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# Program planning – Courses of study: Geography

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## Introduction

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Queensland School Curriculum Council syllabuses provide frameworks for planning learning and assessment activities through which students have opportunities to demonstrate what they know and what they can do with what they know in the key learning area. Syllabuses are intended to be implemented through the development of work programs that meet the needs of students and communities in their local contexts. The Years 9 and 10 optional Geography syllabus outlines one way the Levels 5 and 6 core learning outcomes of the *Years 1 to 10 Studies of Society and Environment Syllabus* can be organised to create courses of study for lower secondary students. Courses of study, which are designed around outcomes of a syllabus, need to reflect the guidelines, principles and decisions that underpin this syllabus.

Courses of study developed for Years 9 and 10 need to recognise students' prior learning. The core learning outcomes within Queensland School Curriculum Council syllabuses are organised in six levels. Some students will have demonstrated a number of Level 5 core learning outcomes by the end of Year 8 and may have begun to work towards some outcomes at Level 6. Similarly, most students will have demonstrated Level 4 core learning outcomes by the end of Year 7. In the following proposed course, more units have been included to provide flexibility and to recognise that not all students will have demonstrated all Level 4 or 5 outcomes.

When designing a course of study, it should be acknowledged that Geography is not restricted to any one of the strands used to organise the Years 1 to 10 Studies of Society and Environment core learning outcomes. Geographical knowledge and skills are embedded in all of the core learning outcomes. By the time students begin Year 9, they will typically have demonstrated understandings related to the uniqueness of places and spaces, the understanding of cultures, changes over time, the importance of different systems and resources to a community and the identification of power bases.

The core learning outcomes develop systematically from Level 1 to Level 6 in two main ways:

- **conceptually** — for example, the first outcome in the Place and Space strand develops the concept of human–environment relationships; the second the concept of processes and environment; the third stewardship and so on.
- in terms of **processes** — for example, the first outcome in ALL strands and levels develops the process of *investigating*. The second outcome develops the process of *creating*, the third *participating*, the fourth *communicating* and the fifth *reflecting*. These processes provide clear links with the criteria used in the Senior Geography syllabus produced by the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies. They also relate closely to the seven valued attributes of a lifelong learner, identified in all Queensland School Curriculum Council syllabuses.

For more information about the sequencing of core learning outcomes, refer to the *Years 1 to 10 Studies of Society and Environment Syllabus* and the sourcebook guidelines (available on the QSCC website, [www.qscc.qld.edu.au](http://www.qscc.qld.edu.au)).

## Components of a Geography course of study

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A Geography course for Years 9 and 10 students should be based on the core learning outcomes outlined in the Studies of Society and Environment syllabus and should include:

- a rationale (see the 'Rationale' section of the Years 9 and 10 optional subject syllabuses) for studying Geography, including some guidelines for topic selection
- the duration of units (at least 1.5 hours per week if only core time allocation is to be used)
- the titles of units
- an overview of the type of content that could be expected in the unit
- an outline of the key geographical ideas to be covered
- information on the core learning outcomes emphasised within units.

Elements to be developed from this course outline include:

- sequenced and phased activities for each unit that provide opportunities for students to demonstrate the core learning outcomes
- assessment and reporting strategies
- student profiles
- links within and across the key learning areas
- equity considerations
- school authority policies.

When designing and implementing courses of study, consideration could be given to varying the time commitments and resources for:

- discrete subjects in discretionary time in addition to recommended minimum core times
- other courses taught in discretionary time that may complement a Geography course
- inclusion of the Geography course across a range of key learning areas
- particular environments, such as local environments, that may occur in core and/or discretionary time.

## Proposed Geography course of study for Years 9 and 10 (core learning outcomes Levels 5 and 6)

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Although the proposed sequence of units is devised by the Geography Teachers' Association of Queensland, it is not intended to be prescriptive and is not the only sequence of Geography units that is possible. The proposed units are mapped against the core learning outcomes of the *Years 1 to 10 Studies of Society and Environment Syllabus*. Although existing school units could be substituted in this course outline, core learning outcomes would need to be mapped to ensure that multiple opportunities were provided for students to demonstrate outcomes.

This course is developmental over Years 9 and 10. Because it is based on the core learning outcomes of the *Years 1 to 10 Studies of Society and Environment Syllabus* it includes geographical, political, environmental, economic and other elements.

A wide range of geographical content is available and, as new geographical understanding and new perspectives emerge, the choices widen. The following course outline is not intended to be definitive.

This course of study covers the Studies of Society and Environment core learning outcomes. Most of the core learning outcomes are mentioned in more than one unit. These are bolded. The teacher can decide if s/he wishes the students to repeat their demonstrations of these outcomes.

The scales of study for each unit are suggested. Ideally, students should cover all three scales during the course of study. Module overview tables from the sample sourcebook modules published by QSCC should be used when deciding on the time needed for each unit. These module overviews indicate that no more than six learning outcomes can generally be accommodated in a 15-hour module. Some of these Geography units will, therefore, need to be timetabled for more than 15 hours while others will need less time.

Year	Possible Geography unit title	Outcome level	Overview	Scale of study	Core learning outcomes in strands			
					TCC	PS	CI	SRP
9	<b>The places and spaces of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples</b>	5	Students come to an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander places and spaces and their importance. Students also look at past and current population distributions of these groups.	Local Regional	<b>5.2</b> <b>5.3</b> <b>5.5</b>	<b>5.1</b> <b>5.4</b> <b>5.5</b>	<b>5.1</b> <b>5.4</b> <b>5.5</b>	5.5
9	<b>A regional study</b>	5	Students investigate a local region (such as South East Queensland or the Darling Downs). They focus on both physical and social patterns and highlight the area's dependency on local industry (e.g. tourism, wheat production).	Local	<b>5.2</b> <b>5.5</b>	<b>5.1</b> <b>5.5</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>5.3</b>
9	<b>Watch the Waterway!</b> (‘Getting things done’ in <i>Discovering Democracy</i> middle secondary units may be useful here.)	5	An exploration of a local or regional waterway with an emphasis on using maps, diagrams and statistics to suggest how it can be managed in a sustainable way. A study of a dam such as Three Gorges could provide a global perspective.	Regional Local Global	<b>5.3</b> <b>5.5</b>	<b>5.1</b> <b>5.2</b> <b>5.4</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>5.1</b> <b>5.3</b>
9	<b>Difficult environments of the world</b>	5	A global investigation of the world's more difficult environments. Arid, polar, hot/wet or mountainous areas could be investigated in terms of topography, climate, vegetation, flora and fauna. An appreciation of human endeavour in surviving and adapting to these environments should be encouraged.	Global	<b>5.3</b> <b>5.4</b>	<b>5.1</b> <b>5.3</b> <b>5.4</b>	<b>5.3</b> <b>5.4</b>	<b>5.1</b>
9	<b>Tourism</b> (Unit developed by Tourism Queensland could be useful here.)	5	An interactive investigation of the tourism industry taking both an Australian and Queensland perspective. A focus on national parks or indigenous tourism could be developed depending on students' level of interest and ability. Management of place issues could be incorporated to take students to Level 6.	Regional Local	<b>5.2</b>	<b>5.2</b> <b>5.4</b> <b>5.5</b> <b>6.1</b> <b>(opt)</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>5.1</b> <b>5.3</b>
9	<b>What a disaster?</b>	5	Students use the geographical inquiry approach to investigate a natural or human-made disaster and its subsequent environmental, social and economic impacts.	Global Regional	<b>5.2</b>	<b>5.3</b>		<b>5.1</b> <b>5.3</b>
9	<b>The built environment</b>	5/6	An overview of settlement patterns with an emphasis on the physical and social changes which result. Cities in developing countries and inner cities could provide useful case studies. Processes of urban blight, gentrification and urban sprawl could be investigated at higher levels.	Global Regional Local	<b>5.2</b> <b>5.3</b> <b>5.4</b> <b>5.5</b> <b>6.2</b> <b>6.4</b>	<b>5.1</b> <b>5.2</b> <b>5.3</b> <b>6.1</b>	<b>5.3</b> <b>5.4</b>	
9	<b>Queensland's primary industry</b>	5/6	An investigation of natural and economic issues underpinning primary industries with a futures perspective. Soil and water degradation issues could be investigated and current sustainable practices outlined. A field study should be included.	Regional Local	<b>5.5</b>	<b>5.1</b> <b>5.2</b> <b>5.5</b>	<b>5.2</b> <b>5.4</b>	<b>5.1</b> <b>5.2</b> <b>5.3</b>
10	<b>Solving global environmental problems</b>	6	Global warming, acid rain and ozone depletion are looked at in terms of their social, economic and political importance. The positive contributions of individuals and groups such as Greenpeace, WWF and United Nations should be included, with students collaborating to provide preferred futures scenarios.	Global	<b>6.2</b> <b>6.3</b> <b>6.4</b> <b>6.5</b>	<b>6.1</b> <b>6.2</b> <b>6.4</b> <b>6.5</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>6.1</b> <b>6.3</b> <b>6.5</b>
10	<b>The global citizen: Ecology and economy</b> (QSCC sourcebook module.)	6	Students identify factors contributing to globalisation and explore its impact on Australia and on environments in the Asia-Pacific region. Should emphasise global trade and economic systems.	Global Regional		<b>6.2</b> <b>6.4</b> <b>6.5</b>		<b>6.2</b> <b>6.3</b> <b>6.4</b>
10	<b>Forests for the future</b>	6	Students investigate and analyse environmental impacts resulting from political, economic or technological changes. A global perspective could be introduced by looking at forestry practices in developing countries.	Regional Local Global	<b>6.2</b> <b>6.4</b>	<b>6.1</b>		<b>6.1</b>

Year	Possible Geography unit title	Outcome Level	Overview	Scales of study	Core learning outcomes in strands			
					TCC	PS	CI	SRP
10	<b>Rabbits, cane toads, cows and horses</b> (A module from the Queensland History Teachers' Association <a href="http://qhta.com.au">qhta.com.au</a> .)	6	The spatial aspects of introduced species can be taught in conjunction with the <i>Tangled Destinies</i> theme at The National Museum of Australia ( <a href="http://www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/tangled">www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/tangled</a> ).	Local	5.5	6.1 6.3 6.4 6.5		6.1
10	<b>Natural, built and social environments</b>	6	Students display understanding of natural, built and social environments and how they interact by undertaking a research project based on fieldwork.	Local		6.3 6.4		6.1 6.3
10	<b>Changes or continuities in the Asia-Pacific region</b> (Refer to the elaboration for the optional Geography syllabus TCC 6.2.)	6	Students use research to investigate socioeconomic changes or continuities in the Asia-Pacific region.	Regional	6.1 6.2 6.3	6.4	6.1	
10	<b>Looking at natural systems</b> (Refer to the elaboration for the optional Geography syllabus PS 6.1.)	6	Students use Geographic Information Systems to undertake studies of selected natural systems such as fluvial, arid, coastal, glacial or volcanic systems.	Local Regional Global		6.1 6.4		
10	<b>An investigation of an environmental issue</b>	6	Students undertake an investigation of a local or regional environmental issue.	Local Regional	6.4	6.1 6.2 6.3 6.4 6.5	6.2 6.3	6.1 6.3
10	<b>Asia-Pacific challenges</b> (Based on a QSCC module.)	6	Emphasises the ways people are influenced by the region's landscapes and the challenges people have faced over time, especially in the Pacific. The unit can be based on the QSCC module and on commercial texts.	Regional		6.2 6.3 6.4		6.3

**Note:** The codes in the header in the above table refer to the Studies of Society and Environment strands. That is:

**TCC** = Time, Continuity and Change  
**PS** = Place and Space

**CI** = Culture and Identity  
**SRP** = Systems, Resources and Power