

### Unit description

The focus for this unit is media representation. In this unit, students explore concepts of media representation within and between cultures in Australia and other countries. They investigate the influence all forms of media have on contemporary society. Students explore how the representation of different cultural groups in the media can be used to shape or challenge values and beliefs, as well as to reflect them.

### Unit content

An understanding of the Year 11 content is assumed knowledge for students in Year 12.

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

#### Aboriginal perspectives

##### Cultural perspectives

- the various forms of mainstream media, including social media
- the role of media in shaping social attitudes
- media representations of Aboriginal Peoples' lives
- types of representations of Aboriginal Peoples in the media, including stereotyping, use of propaganda
- the effects of media representation on Aboriginal people themselves
- media representations of Aboriginal Peoples' experiences, including experiences with the criminal justice system and the effects on community relationships and attitudes

##### Place and belonging

- media representations of the relationships between different peoples and the land
- media representations of Aboriginal land rights issues, and the role played by Australian courts and governments in dealing with land rights, including:
  - the concept of *terra nullius*
  - the Mabo and Wik decisions of the High Court
  - native title decisions

##### Diversity and change

- reasons for change and continuity in different aspects of media representation, including contact with other cultures, economic, political and social factors
- changing representations of Aboriginal Peoples in the media
- why some groups are represented differently from others in the media, such as sports-stars, artists, musicians

### Aboriginal contributions to Australian society

- how the contributions of Aboriginal Peoples to Australian society are represented in the media
- interpretations of Australian history, including the 'History wars'
- the use of Aboriginal culture in advertising, tourism, film and television in Australia
- how Aboriginal cultural expression, including artistic expression has changed Australian identity

### Sustainable societies

#### Empowering people

- principles and origins of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- impact of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on the Australian political and legal system
- the ideal of social justice as a core value for the Australian political and legal system
- examples of effective political action and use of the media by First Nations peoples in at least one country, including **at least one** of the following:
  - the attainment of full citizenship rights, including voting rights
  - the attainment of equal access to education
  - the preservation of a First Nations peoples' language

#### Relationships with the environment over time

- changing and diverse attitudes to the environment and sustainability in contemporary society as presented by the media
- conflicting cultural perspectives of mining operations and their impacts on local communities in Papua New Guinea, the Amazon and/or the Pilbara
- examples of media representations of these conflicts over mining operations

#### Cultural interaction in a pluralist society

- media representations of divisions between cultural groups in Australia
- the Americanisation of youth culture and its impact on cultural identity of First Nations peoples

### Social inquiry skills

#### Research skills

- constructing a set of focus questions to investigate a specific topic/issue
- collecting, recording and organising data/information
- recognising different perspectives presented in a variety of different sources/texts
- drawing conclusions and developing explanations based on research findings
- communicating findings using formats appropriate to purpose, including, written, oral or multimodal presentations

- identifying and practising ethical scholarship when conducting research, including:
  - respecting variation between cultural groups of processes and protocols for collecting, acknowledging and communicating information
  - adopting protocols and conventions to communicate in culturally appropriate ways

**Self-reflection**

- using the inquiry to identify the manipulation of beliefs and values by different forms of media, including presentation of stereotypes, use of propaganda and advertising techniques
- interpreting and analysing the reliability of generalisations about own culture and that of others

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## Unit 4

### Unit description

The focus for this unit is heritage and cultural identity in the context of Australia. The concept of heritage is an essential component in the formation of cultural and personal identity. Students investigate cultural practices, beliefs and values, both traditional and contemporary, that contribute to understanding one's heritage and identity.

### Unit content

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

#### Aboriginal perspectives

##### Cultural perspectives

- the importance of Aboriginal customary law, significant sites, song-lines, and the passing on of knowledge
- Aboriginal perspectives represented by contemporary storytelling, including film, music, dance, and television programs
- decisions that have incorporated Aboriginal perspectives, including:
  - acknowledgement of Aboriginal customary law in Australian courts
  - protection of significant sites
  - developments in Aboriginal education
  - developments in Aboriginal health

##### Place and belonging

- the importance of regaining access and influencing decision-making in regards to Country
- acknowledgement of heritage and identity through land and water rights and the recognition of native title and customary law with particular reference to the Mabo and Wik decisions
- the importance of family to cultural and personal identity

##### Diversity and change

- the impact of changing social attitudes and government policies on:
  - voting rights and the attainment of full citizenship
  - the removal of children from families
  - development of areas which contain significant sites, including the Burrup Peninsula, Uluru

##### Aboriginal contributions to Australian society

- use of Aboriginal cultural expression and heritage by the wider Australian community
- the contribution of Aboriginal heritage and cultural identity to the development of international tourism
- contemporary initiatives of Aboriginal Peoples, including Aboriginal radio and television stations, education foundations, health programs, and housing programs

## Sustainable societies

### Empowering people

- the concepts of fairness and equity, marginalisation and social disadvantage
- barriers to access to health and education for particular groups in Australia
- the impact of barriers to access to health and education on identity

### Relationships with the environment over time

- influences of heritage on the ways First Nations peoples interact with their environment, including hunting and fishing rights and customary law
- attempts by government to balance environmental, heritage and economic factors when using the land and sea, including the use of customary law and Indigenous rangers in land and sea management

### Cultural interaction in a pluralist society

- the concept of cross-cultural interaction
- influence of traditions, beliefs and heritage on cross-cultural interaction

## Social inquiry skills

### Research skills

- constructing a set of focus questions to investigate a specific topic/issue
- collecting, recording and organising data/information
- recognising different perspectives presented in a variety of different sources/texts
- drawing conclusions and developing explanations based on research findings
- communicating findings using formats appropriate to purpose, including, written, oral or multimodal presentations
- identifying and practising ethical scholarship when conducting research, including:
  - respecting variation between cultural groups of processes and protocols for collecting, acknowledging and communicating information
  - adopting protocols and conventions to communicate in culturally appropriate ways

### Self-reflection

- analysing own beliefs and values of heritage through the inquiry process
- making generalisations about own cultural identity and heritage and that of others, as a result of new information found during the inquiry process

## 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 Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies ATAR Year 12 syllabus and the weighting for each assessment type.

**Assessment table – Year 12**

Type of assessment	Weighting
<p><b>Social inquiry</b></p> <p>Students use ethical procedures, appropriate methodology and sources, and show cultural sensitivity and awareness to plan, conduct and communicate a social inquiry.</p> <p>Typically the inquiry proposition is devised by the teacher.</p> <p>Typically the final presentation is an oral format which can include: a debate; a hypothetical; a speech and/or a multimodal presentation. The presentation can be individual or group.</p> <p>Typically one social inquiry is completed for each unit.</p>	20%
<p><b>Source analysis</b></p> <p>A number of sources are interpreted, analysed, and evaluated. Questions typically require the use of evidence from the sources when commenting on: message; origin, purpose and context; reliability and contestability of the evidence; perspective; and relevance. Typically the teacher selects the sources and provides the questions.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>At least two source analysis tasks must be administered in class under test conditions.</p>	25%
<p><b>Extended response (Issue analysis)</b></p> <p>The format can be a written response to a scaffolded or sectionalised essay question which can contain timelines and diagrams; an oral presentation, such as a debate, hypothetical, re-enactment; and/or a multimodal presentation, such as a museum display, or a PowerPoint.</p> <p>Typically students are required to respond to one or more closed or open questions, or a proposition; or an interpretation and/or evaluation of perspectives.</p> <p>At least two extended response tasks must be administered in class under test conditions.</p>	25%
<p><b>Examination</b></p> <p>Typically conducted at the end of each semester and/or unit and reflecting the examination design brief for this syllabus.</p>	30%

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 twice.

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. For example, student performance for a social inquiry could be validated by a task, such as a structured essay, extended response or analysis of the sources used in the inquiry, which is completed in class after the final presentation is submitted.

## 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 Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies ATAR 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](http://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.

## ATAR course examination

All students enrolled in the Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies ATAR Year 12 course are required to sit the ATAR course examination. The examination is based on a representative sampling of the content for Unit 3 and Unit 4. Details of the ATAR course examination are prescribed in the examination design brief on the following page.

Refer to the WACE Manual for further information.

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## Examination design brief – Year 12

### Time allowed

Reading time before commencing work: ten minutes

Working time for paper: three hours

### Permissible items

Standard items: pens (blue/black preferred), pencils (including coloured), sharpener, correction fluid/tape, eraser, ruler, highlighters

Special items: printed English language dictionary and/or bilingual dictionary. No electronic dictionaries or thesaurus allowed.

Note: Dictionaries must not contain any notes or other marks.

SECTION	SUPPORTING INFORMATION
<p><b>Section One</b>  <b>Source analysis</b>            50% of the total examination            10–15 questions            Suggested working time: 90 minutes</p>	<p>Questions are structured as a series of closed and open items that increase in complexity.</p> <p>Questions require the candidate to interpret, analyse and/or evaluate the source material.</p> <p>Source material can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>written texts (an extract from a government paper, a newspaper and/or journal article; and/or an extract from a narrative, a poem, a song lyric, a play script, and/or a letter)</li> <li>graphic materials (a photograph, a map, a graph, a diagram, a cartoon, and/or a drawing)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Section Two</b>  <b>Extended response</b>            50% of the total examination  <b>Unit 3: 25%</b>            One question from a choice of two            Suggested working time: 45 minutes  <b>Unit 4: 25%</b>            One question from a choice of two            Suggested working time: 45 minutes</p>	<p>Questions can require the candidate to outline, explain, discuss, assess, examine, analyse and/or evaluate.</p>

## Appendix 1 – Grade descriptions Year 12

<b>A</b>	Explains how the complexity of interrelationships between cultures and environment has short-term and long-term consequences.
	Discusses the complexity of the dynamics of political and legal change.
	Analyses causes of complex social justice and equity issues and principles for alternative solutions.
	Analyses and critically evaluates sources of information for a social inquiry.
<b>B</b>	Communicates findings in culturally sensitive ways, analysing and evaluating for bias and cultural perspectives.
	Identifies interconnections within and between past and present cultures and their effect on people and their environment.
	Recognises the complexity of the dynamics of political and legal change.
	Explains the origins of specific social justice and equity issues in Australia.
<b>C</b>	Analyses sources of information for a social inquiry.
	Communicates findings in culturally sensitive ways, analysing for bias and cultural perspectives.
	Recognises that a diversity of views about culture and environment has short-term and long-term consequences.
	Identifies that there are different systems of governance.
<b>D</b>	Describes contemporary social justice and equity issues and principles consistent with sustainable societies.
	Selects appropriate data that allows some examination of sources for a social inquiry.
	Communicates findings, showing some cross-cultural empathy.
	Provides limited examples of the ways that different values concerning the environment affect practices.
<b>E</b>	Lists a few of the roles, rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democratic society.
	Describes social justice and equity issues in simple terms.
	Draws limited conclusions about a social inquiry.
	Shows a limited recognition of the values and needs of audiences.
<b>E</b>	Recognises that cultures have traditional views about the environment.
	Provides a few unsupported statements about the responsibilities of citizens.
	Lists some social justice and equity issues.
	Collects some information for a social inquiry, which may have little relevance.
<b>E</b>	Attempts to communicate findings.