This subject guide relates to courses developed from the Geography Senior Syllabus 2007.

Why study Geography?

Geography is about the study of human and natural characteristics of places, and the interactions between them. It is a rich and complex discipline which includes two vital dimensions:

- the spatial dimension, which focuses on where things are and why they are there
- the ecological dimension, which considers how humans interact with environments.

Geography prepares students for adult life by developing in them an informed perspective. This perspective will develop across the two-year course of study through a range of scales, including local, regional, national and global scales. Geographically informed citizens understand the many interdependent spheres in which they live, and make informed judgments to improve their community, state, country and the world.

To meet the challenges of the future, a geographically informed citizen should be able to:

- know and understand facts, concepts and generalisations about Geography
- apply geographic skills to observe, gather, organise, present and analyse information
- use geographic perspectives to evaluate, make decisions about, and report on issues, processes and events.

Geography is of benefit for tertiary study and employment in the following areas: defence forces, urban design, journalism, education, real estate, mining, meteorology, public service, public relations, agriculture, anthropology, architecture, environmental studies, engineering, economics and commerce, geology, psychology, social work, surveying, and tourism.

What is studied?

The senior Geography syllabus is designed around four themes. Each theme offers a range of focus and elective units, providing flexibility and choice for both students and teachers. Across the two-year course students should study a range of geographical locations and issues through a range of scales, including local, regional, national, and global scales. The four themes and their focus units are:

- **Theme 1: Managing the natural environment**
  - Focus unit 1: Responding to natural hazards
  - Focus unit 2: Managing catchments

- **Theme 2: Social environments**
  - Focus unit 3: Sustaining communities
  - Focus unit 4: Connecting people and places

- **Theme 3: Resources and the environment**
  - Focus unit 5: Living with climate change
Focus unit 6: Sustaining biodiversity

**Theme 4: People and development**
- Focus unit 7: Feeding the world’s people
- Focus unit 8: Exploring the geography of disease

Students study a minimum of two and maximum of three units for each theme. This includes at least one focus unit per theme. Elective topics are selected by the school and take into account student preferences, resources and local needs. A maximum of two elective units may be studied for each theme.

**How do students learn?**

Learning is achieved through activities such as case studies, debates and discussions, interviews and polls, community investigations, field trips, statistical analyses, simulation activities and interacting with guest speakers. These activities will often relate to particular issues and situations in local communities involving real-life experiences.

Learning in Geography takes place in a variety of settings, including classroom, library, school grounds, local community, and field study excursions. Students will be involved in a wide range of learning activities, including fieldwork; statistical calculation and analysis; interpretation and transformation of satellite imagery and photographs; creation of maps, diagrams and graphs; and extrapolation of spatial and ecological information. Fieldwork is especially important in Geography because it enables students to develop skills to find out about environments first hand.

Generally, geographers ask and seek to answer the following key questions:
- What and where are the issues or patterns being studied?
- How and why do these issues and patterns develop?
- What are the impacts of these issues and patterns?
- What is being done or what could be done to sustainably manage these impacts?

In dealing with questions such as these, students use a wide range of data as the basis of their studies. Sources of data include the use of spatial and information technologies, as well as library and field research.

**How are students assessed?**

Criteria that are consistent with the objectives of the course of study are used to determine standards of student work. Students are assessed by a variety of techniques so that they have an opportunity to demonstrate their best performance.

Judgments are made about a student’s exit level of achievement, using four criteria:
- **Knowledge** (ability to recall learned factual material in text and spatial forms)
- **Analytical processes** (ability to identify trends, similarities, differences and patterns)
- **Decision-making processes** (ability to select between valid alternatives and make supported judgments)
- **Research and communication** (ability to gather, organise and present valid information using suitable language and geographical conventions).
Schools use a variety of assessment techniques, including short responses, data responses, practical exercises, stimulus-response essays, reports, and nonwritten presentations.

**How can parents help?**

The development of sound geographical knowledge and skills requires learning at home as well as at school and in the community. Parents can help by:

- keeping abreast of current events and news items
- discussing important geographical and economic issues with their children
- building up a store of home reference materials and encouraging children to make use of community resources (references on DVD and CD-ROM available through local libraries, magazines, newspapers and current affairs programs on TV and radio)
- actively participating in community activities.

**More information**

If you would like more information, please email senior.syllabuses@qcaa.qld.edu.au. You can also visit the QCAA website [www.qcaa.qld.edu.au](http://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au) and search for ‘Geography’.