

Understanding the achievement standards and content descriptions

Prep–Year 10

Achievement standards

The Australian Curriculum achievement standards provide a fixed frame of reference and a shared language to use when describing student achievement. For each learning area or subject, the achievement standards are a statement of what students should know and be able to do at the end of the year or band of years.

The achievement standards describe a broad sequence of expected learning (across P–10) and are organised into two paragraphs. The first paragraph typically relates to understanding and the second paragraph to skills. Achievement standards emphasise the depth of conceptual understanding, sophistication of skills and ability to apply essential knowledge students typically demonstrate at the end of each year or band of years.

In Queensland, all schooling sectors collaboratively decided that the achievement standard is the C standard (or equivalent) against which judgments are made on a five-point scale (commonly A–E).

Content descriptions and elaborations

The content descriptions for each year or band of years inform understanding of the achievement standard. They specify the knowledge, understanding and skills that guide what teachers are expected to teach, and students are expected to learn in order to progress. They do not prescribe approaches to teaching.

Content elaborations are a useful resource to illustrate and exemplify content and assist teachers in developing a common understanding of the content descriptions. They are not a requirement for teaching the Australian Curriculum.

Organisation of learning area achievement standards and content descriptions

There are many common structural curriculum elements within the Australian Curriculum learning areas. There are, however, structural differences in how the achievement standards and content descriptions are organised for each learning area, as outlined in the table below.

Learning area	Achievement standard		Content descriptions	
	Learning area	Subject	Knowledge and understanding	Skills
English	Changes by year	n/a	Changes by year	
Health and Physical Education	Changes by band	n/a	Changes by band	
Humanities and Social Sciences	Changes by year (available for Prep–Year 6/7 only)	Changes by year (available for Prep–Year 10)	Changes by year	Changes by band
Languages	n/a	Changes by band	Changes by band	
Mathematics	Changes by year	n/a	Changes by year	
Science	Changes by year	n/a	Changes by year	Changes by band
Technologies	Changes by band	Changes by band	Changes by band	
The Arts	Changes by band	Changes by band	Changes by band	
Work Studies — Years 9 & 10 (optional)	Changes by year	n/a	Changes by year	

Information adapted from the Australian Curriculum version 8.4.

In Humanities and Social Sciences, Technologies and The Arts, achievement standards are provided both at a learning area level and for each subject within the learning area. Languages only provide achievement standards for each subject within the learning area.

This resource may be used in conjunction with the learning area overviews and presentations to support teachers when planning for teaching, learning and assessment.