This document is currently under review

CURRICULUM PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

FOR QUALITY TEACHING, ASSESSING AND REPORTING

OCTOBER 2012

Purpose

The purpose of curriculum planning and programming in a school is to improve student learning experiences and outcomes by facilitating quality teaching, assessing and reporting practices.

Curriculum planning and programming is the process of translating policies[1], curriculum requirements[2] and NSW syllabuses[3] into teaching, assessing and reporting practices that are responsive to the local school context.

Curriculum planning and programming is an ongoing process and occurs at whole school, stage and year, unit and lesson levels. Curriculum planning and programming is enhanced by professional learning, dialogue, reflection and evaluation and contributes to a culture of continuous improvement, feedback and growth.

Teaching programs are the products of curriculum planning and programming. They provide a record of planned and implemented curriculum that is to be retained by the school[4]. Teaching programs are flexible working documents that evolve and develop over time and include scope and sequence, unit and lesson plans, resources, assessment schedules, reporting plans, program registers and evaluations.

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[1] The NSW Department of Education and Communities policy database provides access to policies for schools https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policiesinter/category.do?level=Schools

[2] The *Curriculum planning and programming, assessing and reporting to parents K-12* policy and policy standards describe curriculum requirements for schools https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policiesinter/category/search.do;?level=Schools&categories=Schools|curriculum+&+school+work|curriculum+requirements

[3] The Board of Studies NSW website provides access to NSW syllabuses http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/

[4] Teaching programs and program registers are to be retained by the school in accordance with the Records Management Program in particular the Schools Disposal Schedule DA60 https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/admiserv/admipolp/rmp/disposalauthorities/da60/da60.pdf

Principles for curriculum planning and programming

The following principles identify key features of effective curriculum planning and programming. Each principle is described on the following pages.

Curriculum planning and programming aims to:

1. be responsive to student needs
2. provide a seamless progression of learning within and across school years
3. focus on learning of high intellectual quality and significance
4. make explicit high expectations for learning and achievement
5. enhance professional practice through collaborative development and evaluation.

1. Curriculum planning and programming aims to be responsive to student needs

Students in NSW public schools are entitled to high quality teaching and assessment that is responsive to their learning needs.

Effective curriculum planning and programming in a school supports teachers to differentiate their practice in response to the varied ways students learn.

Differentiation relates to understanding individual differences and devising teaching strategies to challenge and support every student's learning. It can occur through adaptations in content, process, product and learning environment.

Differentiation is particularly evident in curriculum planning and programming when opportunities are provided, particularly at the unit and lesson level, for teachers to:

- gather information about student experience, interests, knowledge, skills and understandings before, during and after teaching
- use ongoing assessment information to adjust teaching and learning
- provide sequenced learning experiences to extend and deepen each student's current level of understanding
- monitor and assess students' changing understandings and skills
- reflect on the success of teaching strategies and learning experiences in meeting student learning needs.

Individualised planning requirements exist for some students. Further information is provided in *Policy requirements for NSW public schools* on pages 16 and 17.

2. Curriculum planning and programming aims to provide a seamless progression of learning within and across school years

The community expects that certain agreed learning will be provided as students progress through schooling. An overview of the learning essential for all NSW students to succeed in and beyond schooling is provided in the Board of Studies NSW *K–10 Curriculum Framework*[5]. The Board's syllabuses provide the detail of particular aspects of this essential learning in the context of different learning areas.

The NSW syllabuses[6], through the outcomes, content and stage statements, describe a planned, sequenced and rigorous progression of learning over time in each learning area. Some syllabuses describe mandatory learning in each stage while other syllabuses and industry curriculum framework courses describe a range of optional or elective learning for students.

Curriculum planning and programming involves scoping and sequencing syllabus requirements. The scope and sequence provides a systematic and explicit plan for building student knowledge, skills and understandings, values and attitudes in each year and stage.

An effective process to scope and sequence syllabus requirements includes:

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[5] The Board of Studies NSW *K-10 Curriculum Framework* is available from the Board's website
http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/manuals/pdf_doc/curriculum_fw_K10.pdf

[6] All NSW syllabuses are available from the Board of Studies NSW website
http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au

- considering the local school context including student learning needs and interests and resources available through the school community such as personnel, materials, equipment and facilities
- allocating the outcomes and content that students will be taught, assessed and reported on, to specific periods of time
- promoting connections within and across learning areas and stages and making connections with contexts beyond school.

In addition to syllabus requirements, schools may identify other learning that is appropriate to the local school context and integrate this learning into teaching programs and other school offerings.

3. Curriculum planning and programming aims to focus on learning of high intellectual quality and significance[7]

Student learning outcomes are improved when teachers focus on intellectual quality. This means teachers focus on learning that challenges students to develop and demonstrate deep understanding of important, substantive concepts, skills and ideas contained in syllabus documents.

Making clear connections with student experience, interests, knowledge, skills and understandings enables students to develop and demonstrate deep understanding and apply learning in other contexts.

Curriculum planning and programming at the unit and lesson level should assist teachers to:

- focus teaching, assessing and reporting on the key concepts, ideas and skills identified in syllabuses
- develop teaching strategies and learning experiences that make learning connections visible and illustrate the significance of the learning to students.

Effective teachers have deep knowledge of key concepts, ideas and skills in the syllabuses and know how to explicitly teach and assess these in the contexts of their schools. Professional learning assists teachers to deepen their content knowledge and pedagogical skills.

4. Curriculum planning and programming aims to make explicit high expectations for learning and achievement

Student learning is more likely to be successful when teachers have high expectations for every student and differentiate their practice to support student learning.

Curriculum planning and programming processes, particularly at the unit and lesson level, should assist teachers to:

- find out what each student already knows and can do
- know what they want students to learn
- set challenging learning tasks and assessments
- effectively communicate expected achievement standards

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[7] Information on quality teaching in NSW public schools can be found at
https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/proflearn/areas/qt/index.htm

- build bridges between prior knowledge and experiences and new knowledge
- provide graduated assistance or scaffolding to support student learning
- provide effective feedback and encourage students to reflect on their learning.

Curriculum planning and programming should demonstrate clear and achievable links between expected learning and achievement at particular points in time.

5. Curriculum planning and programming aims to enhance professional practice through collaborative development and evaluation

Curriculum planning and programming processes provide an important opportunity for professional learning to improve the quality of teaching, assessing and reporting practices in the school.

Collaborative development and evaluation of teaching programs ideally occurs at the whole school, stage and year, unit and lesson levels. Collaborative processes can:

- establish a shared understanding of intended learning and of the expected standards for student achievement
- facilitate improvements in teacher professional practice
- result in more challenging, inclusive and engaging learning experiences for students through consideration of a broader range of teaching ideas, perspectives, strategies and resources
- occur effectively within a school or across communities of schools
- include student and community involvement
- facilitate more efficient development of teaching programs.

Monitoring and evaluation of the impact of curriculum planning and programming needs to occur systematically to inform ongoing school development in relation to:

- the quality of teaching, assessing and reporting practice
- improvements in student learning outcomes.

Curriculum planning and programming process

Local school context

While NSW syllabuses are the same for all students, every school is different.

School curriculum planning and programming enables the effective and appropriate use of available resources to meet student learning needs. Available resources for learning include:
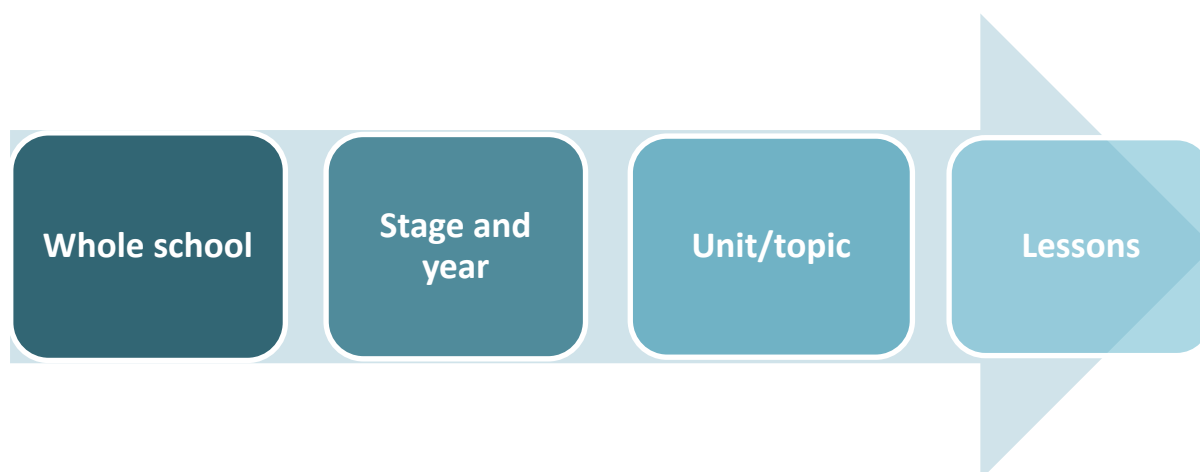
- access to technologies, specialised learning materials, equipment and facilities
- availability and expertise of teachers, support personnel and community members.

Knowledge of student learning strengths, needs and interests should influence curriculum planning and programming at all levels in a school. With this knowledge, schools are able to establish effective organisational structures and plan to optimise student learning outcomes.
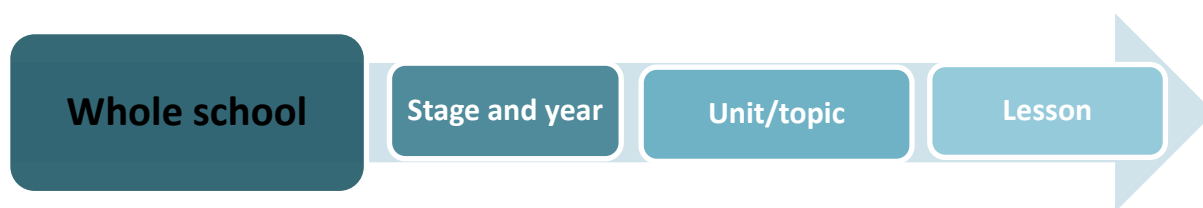
When curriculum planning and programming directions are determined at the whole school, stage and year, and unit or topic level, the teacher is able to focus at the lesson level on student learning needs, refining and adjusting their practices as they observe and assess student learning.

The curriculum planning and programming process

Curriculum planning and programming occurs at a number of levels in a school. At each level decisions are to be made about why it is being done, what it will look like when it is done effectively and how it will be done. This means making decisions for each level about who will be involved, what actions will be taken, what resources are available, what products will be developed for the teaching program and how the quality of curriculum planning and programming will be monitored.

| Whole school | Stage and year | Unit/topic | Lessons |

Whole school

Whole school	Stage and year	Unit/topic	Lesson

Why do we do it?

The purpose of curriculum planning and programming in a school is to improve student learning experiences and outcomes by facilitating quality teaching, assessing and reporting practices.

At the whole school level, the executive and teachers undertake planning to reach agreed and achievable processes for curriculum planning and programming. The processes are aligned with the school plan and can be effectively implemented in the school context to meet student learning needs, within school capacity and resources.

What does it look like?

The school has:

- alignment between the school plan and curriculum planning and programming processes
- an agreed curriculum planning and programming process in the school that includes clear actions, responsibilities and resourcing to support development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of teaching practices and programs
- information available to the school community about curriculum planning and programming processes
- teaching programs that are working documents which support quality teaching, assessing and reporting and are monitored, registered and evaluated on a regular basis
- records management processes to manage and retain teaching programs as official school records.

How do we do it?

The following questions inform decisions about whole school curriculum planning and programming.

- What evidence do we have about learning needs, interests and outcomes for our students? What else do we need to know or find out?
- What are we doing well and what could we do better in curriculum implementation?
- Are there any significant changes in curriculum requirements that will require us to change what we do?
- What are the curriculum and pedagogical understandings and expertise of teachers? What professional learning may be required?

- How will we approach differentiation to meet the learning needs of every student? How will students with individualised learning requirements be supported?
- How will assessment be integrated into teaching programs? Will a whole school assessment plan require development?
- How will learning be reported to parents?
- How will staff and students be organised/timetabled to meet curriculum requirements?
- What facilities, equipment and other resources are available to support curriculum implementation? What else might be needed?
- What opportunities are there to deeply engage students in learning of high relevance and significance?
- Are there opportunities to better address substantive issues and 21st Century learning skills?
- Will integration across learning areas be implemented? How will learning across the curriculum be addressed?
- What planned school activities will impact on teaching and learning?
- How will teaching programs including scope and sequence, unit and lesson plans, resources, assessment schedules, reporting plans, program registers and evaluations be developed? By whom? What format/s? How will they be stored and shared?
- How will implementation of teaching programs be monitored, registered and evaluated?

Stage and year

| Whole school | **Stage and year group** | Unit/topic | Lesson |

Why do we do it?

At the stage and year level, executive and teachers develop a scope and sequence that provides a systematic and explicit plan for building student knowledge, skills, understandings, values and attitudes described in syllabuses.

What does it look like?

For each stage/year and syllabus the school has:

- an agreed process for developing a scope and sequence that includes clear actions, responsibilities and resourcing which takes into account:
    - o student learning needs and interests
    - o staff expertise and professional learning needs
    - o school organisation such as events and timetabling issues
    - o school resources such as facilities, materials and equipment
    - o school assessment and reporting requirements.
- a scope and sequence that:
    - o allocates, to specific periods of time, the syllabus outcomes and content that will be taught and assessed, then reported to students and parents
    - o promotes connections within and across learning areas/stages and makes links with contexts beyond school.

How do we do it?

The following questions inform decisions about stage and year level planning and programming.

- What evidence do we have about student learning needs and outcomes for this stage/year? What else is required?
- Are there changes in syllabus requirements that will require changing what we do at this stage/year? If so, what and how?
- Who may be teaching the stage/year? What are the curriculum and pedagogical understandings and expertise of teachers? What professional learning may be required?
- How will curriculum be differentiated to meet the learning needs of all students in this stage/year? How will students with individualised learning requirements be supported?

- What will be the expected achievement standard for each reporting period and how will a shared understanding of that standard be developed across the stage or year?

- What are the requirements for reporting to parents? What are the dates for finalisation of assessment for each reporting period?

- What key events occurring in the school, such as school camps, tests and examinations, sport or performance events, will impact on stage and year level planning?

- How are outcomes and content allocated to specific periods of time across the stage/year? What are the implications of this for assessment and reporting?

- Are there opportunities for integration across learning areas?

- How will learning in this stage/year connect to prior and future learning?

- Will we specify the topics/theme/focus areas/key concepts in the scope and sequence for each unit?

- How will access to resources including materials, equipment and facilities impact on the scope and sequence?

Unit and topic

| Whole school | Stage and year | **Unit/topic** | Lesson |

do we do it?

As teachers plan a topic or unit of learning, they use syllabus as well as scope and sequence documents to determine allocated outcomes and content. Teachers ensure they:

- have identified key concepts, ideas and skills as the focus for learning and what students will do or produce to demonstrate understanding of these
- consider student learning strengths and needs and available resources
- consider facilities and school assessment and reporting requirements
- identify connections with students' prior knowledge, their social and cultural background knowledge and contexts in which the learning would be applied.

What does it look like?

These considerations inform the development of a unit that:

- is a detailed plan for teaching and assessing student learning
- includes the syllabus outcomes being addressed, planned learning experiences and teaching and assessment strategies
- may include suggested resources
- enables teachers to differentiate the learning in ways that are responsive to students' needs. While units may be planned collaboratively and shared, teachers will need to be able to differentiate learning to cater for particular students.

How do we do it?

The following questions inform decisions about unit level planning and programming.

- What do we want the students to learn? Why does this learning matter?
- Which teacher(s) will teach the unit? What collaborative planning needs to take place?
- Where does this unit/topic fit into the scope and sequence plan?
- How will students' social and cultural background knowledge, resources, current events, opportunities, interests and goals for the future be used to engage students?
- How will the prior skills and understandings of each student be identified? How do they connect with future learning?
- How will we communicate assessment requirements to students?
- How will the learning be differentiated to meet needs of particular students?
- How will we record variations from the planned teaching program?

Lesson

| Whole school | Stage and year | Unit/topic | Lesson |

Why do we do it?

As teachers plan lessons, they consider student learning strengths, needs and interests and assessment and reporting requirements in relation to the planned learning. These considerations inform ongoing differentiation of teaching strategies and learning experiences in the unit or topic. As they observe student learning, teachers evaluate, refine and adjust planned lessons to meet the diverse learning needs of students.

What does it look like?

Teachers:

- work from the scope and sequence and unit

- gather information about student experience, interests, knowledge, skills and understandings

- provide learning experiences to extend and deepen each student's current level of understanding

- monitor and assess students' changing understandings and skills and use this information to adjust teaching and learning

- reflect on the success of teaching strategies and learning experiences in meeting student learning needs

- record and annotate variations to teaching activities to inform program registers and evaluations.

How do we do it?

The following questions inform decisions about lesson level planning and programming.

- Do I have deep knowledge of the key concepts, skills and ideas?

- What learning partnerships will support students?

- How will the prior knowledge, skills and understandings of each student be built upon?

- What do I want my students to learn? Why does this learning matter?

- How will I differentiate learning for my students?

- Are other resources available to support student learning?

- How will students demonstrate the learning?

- How well do I want them to do it?

- How will I know that learning has occurred?

- How will I refine and adjust teaching for future lessons?

- How will personalised learning plans (PLPs) and individual education plans (IEPs) influence my teaching?

Policy requirements for NSW public schools

Curriculum planning and programming in schools is guided by legislative and other policy requirements.

Curriculum planning, programming, assessing and reporting

The *Curriculum planning and programming, assessing and reporting to parents K-12* policy[8] requires schools to plan curriculum and develop teaching programs which:

- are consistent with the Education Act and Board of Studies credentialing requirements

- meet the *Policy standards for curriculum planning, programming, assessing and reporting to parents K-12*

- incorporate assessment as an integral component

- indicate the outcomes being addressed, the teaching activities planned and the intended assessment strategies.

In addition, section 5.1.2 Professional responsibilities in the *Teacher's handbook[9]* states:

> *In carrying out their duties and responsibilities all teachers must: …*

- *collaborate in the development of school plans, policies and programs*

- *devise and document teaching and learning programs and develop and implement appropriate evaluation mechanisms…*

The Records Management Program, in particular the Schools Disposal Schedule, requires:

- teachers' class programs and copies of class programs to be retained for a minimum of two years after they are superseded, then they can be destroyed (3.2.2)

- program registers be retained for a minimum of seven years after they are superseded, then they can be destroyed (3.2.4)[10].

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[8] The *Curriculum planning and programming, assessing and reporting to parents K-12* policy and policy standards describe curriculum requirements for schools
https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policiesinter/category/search.do;?level=Schools&categories=Schools%7curriculum+%26+school+work%7Ccurriculum+requirements

[9] *Teacher's handbook*
http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-us/careers-centre/resources/teachers-handbook

[10] Teaching programs and program registers are to be retained by the school in accordance with the Records Management Program in particular the Schools Disposal Schedule DA60
https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/admiserv/admipolp/rmp/disposalauthorities/da60/da60.pdf

Policy requirements for meeting the diverse learning needs of students

Students bring to school a richness and wide variety of experiences and perspectives. They may also belong to several groups through their gender, cultural identity, background, geographic location and learning needs.

All teachers need a deep knowledge and understanding of student learning needs, as well as syllabus requirements. They use knowledge of students and curriculum to inform planning and practice.

School planning uses terms such as student-centred learning, differentiation, individualised learning and personalised learning. These terms have particular relevance for some groups of students.

Individualised learning means that the teacher has a sound knowledge and understanding of the student's learning needs and these needs inform planning and practice. The individual backgrounds, experiences, knowledge and skills which each student brings to school inform whole school, stage/year, class, unit/topic and lesson level planning and programming processes.

Mandatory learning requirements exist for some students. These mandatory requirements are outlined below and highlight the necessity for personalised learning.

Aboriginal students

The process for the development of personalised learning plans (PLPs) enables parents/caregivers, teachers and students to focus on the learning needs for each Aboriginal student. When Aboriginal parents/caregivers form strong relationships with teachers and participate in decisions about the education of their children, teachers are better able to plan and program for Aboriginal students.

The *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010-2014* (ATSIEAP) aims to accelerate improvements in the educational outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This plan requires that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have a PLP. Within this national policy framework the *ATSIEAP: NSW Delivery and Actions* requires that all Aboriginal students from Kindergarten to Year 12 have PLPs that are collaboratively developed by parents, teachers and students.

Further information about developing and implementing PLPs can be obtained by contacting Regional Aboriginal Education Teams.

Students with additional learning and support needs

Under the *Commonwealth Disability Standards for Education (2005)*[11]*,* all education providers are required to make sure that every student with disability is able to access and participate in education on the same basis as students without disability. This includes a requirement to make or provide reasonable adjustments for the individual student where needed so that they have the same experience and opportunities as their peers without disability.

Adjustments may include changes to pedagogy, curriculum and the learning environments so that the student can access and participate in learning.

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[11] *Commonwealth Disability Standards for Education (2005)*
http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Programs/Documents/Disability_Standards_for_Education_2005.pdf

The *Disability Standards for Education (2005)* require that students, or their parents, must be consulted about the adjustments that are put in place for the student.

Disability is defined broadly in this legislation and includes students with expressive and receptive language disorders, learning difficulties and behaviour disorders as well as those who have a 'confirmed' disability.

Out of home care

The *Out of home care in government schools policy*[12] requires an individual education plan be developed for all preschool and school aged children and young people in out of home care. These plans are to be reviewed annually by the Department of Education and Communities and by designated case workers.

Gifted and talented students

The *Gifted and talented policy*[13] outlines the responsibility of school communities to identify gifted and talented students and maximise their learning outcomes through modification or differentiation of the curriculum.

Students for whom English is an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D)

EAL/D students require learning programs which have been differentiated according to their Standard Australian English language level to enable them to access stage appropriate curriculum outcomes.

Refugee students may have had significant disruptions to their education as well as traumatic experiences that can impact on their learning. *Supporting Refugee Students Guidelines for Schools* outlines the responsibility of schools to identify students from refugee backgrounds and to personalise learning and differentiate support.

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[12] Out of home care in government schools policy
https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/student_serv/student_welfare/outhome/PD20100402_i.shtml

[13] Gifted and talented policy
https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/curriculum/schools/gats/PD20040051.shtml