

Embedding the general capabilities

The Australian Curriculum supports students to meet the demands of the 21st century by providing them with opportunities to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed community members.

The general capabilities, together with the learning areas and the cross-curriculum priorities, form part of the Australian Curriculum's three-dimensional curriculum design. Through embedding the general capabilities in Prep to Year 10, schools can equip their students with the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions they need now and for the future.

Understanding the general capabilities

The Australian Curriculum has seven general capabilities:

- Critical and creative thinking
- Digital literacy
- Ethical understanding
- Intercultural understanding
- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Personal and social capability.

Organisation of the capabilities

Each general capability contains:

- an introduction that provides a description of the capability and a rationale for its inclusion in the Australian Curriculum
- a structure that includes organising elements
- key connections that identify how the general capability can be developed within the context of learning areas
- a glossary providing definitions of terms used in the general capability.

Structure of the capabilities

Each general capability is presented as either a learning continuum or a learning progression with elements and sub-elements.

Learning continua

Learning continua have been developed for five of the seven general capabilities — Critical and creative thinking, Digital literacy, Ethical understanding, Intercultural understanding and Personal and social capability.

The learning continua map:

- each capability's knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions, and alignment to specific years of schooling
- the common paths for each of the elements and sub-elements across six levels.

Table 1: Alignment of the general capabilities to the year levels

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
Prep	Years 1–2	Years 3–4	Years 5–6	Years 7–8	Years 9–10

An additional level is provided within Level 1 for Personal and social capability. The additional descriptions in Level 1a are designed to support teachers to personalise learning for students with disability.

Learning progressions

Learning progressions describe the learning pathways for literacy and numeracy. The progressions describe the fine-grained development of skills, knowledge and dispositions across varying numbers of levels for different sub-elements. The content and levels in the progressions are aligned to the English and Mathematics curriculum, although literacy and numeracy are fundamental for success in all learning areas.

The progressions:

- describe pathways along which students typically progress, regardless of age or year level
- articulate observable indicators of increasing complexity
- support teachers to ascertain the stage of learning reached, identify gaps in skills and knowledge and plan next steps
- provide a conceptual tool to assist in the development of targeted teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy for students who are working at, above, or below year-level expectations.

The relationship between the general capabilities and learning area content

The general capabilities are designed to be developed within and through the discipline-specific content of the eight learning areas. They provide an avenue to present learning in ways that enrich and deepen student engagement with learning area content.

Some general capabilities are essential to, and best developed within, specific learning areas. Other general capabilities support learning in any learning area. Appendix 1 provides a table summary where icons have been used to indicate alignment of the content descriptions with the general capabilities, indicating where they can be developed in authentic ways.

Planning to use the general capabilities

Planned learning opportunities specifically target each of the general capabilities and the associated skills where appropriate.

When planning a unit of work, teachers are encouraged to:

- select the relevant aspect of the achievement standard and content descriptions to be addressed
- consider the unit's focus and context for learning
- identify authentic connections with the general capabilities and select the general capability, or capabilities, that will support depth of learning area content
- select and sequence learning activities within the teaching and learning plan where the general capability can be developed and used to reinforce learning outcomes
- incorporate learning activities that model the general capability so that students can see the understandings being enacted and the skills being used
- provide opportunities for students to practise the general capability's skills and provide informal feedback to students about their progress toward developing the general capability.

Further information

The QCAA has developed the following resources to support teachers when planning teaching and learning:

- level overviews and learning continua, which map connections to learning area content descriptions. Level overviews show the development of the general capabilities within a single year level. Learning continua are labelled from Level 1–6 to present a sequence of learning independent of year levels. Level overviews and learning continua are provided for Critical and creative thinking, Digital literacy, Ethical understanding, Intercultural understanding and Personal and social capability
- Literacy and Numeracy progressions advice documents, which provide further guidance on how to use the progressions
- mapping documents, which are provided to show where the general capabilities can be developed within
 - learning areas
 - Prep – Year 2
 - Years 3–4
 - Years 5–6
 - Years 7–10
- *Planning for teaching, learning and assessment: Prep–Year 10*, which provides advice on using six interdependent elements for curriculum planning and assessment.

For more information and to access these resources, see the [QCAA website](#).

Appendix 1: Connections of the general capabilities to learning areas

Within the curriculum, icons have been used with content descriptions to identify where general capabilities can support and deepen student engagement and learning. The following table provides an overview of where icons will be found within the learning area content descriptions.

Learning areas and subjects	Critical and creative thinking	Digital literacy	Ethical understanding	Intercultural understanding	Literacy	Numeracy	Personal and social capability
English	•		•	•	•		•
Health and Physical Education (HPE)	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS)							
HASS P–6	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Civics and Citizenship 7–10	•		•	•	•		•
Economics and Business 7–10	•		•		•	•	•
Geography 7–10	•	•	•	•	•		•
History 7–10	•		•	•	•		•
Languages	•	•		•	•		•
Mathematics	•	•	•		•	•	
Science	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Technologies							
Design and Technologies	•	•	•		•	•	•
Digital Technologies	•	•	•		•	•	•
The Arts							
Dance	•		•	•	•	•	•
Drama	•		•	•	•		•
Media Arts	•	•	•	•	•		•
Music	•		•	•	•		•
Visual Arts	•		•	•	•	•	•

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