



Review of the Australian Curriculum

The Australian Curriculum provides teachers and parents with a clear understanding of what needs to be covered as children progress through school from Foundation to Year 12.

Some states and territories have implemented the Australian Curriculum in its original form, while others have merged it into their own curriculum frameworks.

All states and territories had substantially implemented the Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum for English, mathematics, science and history by the end of 2013.

Curriculum and school authorities in each state and territory are able to make decisions about how the Australian Curriculum is implemented in their schools.

Review of the Australian Curriculum

The Australian Government established a Review of the Australian Curriculum in January 2014.

The Review was set up to look into the robustness, independence and balance in the curriculum's development and content. The Government wanted to know if the curriculum was delivering what students need, and what parents expect, in an increasingly competitive world.

Review Findings

The reviewers spoke with key stakeholders, received almost 1600 submissions from the general public, reviewed national and international research and commissioned 15 reports from subject matter specialists as part of their Review.

They delivered a Preliminary Report to the Government in March 2014.

The Final Report, made publicly available in October 2014, made 30 key recommendations for improving the Australian Curriculum.

The reviewers found that there was support for the Australian Curriculum, but that improvements were needed.

Overall, they found that:

- there is too much content, particularly in the primary school years
- some aspects make teaching the Australian Curriculum complicated and may need to be reconsidered
- there appear to be content gaps in some subjects
- parents want to be more closely involved in what their children learn at school
- the Australian Curriculum needs to be more inclusive, particularly of students with disability
- a vision statement for the Australian Curriculum should be written to guide its future development



- there were mixed views on the role, function and governance of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).

Initial Australian Government Response

The Australian Government's initial response to the Review of the Australian Curriculum focuses on five themes:

Fixing the overcrowded curriculum

Many people have said the current curriculum is overcrowded – that it contains too much content, particularly in primary school. The Government believes this is an important issue that must be addressed.

Making it easier for parents to engage with the curriculum

We know that children do better when their parents are involved in their education.

The Review recommended education authorities provide new tools, for example, plain English information on websites, to help parents understand what their child is meant to be learning at school. The Government strongly supports ways of making it easier for parents to become involved in their child's education.

Improving access for all students

The Review highlighted the need for the curriculum to be more accessible for students, especially those with disability. The Government fully supports efforts to make education more inclusive for students with disability and/or additional needs.

Rebalancing the curriculum

The Review makes recommendations about the need to rebalance the curriculum to make sure what students are learning is

appropriate, and that there are no gaps in what they are taught. For example, the Review recommends an increased emphasis on phonics in early years reading.

The Government supports this recommendation and believes changes that rebalance the content of the Australian Curriculum should be referred to education experts.

Reviewing the way ACARA works

The Government supports recommendations to change the way the body that develops the Australian Curriculum (ACARA) operates.

Next steps

The Australian Government wants to make sure we get the curriculum right.

We need to work with the state and territory governments to consider the Review's recommendations before we take any action.

We know students do best in schools that have quality teaching, support parent involvement, have appropriate decision making at the local school level, and an effective curriculum.

The Australian Government is focussing on these key areas so there can be real improvements where it counts — in the classroom, in what students learn and in what they achieve.

Further information

Information on the Review including the Final Report of the Review of the Australian Curriculum, Initial Australian Government Response, public submissions and subject matter specialist reports are available on the *Students First* website at: www.studentsfirst.gov.au.

