

# Learning P–12

Informed prescription › Informed professionalism



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# Introduction

Learning P–12 describes the relationships between the various syllabuses and guidelines produced by the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA)<sup>1</sup> for the Preparatory Year through to Year 12 (P–12). These syllabuses and guidelines were developed in partnership with school sectors, parents and the community to achieve broad goals for educational excellence and equity based on:

- high expectations and standards for all students
- improved educational outcomes for all students
- improved public trust in schools and the education system.

QSA syllabuses and guidelines provide schools and teachers with a cohesive and cumulative approach to teaching, learning and assessment across P–12 that:

- establishes a better preparation for learning in the early years
- strengthens learning in the middle years of schooling
- builds Year 10 as the transition to the senior phase of learning
- provides young people in the senior phase with flexible options to achieve a Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) or a Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement (QCIA).

## Aligning to national goals and the national curriculum

Learning P–12 aligns with the goals for Australian schooling, as expressed in the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*.<sup>2</sup> These goals are:

- Goal 1 — Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence
- Goal 2 — All young Australians become:
  - successful learners
  - confident and creative individuals
  - active and informed citizens.

To achieve these goals, the Declaration commits to the development of a world-class curriculum that will enable every student to develop:

- a solid foundation in knowledge, understanding, skills and values on which further learning and adult life can be built
- deep knowledge, understanding, skills and values that will enable advanced learning and an ability to create new ideas and translate them into practical applications
- general capabilities that underpin flexible and analytical thinking, a capacity to work with others and an ability to move across subject disciplines to develop new expertise.

These are also the basis for Learning P–12.

## Learning P–12 — an integrated approach

Learning P–12 describes the key components of the P–12 approach to teaching, learning and assessment for excellence and equity:

- **Syllabus design principles and elements** that describe the “low-definition” syllabus based on informed prescription and informed professionalism
- **Phases of learning** that describes the three phases of learning — early, middle and senior — that guide the development of QSA documents
- **Syllabus content** that describes how content standards establish continuity of learning across P–12
- **Assessment, standards and consistency** that shows how standards-based school-based assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process.

Content and achievement standards in the following QSA documents establish continuity of learning through P–12. This ensures that studies undertaken in the early and middle phases of learning give young people every opportunity to achieve success in the senior phase:

<sup>1</sup> The QSA is a statutory body established under the *Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Act 2002*. The QSA develops, reviews and approves guidelines and syllabuses for the Preparatory Year to Year 12, as well as a variety of resources to support their implementation. Other responsibilities include testing, assessment and moderation, certification and the facilitation of tertiary entrance procedures for Queensland students.

<sup>2</sup> Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs 2008, *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, viewed January 2009, <[www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/\\_resources/National\\_Declaration\\_on\\_the\\_Educational\\_Goals\\_for\\_Young\\_Australians.pdf](http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf)>.

- Learning P–3, incorporating:
  - *Early Years Curriculum Guidelines* for the Preparatory Year
  - Year 1 Learning Statements
  - Essential Learnings and Standards for key learning areas by the end of Year 3
  - P–3 Literacy and Numeracy Indicators<sup>3</sup>
- Years 1–9 Essential Learnings and Standards for key learning areas
- *Year 10 Guidelines*
- Years 11 and 12 syllabuses and study area specifications (SASs), incorporating nationally endorsed vocational education and training (VET) training packages.

QSA documents draw on well-researched design principles and elements for equity and excellence, and set the parameters for the intended curriculum. The focus on expected learning sets the conditions for teachers to exercise their professional expertise and judgment about how best to promote student learning.

By embedding Indigenous perspectives in the bodies of knowledge that all students engage with, QSA documents affirm the unique status of Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students, communities, histories and experiences in teaching and learning.

## Syllabus design principles and elements: excellence and equity

The documents that the QSA develops to support teaching, learning and assessment use consistent design principles and elements. These documents are not “the curriculum”. The curriculum is the sum total of the teaching and learning in classrooms and other learning environments.

### Design principles

Research shows that a “low-definition” syllabus design, when properly supported, can set up the conditions to improve educational outcomes for students. The principles for a low-definition syllabus are:

- ***Informed prescription*** — the syllabus concisely sets out “expected” coverage, or what is essential, in clear, accessible professional language. Informed prescription emphasises centralised standards and syllabus mandates, thus supporting the accountability of the system.
- ***Informed professionalism*** — the syllabus sets the conditions for teachers to exercise their professional judgment to shape their curriculum by providing:
  - clarity about the focus of teaching, learning and assessment, balanced with flexibility to make decisions about how best to promote student learning
  - scope for school sectors and schools to inform practice across diverse school settings throughout Queensland, and flexibility and autonomy to plan their curriculum and assessment in ways that best suit their individual contexts
  - reference to useful resources that support planning for teaching, learning and assessment, and which cater for diversity and recognise that teaching and learning should be socially and culturally inclusive.

<sup>3</sup> The indicators have been developed from the work undertaken in 2008 on the proposed Early Years Diagnostic Net. The Year 2 Diagnostic Net continues to be available.

## Design elements

The following evidence-based design elements for excellence and equity are applied to QSA P–12 syllabuses and guidelines.

### 1. *Syllabus coverage — Phases of learning*

From P–12 there are three phases of learning: early, middle and senior. Each phase has a specific and distinctive developmental focus that aligns with the overall system’s goals of high-quality and high-equity student achievement.

### 2. *Syllabus rationale*

Each syllabus and guideline has a rationale that includes brief statements about:

- the school subject — an educationally sound statement of the philosophy and logic of the school subject, noting key developments and benchmarks in research on the subject
- the educational goals — a statement of the overall educational purposes of the school subject, noting its benefits and value, associated learning during the particular phase and its links to earlier and later learning
- the learners — a brief description of the phase, age and developmental issues of the diverse learners to whom the school subject will be taught (including language, cultural background, age, location and special needs).

### 3. *Syllabus content*

Each syllabus and guideline identifies the required learning for a school subject, expressed as knowledge, understanding and skills, that is expected for all students.

The required learning is expressed as clear, concise statements that are useful for teachers. A “teacher prompt” to illustrate the required learning may accompany each statement.

### 4. *Syllabus standards*

Each syllabus and guideline includes content and achievement standards to guide teacher judgment. The standards set targets for students and teachers to work towards, and are also used to report student achievement.

The standards statements, which include knowledge and understanding and cross-curricular capabilities, are consistent across school subjects and phases of learning. The statements provide a common vocabulary for

teachers, students and parents to use when describing student performance in and across school subjects.

### 5. *Assessment: school-based/standards-based*

Each syllabus and guideline includes specific guidance on assessment practices and strategies appropriate to the school subject and phase of learning.

Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process, and the purposes of this assessment are to:

- promote, assist and improve teaching and learning
- help students achieve the highest standards they can
- provide parents and carers with meaningful information on students’ achievements and information for reporting and certification.

Each syllabus and guideline indicates where systemic standardised testing programs and mandated moderated assessment are linked to required learning. What is in the syllabus guides the development of systemic and school-based assessment and moderation (where appropriate).

## Alignment with systemic policies

The syllabus design principles and elements set enabling conditions for informed professionalism in pedagogy and assessment aimed at high-quality and high-equity student achievement.

However, the success of low-definition syllabus design is contingent on the effective alignment of other systemic policies and resources, including:

- the development of accessible teacher professional resources
- a commitment to cross-sectoral and interagency collaboration
- ongoing comprehensive professional development
- clearly aligned pre-service teacher education.



## Phases of learning

QSA syllabuses and guidelines are developed for three phases of learning: early, middle and senior. Each phase of learning consistently and sequentially builds the goals for excellence and equity.

Syllabuses and guidelines developed in phases recognise that students progress at different rates, and that learning at different phases of schooling occurs in different ways.

Although each phase of learning has a specific developmental focus, all phases have a common aim — to promote the continued development of the knowledge, understandings and skills that students need to become:

- knowledge workers who can work with knowledge in creative, critical and innovative ways
- confident individuals who can interact with others, act autonomously and manage themselves
- responsible citizens who can work with communities and manage the rights, responsibilities and duties of citizenship.

Each phase merges to the next and, at the points of transition, the particular characteristics of the different phases may be present simultaneously.

### Early phase (Prep–Year 3)

The focus in the early phase is access. The emphasis is on the knowledge, understandings and skills for success at school, and includes literacy, numeracy, social and emotional competence, health and physical wellbeing, and active learning processes.

Learning P–3 provides teachers with linked curriculum resources that are the basis for teaching, learning, assessment and reporting in the early phase. The following resources support transition from Prep to Year 1 and build continuity throughout the early years:

- *Early Years Curriculum Guidelines (EYCG)*
- Year 1 Learning Statements
- Essential Learnings for key learning areas by the end of Year 3
- Standards
- P–3 Literacy and Numeracy Indicators.

Complimentary resources such as the Assessment Bank and the scope and sequence guides for Mathematics and aspects of English provide support for teachers' planning.

### Middle phase (Years 4–9)

The focus in the middle phase is engagement. The emphasis is on continuing literacy and numeracy development and learning focused on the key learning areas (KLAs): The Arts, English, Health and Physical Education, Languages other than English, Mathematics, Science, Studies of Society and Environment, and Technology.

In the middle phase, teaching and learning, assessment and reporting are based on:

- Essential Learnings for each of the KLAs at the end of Years 3, 5, 7 and 9<sup>4</sup>
- Standards
- the Assessment Bank, an online collection of assessment instruments and resources linked to the Essential Learnings and Standards
- Queensland Comparable Assessment Tasks (QCATs) for English, Mathematics and Science in Years 4, 6 and 9
- *Guidelines for Reporting* using a five-point scale (A–E or equivalent).

### Senior phase (Years 10–12)

The focus in the senior phase is on multiple pathways. Transition to the full range of post-school destinations — further education and training, work and citizenship — is facilitated by a variety of learning pathways. At this time, students focus on learning achievements that lead to certification, i.e. the QCE or the QCIA.

In the senior phase, QSA syllabuses and guidelines are part of the wide range of specialised learning options from which schools select and plan their curriculum. QSA syllabuses and guidelines include:

- *Year 10 Guidelines*, which provides information and advice focused on students' transition from the middle phase to the flexibility and choice that is a feature of the senior phase of learning
- Years 11 and 12 syllabuses and SASs (including nationally endorsed training packages), which are the basis for a broad range of elective study focusing on pathways

<sup>4</sup> The KLA syllabuses are an additional resource which may assist planning.

to further education, training, work and citizenship

- structured workplace or community-based learning projects and individual learning projects.

These are complemented by learning options provided by other learning and training organisations, for example:

- vocational education and training (VET) qualifications, from training packages or accredited courses
- recognised programs and courses of study and school-based subjects
- university study while still at school.

Resources that help schools to assist students to plan and monitor their progress through the senior phase include:

- the Senior Education and Training (SET) plan which helps students structure their learning throughout their senior phase of learning
- the Career Information Service (CIS) through which students can check their Learning Accounts.

## Syllabus content: what is taught

QSA syllabuses and guidelines identify the content standards or required learning that is expected of students.

The content standards establish continuity of learning across P–12. Where necessary, especially at key transition points, there are some overlaps. The content standards across syllabuses and guidelines explicitly describe the learning and valued knowledge that supports students to become knowledge workers, confident individuals and responsible citizens.

The content standards include appropriate representations of different kinds of cultural knowledge and experience. The QSA embeds Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, viewing and relating to the world. These perspectives acknowledge the viewpoints of Indigenous people on time, place and people within local, regional, national and global contexts. Individual and community experiences, learning, cultural beliefs and values inform these viewpoints.

Using the following documents, as grouped in the early, middle and senior phases, teachers identify the curriculum intent and sequence teaching strategies to meet the needs and interests of their students.

EARLY PHASE <

## Learning P–3

From Prep to Year 3, the learning builds sequentially to support children through three key transition points: from home to school, from Prep into Year 1 and from Year 3 into Year 4.

In the early phase, teachers build their curriculum using:

- **Early Years Curriculum Guidelines (EYCG).** These are designed around five early learning areas that have been shown to influence children's school readiness and future success at school learning – social and personal learning, health and physical learning, language learning and communication, early mathematical understandings, and active learning processes
- **Year 1 Learning Statements.** These build continuity between Prep and Year 1 by linking the early learning areas and active learning processes to the Essential Learnings for the key learning areas by the end of Year 3. The Year 1 Learning Statements clarify what is important for children to know, understand and be able to do by the end of Year 1.

Teachers' professional capacity is supported by:

- **P–3 Literacy and Numeracy Indicators.** These help teachers monitor and map children's progress by identifying what children are expected to know, understand and be able to do by the end of Prep and Years 1, 2 and 3

## Early learning areas > Key learning areas

Prep	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Social & personal learning			
Health & physical learning			Health & Physical Education (HPE)
Language learning & communication			Languages
			English
Early mathematical understanding			Mathematics
			Science
Active learning processes			Studies of Society & Environment (SOSE)
			Technology
			The Arts



- **Assessment Bank.** This is an online collection of assessment instruments and resources.
- **Scope and sequence guides** for Mathematics and aspects of English, which provide additional detail to support planning.

## Years 1–9 Essential Learnings and Standards for KLAs

Across Years 1 to 9, the Essential Learnings and Standards (incorporating National Statements of Learning) are the starting point for school-based curriculum decision making.

In the middle phase, teachers build their curriculum using:

- **Essential Learnings.** These build increasing complexity across Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, and specify an agreed core of what should be taught and what is important for students to have opportunities to know, understand and be able to do. The Essential Learnings describe the focus of teaching and learning in eight KLAs organised around the dimensions of:
  - Knowledge and understanding, describing the essential concepts, facts and procedures of the KLA
  - Ways of working, describing the processes and capabilities that students use to develop and demonstrate their knowledge and understanding.

The Essential Learnings have a sequential structure and design that help schools to plan integrated and connected curriculum programs. KLA syllabuses provide an additional resource to assist planning.

- **Standards.** These are achievement standards that are linked to the Essential Learnings and reflect the two dimensions of Knowledge and understanding and Ways of working. The Standards provide a common language to describe the expected qualities of student work and describe achievement for reporting. The Standards are the basis for school-based assessment and help teachers make on-balance consistent judgments about how well students have demonstrated what they know, understand and can do.

Teachers' professional capacity is supported by the:

- **Assessment Bank**, which is an online collection of assessment instruments and resources linked to the Essential Learnings and Standards
- **Queensland Comparable Assessment Tasks (QCATs)** for English, Mathematics and Science in Years 4, 6 and 9, which give teachers information about student learning in a selection of Essential Learnings and promote consistency of teacher judgments
- **Scope and sequence guides** for Mathematics and aspects of English which provide additional detail to support planning

## Key learning areas > Year 10 learning areas

Years 1–9	Year 10
Health & Physical Education (HPE) >	HPE
Languages >	Languages
English >	English
Mathematics >	Mathematics
Science >	Science
Studies of Society & Environment (SOSE) >	History
	Geography
	Business
Technology >	Technology
The Arts >	The Arts

- **Guidelines for Reporting**, which provide advice to school sectors about reporting student achievement and progress in Queensland schools. The Guidelines support consistency of reporting about student achievement using a five-point scale (A–E or equivalent).

## Year 10 Guidelines

The *Year 10 Guidelines* gives information and advice to support the transition from the middle to the senior phase of learning. The ten learning areas in the Guidelines help teachers make curriculum decisions about Year 10 courses of study that orient young people to the flexibility and choice that is a feature of the senior phase of learning.

In Year 10, teachers build their curriculum using:

- **Year 10 learning areas** that have learning statements, setting out what students are expected to know, understand and be able to do by the end of Year 10. The learning statements establish a solid foundation for the full range of senior subjects and other learning options by:
  - linking key aspects of the Year 9 Essential Learnings to the disciplinary concepts, facts, procedures and processes in the senior syllabuses through the learning organisers that use the dimensions of Knowledge and understanding and Ways of working
  - maintaining the focus on the capabilities by embedding the cross-curriculum learning of the Essential Learnings and the Common Curriculum Elements (CCEs) of the senior syllabuses
  - continuing the development of literacy and numeracy skills
- **achievement standards** that link to the learning statements, and describe the expected qualities of student work and achievement for reporting.

Teachers' professional capacity is supported by:

- **assessment advice** in each learning area, describing techniques and instruments that prepare students for the assessment demands in Years 11 and 12
- **Year 10 achievement standards**, from which criteria sheets/guides to making judgments can be developed to suit the course structure and individual assessment techniques

- **general information** that establishes the foundation on which young people can make decisions about their choices in Years 11 and 12 including:
  - the Senior Education and Training (SET) Plan (or equivalent) and options for the development of a career development and work education course
  - vocational education and training (VET) that can start in Year 10
  - certification and beginning to bank credit towards a QCE
  - Queensland Core Skills Test and strategies for developing the CCEs.

## Years 11–12

In the final two years of formal schooling, students select from a broad range of elective studies that focus on multiple pathways to further education, training, work and active participation in democratic society.

For Years 11 and 12, schools organise their curriculum using a range of learning options including:

- **syllabuses**, from which Authority subjects are developed
- **SASs**, from which Authority-registered subjects are developed (which may include nationally endorsed VET training packages)
- **VET qualifications from training packages or accredited courses**
- **structured workplace or community-based learning programs** and **individual learning projects** developed to suit individual learning needs and that focus on lifelong learning and employability skills
- **recognised programs and courses** that are developed and assessed by organisations recognised by the QSA
- **recognised school-based subjects**
- **syllabuses for the Senior External Examination**
- **university courses undertaken while still at school.**

In the Years 11–12 QSA syllabuses and SASs, what is required to be taught and what is important for students to have opportunities to know, understand and be able to do is expressed as the general objectives. The required learning is reinforced by the scope of learning which includes course requirements, core topics and mandatory aspects.

These requirements are balanced by choices made by schools from the significant aspects of the syllabus, including elective topics and recommended elements. Through a broad range of contexts for learning represented by different subjects, there is continued focus on:

- capabilities through the Common Curriculum Elements (CCEs) and employability skills
- higher-order thinking as the foundation for work, training and higher education
- increased responsibility and independence in learning
- literacy and numeracy culminating in the requirements for the QCE.

Recognised programs and courses meet QSA criteria and standards to ensure that the learning and assessment is at an appropriate standard and enhances further learning, employment or community engagement.

## Assessment, standards and consistency: what is assessed and reported

Assessment is the purposeful, systematic and ongoing collection of information about student learning.

QSA syllabuses and guidelines apply the principle that assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. The main purposes of an assessment program are:

- promoting, assisting and improving teaching and learning
- helping students achieve the highest standards they can
- providing parents and carers with meaningful information on students' achievements and information for reporting and certification.

Assessment in QSA syllabuses and guidelines are based on the following:

- **Alignment of teaching, learning, assessment and reporting.** Research shows that quality learning outcomes for students are best produced when what is taught informs what is assessed, and when what is assessed forms the basis of what is reported.
- **School-based assessment.** Queensland teachers use the processes and requirements outlined in the syllabuses and guidelines to design continuous school-based assessment programs and make judgments about standards achieved by their students, including summative judgments for reporting purposes.
- **Standards-based assessment.** The syllabuses and guidelines include clear and specific content and achievement standards. Teacher judgment is guided by achievement standards that are fixed reference points used to describe how well students have achieved the objectives or the Essential Learnings. The standards are developed from student work and describe the characteristics of student work.
- **Consistency of teacher judgment.** Informed teacher judgment is at the heart of good assessment practice. Consistency of teacher judgment — making consistent judgments about students' achievements within and between schools — occurs when teachers engage in professional dialogue to discuss and analyse the connections between

standards and student work. Each syllabus and guideline indicates where systemic standardised testing programs and mandated moderated assessment are linked to required learning. This guides the development of systemic, school and classroom assessment and moderation (where appropriate), that is based on informed teacher judgments about consistency of students' achievements within and across schools.

Using the following documents and processes, teachers develop school-based assessment aligned with their curriculum and the standards.

### Learning P–3

The assessment advice during the early years emphasises that:

- judgments about children's learning are based on demonstrations of their learning over time, as their learning varies from day to day and from context to context
- evidence should be linked to planned learning experiences and provide feedback to children about their learning.

Alignment of teaching, learning and assessment in the early years is achieved by teachers planning for learning and assessment using:

- Early Learning Statements in the **Early Years Curriculum Guidelines**
- **Year 1 Learning Statements**
- **Essential Learnings** that describe focuses for learning across Years 2–3
- relevant assessment from the **Assessment Bank**.

Progress and achievement in the early years are described using the:

- Early Learning Record in Prep
- **Standards** in relation to Years 1–3
- **P–3 Literacy and Numeracy Indicators**.

Consistency of teachers' judgments is developed by:

- using the Early Learning Record to map children's progress
- monitoring literacy and numeracy progress using **P–3 Literacy and Numeracy Indicators**
- moderating and validating judgments about children's progress in literacy and numeracy, using resources developed by the QSA and available on the Assessment Bank.

### Years 1–9 Essential Learnings and Standards for KLAs

Teachers' capacity to develop quality assessment instruments is enhanced by access to clearly specified statements of Essential Learnings and Standards. These are the basis on which teachers develop assessment aligned to their teaching and learning.

Alignment is developed through assessable elements that connect the two dimensions, Ways of working and Knowledge and understanding, and:

- identify the valued features of a KLA about which evidence of student learning is collected and assessed
- provide the link between the Essential Learnings and the Standards in assessment
- are used to make judgments about the quality of student achievement.

Content and achievement standards provide a common language to describe the quality of student achievement and connect the Essential Learnings to assessment and reporting practices. The Standards:

- reflect the two dimensions of the Essential Learnings, Ways of working and Knowledge and understanding
- describe how well a student has demonstrated their learning
- describe the features of performance for A–E
- are used to develop task-specific guides to making judgments and to report.

Consistency of teachers' judgments is supported by:

- the **Assessment Bank**, which models quality assessment instruments using task-specific assessable elements developed from the Ways of working and Knowledge and understanding. Annotated student sample responses build consistency of teacher judgments
- **Queensland Comparable Assessment Tasks (QCATs)**, which are designed to provide evidence of what students know, understand and can do in relation to a selection of Essential Learnings for English, Mathematics and Science in Years 4, 6 and 9. Consistency of teacher judgment is promoted through focused discussions to consider the task-specific descriptors and how closely the evidence in the student work matches them.

The **Guidelines for Reporting** present school sectors with advice on reporting student achievement and progress for Years 1–9 using a five-point scale (A–E or equivalent).

## Year 10 Guidelines

The **Year 10 Guidelines** have advice about tasks and assessment conditions that build familiarity with the assessment demands in senior subjects. As Year 10 is the beginning of the senior phase, assessment is:

- diagnostic — to determine students' strengths and needs as a basis for providing appropriate feedback or intervention
- formative — to improve learning and assist students' transition to the senior phase of learning
- summative — to indicate standards at particular points for reporting purposes.

Alignment is established by linking the achievement standards to the learning statements.

The achievement standards are reference points that describe how well students have achieved the learning statements. The achievement standards in the **Year 10 Guidelines** draw on the Years 1–9 and Years 11–12 standards frameworks, and relate to the assessable elements of the Essential Learnings and the dimensions of the Years 11–12 syllabuses.

Year 10 achievement standards can be used for reporting an overall result for a course of study.

## Years 11–12

Assessment in the different learning options available in Years 11 and 12 matches the learning being undertaken:

- **syllabuses and SASs** — continuous school-based standards-based assessment
- **VET** — competency-based assessment
- recognised courses — a range of approaches devised by the learning provider
- **structured workplace or community-based learning programs and individual learning projects** — assessment appropriate to the project, generally focused on lifelong learning and employability skills
- **Senior External Examination** — point-in-time examination, standards-based assessment.

In the syllabuses and SASs, alignment is developed through the standards which are described in the same dimensions as the assessable general objectives of the syllabus. The dimensions identify the valued features of the subject about which evidence of student learning is collected and assessed.

The achievement standards are fixed reference points, A–E, to describe how well students have achieved the assessable general objectives. The standard awarded is an on-balance judgment about how the qualities of the student's work match the standards descriptors in each dimension.

Consistency of teachers' judgments is developed through social moderation. This involves ensuring the quality of assessment instruments and the comparability of standards through:

- review panel meetings of expert teachers for Authority subjects
- formal meetings of teachers and consensus social moderation for Authority-registered subjects.

In addition, planning for teaching and developing assessment programs is supported by exemplar assessment instruments and annotated samples of student responses.

Continuous school-based assessment is used for determining individual achievements of students with impairments or difficulties in learning, as reported on the Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement.



# Overview of Learning P-12 — an integrated approach

Learning P–12 describes the key components of the QSA’s P–12 approach to teaching, learning and assessment for excellence and equity.

The P–12 approach is underpinned by “low-definition” syllabus design principles and elements based on informed prescription and informed professionalism.

The *phases of learning* guide the development of QSA documents. Each phase has a specific developmental focus — access in the early phase, engagement in the middle phase and pathways in the senior phase.

*Identifying curriculum* focuses on the syllabus content (expected learning) and sets the parameters for the intended curriculum. It establishes continuity of learning across P–12, ensuring that studies undertaken in the early and middle phases provide every opportunity for success in the senior phase.

*Aligning with assessment* and *Building consistency* show how standards-based school-based assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process.

In the following QSA documents, content and achievement standards establish the conditions for teachers to exercise their professional expertise and judgment about how best to promote student learning:

- Learning P–3 — establishes a better preparation for learning in the early phase
  - *Early Years Curriculum Guidelines*
  - Year 1 Learning Statements
  - Essential Learnings and Standards for key learning areas by the end of Year 3
  - P–3 Literacy and Numeracy Indicators
- Years 1–9 Essential Learnings and Standards for key learning areas — strengthen learning in the middle phase
  - *Year 10 Guidelines* — builds Year 10 as the transition to the senior phase
  - Years 11 and 12 syllabuses and study area specifications (SASs), which incorporate nationally endorsed VET training packages. These products provide young people in the senior phase with flexible options to achieve a Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) or a Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement (QCIA).

LEARNING P-12															
PHASES OF LEARNING	Early phase ACCESS			Middle phase ENGAGEMENT				Senior phase PATHWAYS							
	Prep	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12		
IDENTIFYING CURRICULUM Teachers identify curriculum focus using content standards	Learning P-3 Essential Learnings Year 1 Learning Statements <i>Early Years Curriculum Guidelines</i>			Years 2-3			Years 1-9 Essential Learnings for KLAs						Year 10 Guidelines		Syllabuses & SASSs incl. nationally endorsed training packages
ALIGNING WITH ASSESSMENT Teachers decide what evidence demonstrates students' learning and make judgments based on standards															
BUILDING CONSISTENCY Teachers engage in social moderation															
	Early Learning Record	P-3 Literacy & Numeracy Indicators		Queensland Comparable Assessment Tasks (QCATs) for English, Mathematics and Science at Years 4, 6 & 9			Standards > School-based, standards-based assessment			Assessment Bank			Subject support materials		
													External moderation incl. approved work programs & study plans		



# Glossary

## Assessment

Assessment is the purposeful, systematic and ongoing collection of evidence about student learning. It involves judging which standard on a five-point scale best represents the characteristics of a student's achievement.

## Course of study

A course of study is the learning program developed at the individual school level. It is the school-based interpretation and implementation of the syllabus or guideline.

## Curriculum

Curriculum is a school responsibility. The curriculum is the sum of the learning and development experiences that are offered by a school, formally or informally, in class and out of class. It is heavily influenced by the philosophy of learning that the school adopts. The QSA supplies materials that assist schools to plan and deliver their curriculum.

## Dimension (of a subject)

The dimensions are the salient characteristic or property of a subject or KLA.

## Essential Learnings

Essential Learnings identify what should be taught and what is important for students to have opportunities to know, understand and be able to do. They describe the ways of working, and knowledge and understanding that students need for ongoing learning, social and personal competence, and participation in a democratic society.

## Guideline

A guideline provides advice and information to assist schools and teachers to plan courses of study.

## Key learning areas (KLAs)

KLAs are the eight nationally agreed learning areas that form the common curriculum for the compulsory years of schooling (Prep to Year 10). These are: The Arts, English, Health and Physical Education, Languages other than English, Mathematics, Science, Studies of Society and Environment, and Technology.

## Moderation

Procedures to ensure that teacher judgments of standards achieved by students are comparable.

- **Social moderation** A type of moderation in which groups of teachers meet to reach consensus about the quality of assessment instruments and the judgments of standards.

## On-balance judgment

A teacher's decision about the standard that best matches the quality of a student's work overall, either for a single assessment instrument or across the entire course of study.

## Reporting

Reporting is the provision of a summary statement of student learning to a range of audiences, in differing forms, for various purposes.

## School subject

A school subject is a distinct, purpose-built and targeted unit of study. It is built by selecting from particular disciplines and applied fields of knowledge and by responding to different social, cultural and political demands and challenges. The relationship between the school subject and disciplinary or applied fields of knowledge varies depending on the phase of learning. A school subject may draw upon the stances, principles, procedures, goals and aims of particular academic disciplines, but they are not academic disciplines.

## Standards

- **Content standards** are statements of what students are expected to know and do by the end of key junctures of schooling, variously called essential learnings or objectives, and the scope of that learning, called core content, knowledge and understanding and ways of working or subject matter.
- **Achievement standards** are fixed reference points that describe the expected qualities of student work in relation to the outcomes, essential learnings or objectives in syllabuses.

## Syllabus

A syllabus is an official "map" of a school subject. It provides teachers with:

- a rationale and outline of the school subject
- an overview and specification of what should be taught and learned
- guidance on applying centralised standards to assess students, and to ensure that classroom and school-level assessment aligns with systemic practices.

The syllabus is not the curriculum and is not used to drive other things, e.g. pedagogy. Syllabuses are developed to allow schools to make professional decisions about curriculum delivery, to innovate, adapt and tailor delivery to match the local context and to suit the goals, aspirations and abilities of their students.

## Syllabus framework

A syllabus framework provides syllabus developers, schooling sectors and school staff responsible for whole-school planning with a common understanding and logic to support the development of syllabuses, the professional development of teachers and the planning of school curriculum.

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