

# Developing, maintaining and revising senior syllabuses

## Criteria for decision-making

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The Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) uses the following criteria for making decisions about the development, maintenance and revision of senior syllabuses for Years 11–12. Their use ensures that schools have access to a set of senior syllabuses that build from the learning in Years 1–10, and prepare students well for the full range of post-school destinations.

Each criterion includes a set of focus questions to guide decision-making.

### Criterion 1: A broad and general education P–12

#### Focus questions:

- What are the foundations for the learning in this syllabus?
- How well does the learning align with the learning in the Australian Curriculum?
- What is the rationale for this syllabus?
- Does the syllabus provide options for the continuing development of high levels of competence in key discipline areas?
- Are there other syllabuses in this area of learning already available in the suite? If yes:
  - is the level of specialisation necessary in the senior phase of learning?
  - does the level of specialisation require a four-unit course of study?
  - can the specialisation be included in related syllabus/es?
  - is the learning most appropriate to a general syllabus or an applied syllabus?

### Criterion 2: Literacy and numeracy options

#### Focus question:

- When considering the suite, does the syllabus contribute to the range of options that continue the development of high levels of competence in English language literacy and numeracy for a diverse cohort of students?

### Criterion 3: Equity of pathways

#### Focus questions:

- Does the syllabus contribute to the provision of high-quality learning options that open up a range of post-school pathways, and take full advantage of the flexibilities enabled by the Queensland Certificate of Education?
- In what way does this syllabus align with post-school destinations of work, training or higher education?

- When considering syllabuses in the same area of learning:
  - is there sufficient difference between syllabuses to warrant having two syllabuses?
  - what group of learners will this syllabus serve?
  - what is the potential impact on schools?
- When considering the suite as a whole:
  - is another version or specialisation of the area of learning needed?
  - could the needs of specific cohorts of students be better served by contextualising the current syllabus?
  - what is the potential impact on schools?
- Is the area of learning covered in this syllabus available as a training package or vocational education and training (VET) course? If so, is the VET qualification broadly available to schools?
- Does the syllabus include opportunities for schools to offer programs that extend talented students?

## Criterion 4: Currency and relevance

### Focus questions:

- Does the syllabus:
  - reflect changes in the discipline?
  - include applied and conceptual learning?
  - include how this area of learning relates to the work environment, career options and pathways?
- Is this syllabus a contemporary approach to an area of learning in another syllabus? If yes, what is the strategy to phase out the older version?
- How is this area of learning treated in other jurisdictions?
- Does this syllabus provide opportunities for learning in areas that complement or supplement existing syllabuses?

## Criterion 5: Sustainability

### Focus questions:

- Is this syllabus incompatible with any other syllabus? Does this subject overlap significantly with another syllabus or VET course of study?
- If there is a syllabus, is there sufficient difference to warrant another syllabus? If there is overlap, do the two subjects treat the common material in distinctive manners that would warrant two syllabuses?
- After analysing enrolment and achievement data over time:
  - is there a viable cohort for maintaining the subject in the suite?
  - does achievement data suggest that this subject is opening up post-school pathways for students?

- Are there adequate resources available to support the establishment of the syllabus and its continued maintenance and implementation, including resources that support assessment requirements and quality assurance processes?
- Is a new subject that covers a different context or specialisation in the broad learning area necessary, or can the learning be accommodated using the flexibilities in a current syllabus?
- Is the level of specialisation required to deliver the learning in this syllabus reasonable for schools to offer?
- What is the potential impact on pre-service and in-service teacher preparation?