

Queensland response to the draft F–12 Australian Curriculum: Geography

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Introduction

The Queensland Studies Authority (QSA), in partnership with Education Queensland (EQ), Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) and Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ), appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft Foundation (F)¹ to Year 12 Australian Curriculum: Geography. Queensland supports the development of an Australian Curriculum that will provide consistent and explicit curriculum expectations across the nation.

This response is a summary of the collated Queensland feedback from:

- representative curriculum and learning area committees of the QSA
- professional associations
- representatives and advocates of the three schooling sectors, representing 1400 EQ schools, 290 Catholic schools and 188 Independent schools.

Queensland's consultation identified a range of strengths, key issues and concerns, and also provided some suggested ways forward for ACARA's consideration when redrafting the Australian Curriculum: Geography.

This response has been organised to reflect the structure of the consultation survey:

- Organisation
- Foundation to Year 10
- Senior secondary
- General capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities

The stakeholders who contributed to the Queensland response support the development of an Australian Curriculum in Geography and acknowledge that inherent in its development is the redefining and refocusing of the study of Geography in Australian schools.

The feedback on which this response is based acknowledges that this consultation draft shows considerable progress from the draft presented to stakeholders in mid-2011.

In addition to contributing to the Queensland response, QCEC and ISQ have elected to submit their own responses to ACARA. These responses contain detailed feedback on each aspect of the draft curriculum.

Strengths

The draft F–12 Australian Curriculum: Geography generally provides a clear approach to the teaching of Geography across F–12, and:

- is generally accessible to a range of audiences, from primary teachers to specialist teachers of Geography
- emphasises investigation by foregrounding the teaching of geography inquiry skills, culminating in participation and action
- clearly identifies the key concepts of *place*, *space* and *environment* in the organisation of content descriptions in F–6, as well as making explicit the concepts of *interconnection*, *sustainability*, *scale* and *change* in the content descriptions in Years 7–10 and Years 11–12
- potentially provides a comprehensive global education with opportunities for students to explore the world at a range of levels

¹ The Foundation Year (F) of the Australian Curriculum is Prep (P) in Queensland and refers to the year before Year 1. Children beginning Prep in January are required to be five years of age by 30 June.

- introduces students to a discipline-based approach to the study of Geography through human and physical geography topics, as well as economic, cultural and environmental geography topics in Years 7–12
- provides an approach and focus of content descriptions in F–6 that is consistent with current practice in schools
- provides a workable approach to curriculum organisation in Years 7–10 that is likely to appeal to teachers and students (though revision is necessary, especially the renaming of “units” as depth studies or inquiries to build consistency with other Humanities and Social Sciences subjects)
- makes explicit expectations for the teaching of spatial technologies in the teaching of Geography
- allows for the development of the general capabilities
- makes explicit expectations for the teaching of the cross-curriculum priority Sustainability
- uses “explore”, “analyse” and “explain” as a way of describing Geography’s processes as outlined in the rationales in F–12 and senior secondary, which provides insight into thinking geographically
- offers a number of options and case studies from which to select and develop an appropriate school-based program
- provides opportunities for fieldwork in many of the topics, which is a key component in the study of Geography.

Foundation to Year 10

The rationale and aims have improved significantly. The rationale is clearly structured and easy to read. It sets out the multiple perspectives on Geography as a learning area. It places a strong emphasis in both the rationale and the aims on students developing a sense of curiosity and wonder for our world as they study Geography.

2.1.1 Structure of the curriculum

Consultation supported the:

- The curriculum focus for each band of schooling
- attention to both field work and the inquiry process — the unpacking of the inquiry and how it is used in the organisation of the content — supports students to develop the specific skills referred to in the Geographical Inquiry and Skills strand. Using the heading Geographical Inquiry and Skills in the construction of the curriculum is likely to be very helpful, particularly for primary teachers
- attempt to define the seven concepts — for the primary years, it is appropriate that the seven concepts are refined into three, i.e. *place*, *space* and *environment*. The definitions and explanations of the concepts for geographical understanding are likely to be valuable for teachers who have not had experience in teaching Geography as a distinct discipline. However, a lack of alignment between these concepts and other aspects of the curriculum is an issue. (Refer to the comments about alignment in Section 3.1.3.)

The following features are useful:

- The emphasis on reflection on thinking and learning represented in the content descriptions, including the Reflecting and responding sub-strand, and in the achievement standards across F–10.
- The banding of the Geographical Inquiry and Skills strand into two-year junctures (as modelled by the Australian Curriculum: Science and History).
- The “big ideas” used as organisers for year levels that ensure a clear framework for the curriculum.

2.1.2 Content descriptions

Consultation supported the development of content descriptions that:

- use a consistent structure across F–6 that will assist teachers in using the curriculum
- are pitched appropriately in F–2
- appropriately explore local and more distant places in F–2
- acknowledge that “reflecting” is valued as a part of a comprehensive inquiry process by including the Reflecting and responding sub-strand in the Geographical Inquiry and Skills strand and by embedding “reflecting” and “responding” as a powerful part of geographical imagination and geographical thinking
- are well organised in Year 7, but have units that should be renamed as “depth studies” or “inquiries” to build consistency with other Humanities subjects — this is encouraged for other year levels as well
- use an encompassing “big idea” to establish the year level description — the big idea has some connection to the scales of study, although the idea of the multi-scalar perspective could be described in the Geographical Inquiry and Skills strand
- use the key concepts *place* and *space* as analytical perspectives to describe and structure the content descriptions of the Geography curriculum
- use “observing” as the starting point of any geographical inquiry process
- use “stewardship” in the explanation of the concept *environment*.

Senior secondary

The senior secondary rationale is comprehensive, captures the contribution of Geography to the education of young people and appropriately frames investigations as challenges rather than issues. The communication skills described in the rationale are excellent and capture the contribution of Geography to school learning.

The units outlined generally use different scales to explore relationships. Across the units, there is a balance of physical and human geography.

Despite these strengths, the senior secondary curriculum requires substantial development and broader consultation.

Key issues and concerns

The Australian Curriculum: History provides a comprehensive approach to the study of local, national and world history. The draft Australian Curriculum: Geography does not share this organisational approach. As a result, the clarity of a discipline-based approach may be lost when it is integrated in primary learning programs.

Organisation

The draft Australian Curriculum: Geography needs more specific direction as to what contexts or case studies students should study for each topic. This will ensure that the course organisation addresses the aim of having students develop a deep geographical knowledge of their own place, Australia, our region and the world.

More specific reference to the clear links between Geography and other learning areas is needed. For example, in the content descriptions about mapping, there should be clear links to the Australian Curriculum: Mathematics so that primary teachers can see the connections and understand the expectations across learning areas at a year level. A scan of the content descriptions in the Australian Curriculum: Mathematics, Science and History

is recommended to ensure inclusion of similar content and that its pitch for each year level matches. Additionally, when content overlaps with content in another learning area, there needs to be an explanation about how the content is specific to the discipline of Geography.

The curriculum should recognise that in many instances non-specialist teachers will be teaching the Geography curriculum. While the curriculum is generally accessible to non-specialists, some of the discipline specificity and subtlety may be lost on these teachers. For example, a geographer's approach to climate change will be very different to that of a teacher of another discipline, e.g. Science. The draft Australian Curriculum: Geography needs to be more mindful of this and include specific reference to how a geographer would approach the units. Using geographical terms more consistently would assist this issue.

Queensland has consistently provided feedback on the design specifications for the senior secondary Australian Curriculum. The current design specifications pose significant issues for the operation of Queensland's senior secondary assessment and certification system. The main issue is that the inclusion of units is incompatible with the definition of a subject and ACARA's charter to develop content and achievement standards. A unit is a construct of a course. The current Years 11–12 course organisation will limit the capacity of many Queensland secondary schools to offer composite classes, even though the units show no variation in complexity.

3.1.1 Concepts for geographical understanding

The key concepts as described in the rationale are *place*, *space* and *environment*. The addition of other concepts — *interconnection*, *sustainability*, *scale* and *change* — dilutes and confuses the structuring of Geography as a learning area.

Place, *space* and *environment* elaborate the major concepts and therefore the draft Australian Curriculum: Geography should reflect this relationship. For example, *place* is a key analytical perspective and within the explanation of this concept there are other useful elaborative concepts such as *landscape* and *scale*. Similarly, *space* as a key analytical perspective contains useful elaborative concepts such as *scale* and *dependency*.

The key concept of *environment* as defined in the draft Australian Curriculum: Geography is nearly synonymous with the concept of *place*. It is a term that is used too broadly in society to be useful to describe the Geography learning area. This broad use constructs Geography as a subject based on environmental issues, which is a backward step. Some explanations of *place* and *environment* are repeated or redundant. As established in the content descriptions, places are made up of different environments (that can also be classified as places). *Landscape* is a useful concept for elaborating the meaning of the concept *place*. *Systems* would be a more appropriate key concept to include in the concepts for geographical understanding.

The loss of *landscape* as a key concept of geographical understanding is an issue. This strongly indicates how the draft Australian Curriculum: Geography does not celebrate aesthetics and design as key aspects of geographical thinking and working. *Landscape* as an explanation and context enables teaching and learning programs to explore the ideas of the geographical imagination. The aesthetic appreciation and emotional attachment to particular landscapes is in part why people want to conserve and preserve particular places and their environments. *Landscape* is a useful concept in representing and interpreting the world and includes three layers: physical, biological and cultural.

An opportunity exists to provide greater coherence between definitions of the concepts and the integration of the two strands (Geographical Knowledge and Understanding and Geographical Inquiry and Skills). For example, the concept *place* talks about “progressing from describing the characteristics of places to explaining them”, whereas Foundation Geographical Knowledge and Understanding content descriptions addressing the concept of *place* refer to “features” and not “characteristics”. “Characteristics” is a more general

term and is used to describe typical or distinctive qualities, whereas “features” is a more specific reference to distinctive or characteristic parts. This distinction should be made clearer in the content descriptions. This inconsistency is also evident in the content description that expects students to be able to describe the key characteristics of familiar places, when they are not taught what a key characteristic is (assuming the reference is to natural and built characteristics, and what is distinct or typical about a place).

Sustainability is a philosophy and way of thinking about the world that is central to living well in this world, but is too broad to be useful in constructing a Geography curriculum. It is also a cross-curriculum priority, which has the potential to cause confusion.

3.1.2 Achievement standards

The following general concerns about the achievement standards were identified.

- Although the achievement standards have a clear structure based on the stated constructs of the curriculum, the F–10 content descriptions lack alignment to the achievement standards.
- The achievement standards are described in vague terms and as a summary of content rather than showing progression of learning and quality of performance.
- The achievement standards need to be connected to the Geographical Inquiry and Skills strand and the year level context.

3.1.3 Alignment

The following general concerns about alignment were identified.

- A lack of alignment can be discerned in some content descriptions and elaborations in relation to the Geographical Knowledge and Understanding and Geographical Inquiry and Skills strands.
- The use of three of the seven listed concepts for geographical understanding to organise the F–6 curriculum content is a confusing structure and indicates a lack of alignment between the rationale, aims, curriculum content and achievement standards.

3.1.4 Sequencing

The following general concerns about sequencing were identified.

- The approach to development of foundational knowledge and skills in F–6 is non-systematic, e.g. landscapes are studied for one year while weather and climate are studied across four years. This will have a significant impact on multiple year-level classes.
- The development of students’ active citizenship skills, values and dispositions through the Geographical Inquiry and Skills strand is not strengthened by sustained development of students’ understanding of how legal and political systems affect landscapes, environments and human–environment relationships through the Geographical Knowledge and Understanding strand.
- The descriptions of, and expectations for, teaching spatial technologies throughout the Australian Curriculum: Geography are inconsistent.
- Across F–12, a better balance of geographical contexts and locations is needed to provide students with opportunities to study a full range of geographical regions throughout the world.

3.1.5 Professional learning

The expectations for teachers in relation to the level of geographical knowledge and geographical pedagogical knowledge needed to teach the Australian Curriculum: Geography are heightened, particularly for primary and non-specialist teachers of Geography.

3.1.6 Other general issues and concerns

- The content elaborations are mixtures of skills and descriptions of content, which is confusing and inconsistent.
- Many of the Years 3–7 content descriptions are unclear and rely too heavily on the content elaborations to establish their intent.
- The content descriptions need more overt and explicit references to opportunities for students to:
 - learn outdoors and in the field — this is an essential component of studying Geography
 - understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of understanding and working.
- Content chosen is not appropriately explained or targeted to appropriate year levels. Age appropriateness of some units needs consideration. For example:
 - Year 8 Unit 1 is more suited to Year 7
 - Year 8 Unit 2 could be better implemented in Years 9 and 10, where individual fieldwork and more sophisticated inquiries can occur
 - Year 9 Unit 1 is more suited to Year 8 (however, the food security component of this unit is more suited for study in Year 10).
- Terminology is used inconsistently across the document and needs to be revised significantly.
- The omission of “just” or “social justice” from the rationale and aims narrows the focus of study and silences a key aspect of students’ values, attitudes and dispositions.
- No framework for the inquiry approach is provided. It would improve the logical development if the content description asked the following questions:
 - What and where? — to establish spatial and temporal patterns
 - Why? — to explain interrelationships and features
 - What impact? — to analyse socio-economic and biophysical impacts
 - What is happening? — to discuss management or mitigation strategies and to what extent these are socially, economically and environmentally viable/sustainable
 - How should this happen? — to evaluate alternative proposals and the final outcome, i.e. What should be done? What could be done?

Foundation to Year 10

3.2.1 Organisation

The expectations for teaching geographical inquiry processes, particularly observation and the framing of questions, need to be explicit. This will ensure that the intent of the course organisation section and the content descriptions are aligned.

3.2.2 Content descriptions

In general, the content descriptions are clear and unambiguous, i.e. they explain in understandable language what is to be taught. However, there is an opportunity to be less ambiguous and more specific about what is to be taught under each of the strands — Geographical Knowledge and Understanding and Geographical Inquiry and Skills. This could be done by matching the explicitness of the content descriptions in the other learning areas. Some content descriptions are so general that they are meaningless in terms of what students should be taught in Geography. Content descriptions could be more explicitly connected to the Geography discipline.

The following table identifies critical issues and concerns about the content descriptions.

Issues and concerns about the content descriptions	Ways forward
Greater alignment of the aims, course organisation, descriptions of geographical concepts and content descriptions is needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make explicit the intent of the geographical concepts in the content descriptions.• Ensure the descriptions of Geographical Knowledge and Understanding and Geographical Inquiry and Skills in the course organisation section are realised in the content descriptions.
The content descriptions tend not to stand alone and, in most instances, require the content elaborations to clarify meaning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revise the content descriptions to make clear what teachers need to teach and what students need to learn without teachers needing to rely on the non-mandated content elaborations.
Some content descriptions are very narrow and appear to be coverage of a concept or topic rather than allowing for depth of treatment, e.g. Year 6: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bushfires and other hazards are a recurring feature of seasonal changes to environments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revise the content descriptions with a narrow focus to allow for depth of learning of a concept.
Some content descriptions are ambit claims rather than content descriptions, e.g. Year 10: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Environmental challenges of the future have environmental, economic and social consequences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revise the content descriptions to ensure that they are the appropriate grain size to build learning from.
The repetition of topics affects the development of foundational knowledge, e.g. weather and climate in F-4, settlement patterns and processes in Years 10–12 and sustainability in Years 10–12.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Map and sequence topics, particularly in relation to geographical concepts.

Issues and concerns about the content descriptions	Ways forward
Broad statements do not help target teaching strategies, i.e. a lack of clarity exists in describing the concepts of <i>place</i> and <i>space</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articulate more effectively the sequential development of student understanding of <i>place</i> and <i>space</i> in the content descriptions.
No comprehensive plan is developed for teaching the curriculum's aim of "a deep geographical knowledge of their own place, Australia, our region and the world".	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give direction about the selection of case studies and contexts by including some examples for each unit or year level.
The degree to which integration with the Australian Curriculum: History is possible in F–6 is affected by uneven connections with what is studied in History, particularly through the Historical Knowledge and Understanding strand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify how the Australian Curriculum: Geography and History can be taught effectively in connected contexts, particularly in F–6.
The positioning of Geography as a subject that straddles the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities has led to repetition of content, e.g. the topic of water is addressed in the Australian Curriculum: Geography and Science in Year 7.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish the relationship of Geography to the Humanities and Social Sciences learning area. Avoid identification of topics that have been taught in Science or differentiate between the topics in relation to the specific disciplines.
Explicit expectations for the teaching of local, state and national scales of study are not established in sufficient depth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Devise an approach either through content descriptions or introductory statements that specifies context.
The scope and sequence of learning related to the concepts of <i>place</i> , <i>space</i> and <i>environment</i> needs to be strengthened.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure greater alignment between the expectations outlined in the conceptual statements and the content descriptions.
The concept of <i>environment</i> is described through separate content descriptions rather than integrated into the study of Geography.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give consideration to how the concept of <i>environment</i> can be integrated into all aspects of Geography, particularly in F–6.
The amount of content, in relation to its breadth and the available time, needs revision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise the size of content descriptions and sharpen their focus.

3.2.3 Foundation to Year 6

The following table identifies critical issues and concerns in the draft F–6 curriculum.

Issues and concerns in F–6	Ways forward
The early years focus in Foundation is not represented in the content descriptions and can only be understood from the content elaborations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise the Foundation content descriptions so that the early years focus is clear.
Some content descriptions lack a purpose for learning, e.g. Year 4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The location and main characteristics of the States and Territories in Australia, including populations, significant cities and natural features. The location of major countries in the Asian region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a purpose for the content descriptions by revising why students will learn this knowledge and what they will do with this knowledge.

Issues and concerns in F–6	Ways forward
An inconsistency in the amount of content to be covered is evident across the year levels — Year 6 has considerably fewer content descriptions (and content to be covered) than Years 3–5 and Year 7.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the content descriptions across the year levels and phases to ensure consistency of expectations. Year 6 requires particular review.
In Year 6, the use of the term “data” is problematic. The interplay of population, wealth, health and other resources is complex and there is a concern that the Year 6 treatment of this topic could become tokenistic if simplistic data is chosen to represent these complexities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The concepts related to inequity and distribution of wealth at this year level need more detailed explanation, especially about the sort of data appropriate for this age group to understand these concepts. ACARA is encouraged to be consistent in the use of geographical terms such as “inequality” and to always link this back to the environment.

3.2.4 Years 7–10

The following table identifies critical issues and concerns in the draft Years 7–10 curriculum.

Issues and concerns in 7–10	Ways forward
Geography in Years 7–10 is organised around sequences of units. This structure is used in the draft senior secondary curriculum design specifications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The use of units as the structure of the Years 7–10 curriculum should be reconsidered. The Geography curriculum should be aligned to other Humanities and Social Sciences learning areas, which use the construct of “depth studies” in Years 7–10. If this structure is not seen as appropriate, a more suitable term such as “inquiry” should be used.
The uneven description of topics, along with the distribution of content descriptions (and elaborations), needs consideration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconsider teaching time. Promote depth over breadth. Frame topics accordingly. Connect the geographical ideas to be studied. Prioritise and rationalise the number of content descriptions for each unit.
The geographical concepts are not explicit in the content descriptions, are not developed in a sustained way across year levels and are not well contextualised to particular topics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise the content descriptions to strengthen conceptual underpinning.
Topics, particularly in Years 7–12, need to be described with clearer intent and in less abstract terms, e.g. the Year 8 topic, Personal and community geographies, requires students to conceptualise their study of Geography in a completely different way, with reference to a range of phenomena.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frame topics for available time and review and/or simplify content descriptions to provide clearer geographical intent.

Issues and concerns in 7–10	Ways forward
Some topics, particularly Why people live where they do in Year 7, are too abstract in their orientation while other topics are too broad in their scope — e.g. Navigating global connections in Year 9 — with successful teaching dependent on teachers' geographical knowledge and pedagogical approach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refine and sharpen the approach to these topics to ensure units have clear geographical intent.
The topical/thematic organisation of the curriculum in Years 7–10 does not provide a clear focus on Asia or Australia's engagement with Asia in a geographical sense, particularly the diversity of Asian peoples, environments, cultures and belief systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider how the Australian Curriculum: History incorporated the cross-curriculum priority Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia, and provide explicit direction on how this cross-curriculum priority is to be addressed in the Australian Curriculum: Geography.
Some topics will be difficult for teachers to teach, with few concrete ideas provided and hands-on activities not apparent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the sequential development of concepts and skills across units, and sharpen the focus and content descriptions of each unit to fit the teaching time.
The content of units in Years 7–10 overlaps with units to be studied in Years 11–12, e.g. Environmental challenges and geography.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Differentiate between topics and content taught in Years 7–10 and Years 11–12.
An appreciation of health and wellbeing needs to be promoted in the Year 9 unit Biomes and food security and the Year 10 unit Global well-being.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure unit designs include a personal dimension and a consideration of values, attitudes and dispositions.
The Year 9 unit Biomes and food security outlines personal and global patterns of food production and consumption, but the content descriptions emphasise global patterns of food production with a land–environment rationale. The emphasis on physical and agricultural geography is a 20th century construct.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The content descriptions need to include the ethics of food production, personal choice in food consumption, and the local urban farm phenomenon.
The Year 7 and Year 8 human geography units overlap: both units are “city”-focused and assume diversity within the community that students in rural and remote parts of Australia may have no experience of.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move the content description “Cities that rank very highly on liveability have distinctive characteristics” back to Year 7. Ensure units cover regional, rural and remote settings.
The Year 8 Landscapes unit contains a content description about landscape hazards that does not fit the sequencing as the focus is on the management and sustainability of landscapes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise the content descriptions to ensure clarity of focus.
The Year 8 unit Personal and community geographies overemphasises community geography, lacks clear integration of the key concepts and does not acknowledge small and rural communities or Indigenous communities and Indigenous ways of viewing personal and community geography.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise the unit's content descriptions to realise its potential to be forward thinking and 21st century in its outlook.

Issues and concerns in 7–10	Ways forward
The Year 9 unit Navigating global connections needs to be clearer and “the economic characteristics of places” may not engage this year level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The economic component needs to be moved to Year 10, where it could be covered in more depth.
Greater clarity is needed in the Year 10 unit Environmental challenges and geography, where the environmental challenges listed are all physical geography issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A better unit description is needed to clarify the framework for teachers and to specify if topics such as biodiversity and human and political issues are to be covered.

3.2.5 Content elaborations

The following table identifies critical issues and concerns about the content elaborations.

Issues and concerns about the content elaborations	Ways forward
As with the content descriptions, the content elaborations are inconsistent in their tone and pitch compared to other learning areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the model of other learning areas to revise the Geography content elaborations.
Some content elaborations may need rewording to be more inclusive, e.g. in Year 4, the content description “Different places have different cultures and ways of living” has the elaboration “investigating different religions in Australia and Asia and the influence of religion upon people’s lifestyles.” This implies that culture and way of living is only related to religion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise the content elaborations to ensure that they are inclusive.

3.2.6 Achievement standards

The following table identifies critical issues and concerns about the achievement standards.

Issues and concerns about the achievement standards	Ways forward
The achievement standards are described in vague terms and are a summary of content rather than showing progression of learning and quality of performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish achievement standards that show progression in the development of students’ understandings and capacity with Geographical Inquiry and Skills.
The achievement standards need to be connected to the Geographical Inquiry and Skills strand and the year level context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align the achievement standards to the content descriptions in the Geographical Inquiry and Skills strand. Provide year level specificity in relation to these skills.
The achievement standards in Foundation and Year 1 do not link to all of the content descriptions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The achievement standards need to be revised to explicitly link to all of the content descriptions at year level.

Senior secondary

- The Years 11 and 12 content is narrow and restrictive, and applies an economic focus to the study of Geography.
- The senior secondary curriculum needs substantial work, and this must be accompanied by both targeted and wider consultation processes. Much of the Years 11 and 12 content is a repetition of Years 7–10, and the final unit is full of possibility yet presented as too abstract.

The following table identifies critical issues and concerns about the senior secondary curriculum.

Issues and concerns about the senior secondary curriculum	Ways forward
<p>Queensland has consistently provided feedback on the design specifications for the senior secondary Australian Curriculum. In their current form, the design specifications pose significant issues for the operation of Queensland's senior secondary assessment and certification system. The main issue is that the inclusion of units is incompatible with the definition of a subject and ACARA's charter to develop content and achievement standards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove units from the design of the senior secondary Australian Curriculum subjects, thereby shifting the decision about units, contexts, topics and choices to the jurisdictions.
<p>The current course organisation of Years 11–12 will limit the capacity of many Queensland secondary schools to offer composite classes, even though the units show no variation in complexity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not mandate the sequence of units for all states and territories.
<p>Unit design is inconsistent and too broad in focus.</p>	<p>If unit design is to be used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use a consistent structure, e.g. a separate knowledge and skill components • provide suggested contexts for study and/or case studies • devise smaller sub-units or use subheadings to provide direction to manage the scope of the study • provide some choice.
<p>Unit 1 is not well formed, with poorly articulated expectations of the Geographical Knowledge and Understanding and Geographical Inquiry and Skills strands.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Unit 1 does not overlap with the content of lower secondary courses. • Strengthen cognitive demand and enhance the opportunities to use spatial technologies.
<p>Unit 2 foregrounds economic and environmental sustainability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit 2 needs to give equal emphasis to social sustainability. • The section on metropolitan and regional centres should include services (education, health, childcare, aged care) as a possible in-depth study of a challenge.

Issues and concerns about the senior secondary curriculum	Ways forward
<p>Unit 3 focuses on natural hazards, which is the subject of units studied in lower secondary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... managing those risks to eliminate or minimise harm to the environment whilst benefitting from the economic activity. <p>The underlying preconception that all Geography stems from economic activity needs to be revisited.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure Unit 3 does not overlap with the content of lower secondary courses. Strengthen cognitive demand and consider the implications of recreation and tourism as a social activity, e.g. implications and risk management associated with a music festival venue.
<p>Unit 4 is broad in focus and features too many ideas that are unconnected. Content descriptions are “big” in scope, e.g. the effect of the globalisation of levels of production and consumption of food as one of aspects of “The material world” — a study of either assembled goods, or global cities, or world manufacturing, or food production/consumption.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide clearer intent. Sharpen the focus. Provide suggested contexts for study and/or case studies. Consider one case study from each of the three areas: People, The material world, and Explaining the networked world.

General capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities

Limited feedback on the general capabilities in relation to the draft Australian Curriculum: Geography was provided during consultation.

The following table identifies critical issues and concerns about the cross-curriculum priorities.

Issues and concerns about the cross-curriculum priorities	Ways forward
<p>A sustained focus on Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia as a context for study, as well as Asia in a geographical sense is lacking.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the representation of the cross-curriculum priority of Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia. For example, develop an Asia focus in a unit in Years 7–10 or identify Asia as a context for study in several units in Years 7–10.
<p>A sustained focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures in a geographical sense is lacking.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the representation of the cross-curriculum priority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, e.g. either through a unit or content descriptions at several year levels.
<p>Authentic embedding of the cross-curriculum priority Sustainability across F–12 is needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broaden the approach to embedding Sustainability across F–12, particularly in topics in Years 7–10.

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