



ACARA Charter

December 2022

ACARA Charter

Introduction

This Charter is issued by the National Cabinet's Education Ministers' Meeting (EMM) to take effect from 15 December 2022. It replaces the previous Charter approved by the former Ministerial Council, which took effect from 23 November 2016.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is established under the *Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority Act 2008 (Cth)* (the Act), with its functions detailed under section 6 of the Act. Section 7 of the Act states that ACARA must perform its functions and exercise its powers in accordance with this Charter.

Purpose

The Education Ministers Meeting sets the strategic direction for ACARA through the Charter.

The Charter reflects ACARA's role as an independent statutory authority and provides guidance about the nature of the activities ACARA is expected to pursue in fulfilling its functions and executing the strategic directions set by Council.

The Charter should inform the development of ACARA's rolling Quadrennial Work Plan, which sets out the key deliverables, budget and timeframes for addressing the strategic directions and work priorities established by the Ministerial Council.

Collectively, the Charter and Quadrennial Work Plan establish the Education Ministers Meeting's clear expectations regarding ACARA's priority activities.

Context

The Charter is developed within the following context:

In December 2019, Education Ministers agreed to the Mparntwe (Alice Springs) Education Declaration which sets out the aspiration of the Australian education system to deliver both excellence and equity in education, and to ensure Australian young people leave school as lifelong learners, critical and creative thinkers, and active and engaged members of the community.

The Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) was established in 2021. ACARA collaborates with AERO and the other national architecture agencies, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) and Education Services Australia (ESA) to promote the goals of the Mparntwe Declaration.

Close consultation with these agencies and all other relevant stakeholders allows for an open and transparent decision-making process.

During 2020, 2021 and 2022, the global COVID-19 pandemic impacted schooling in a variety of ways. Students, parents, schools and education authorities adapted to this situation with creativity and resilience, discovering new ways of working and collaborating in the online environment. The pandemic exacerbated existing workload and workforce pressures and affected student and teacher well-being. This is leading to a re-evaluation and a re-imagining of how schooling can be improved. ACARA has an important role to play in this process.

ACARA is aware of the day-to-day workload placed on teachers and the need to take into account the pressures and challenges that teachers face when considering changes to matters relating to national curriculum, assessment and reporting.

Technological, social and economic changes are shaping the world within which students are learning, which is very different to the world in which their parents and teachers grew up. The education system is vitally important to ensure our young people are able to thrive in this world as well as shape it for the better. For example, the world is increasingly digitally interconnected, simultaneously giving rise to opportunities and potential threats related to privacy and data security. ACARA will be mindful of these risks and will liaise with jurisdictions and school sectors in relation to the regulatory environment.

The National School Reform Agreement (NSRA) agreed in 2019 is currently under review. The new NSRA to come into effect from 2024 will likely have bearing on ACARA's work.

On 1 April 2022 Education Ministers Meeting approved the Australian Curriculum, which was subsequently published on a new, interactive website on 9 May 2022. The national curriculum ensures that every child in Australia, regardless of where they live or the school they attend, has access to a world-class curriculum.

National assessment helps school education leaders, teachers and parents periodically assess students against previous performance, national benchmarks and their peers using an objective measure. The *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy* (NAPLAN) is used in combination with other forms of assessment to diagnose learning and inform priorities for schools and education authorities. New digital technologies can transform assessment, including delivering more precise results and the faster turnaround of information. In 2022 full transition to NAPLAN online was achieved.

Public reporting promotes accountability and engagement in school education. Provision of quality information on schooling is important for schools and their students, for parents and their families and for the community and governments. In 2020, ACARA implemented changes to the way NAPLAN results are reported on the My School website, focusing more on student progress in the context of socio-educational advantage of the school community.

Strategic Directions

ACARA will prioritise pursuit of the following strategic directions established by the Charter and implemented through the Quadrennial Work Plan.

Curriculum

ACARA will:

- provide a world-class curriculum from Foundation to Year 12 in specified learning areas agreed to by the Education Ministers Meeting.¹

This strategic direction will be achieved through:

- *developing, updating and maintaining Version 9.0 of the Australian Curriculum and*

¹ For the avoidance of doubt, 'school subjects' for the purposes of section 6(a) of the ACARA Act are the learning areas set out in **Schedule 1** to the Charter and may be amended from time to time in accordance with a resolution of EMM.

supporting its implementation

- *providing authoritative advice to stakeholders and facilitating information sharing, collaboration and support for the Australian Curriculum*
- *monitoring the effectiveness of implementation of the Australian Curriculum and undertaking research to inform national policy and practice.*

In delivering this strategic direction, ACARA will address the following priorities:

- *monitor the accessibility, balance and manageability of the national curriculum*
- *collect curriculum implementation information to assist with development of the next generation of curriculum*
- *scope options for further development of senior secondary curriculum in partnership with interested jurisdictions*
- *develop curriculum support materials, including work samples, illustrations of practice and professional development resources to support teachers to implement the Australian Curriculum.*

Assessment

ACARA will:

- provide a quality, comprehensive and cohesive suite of national assessments.

This strategic direction will be achieved through:

- *implementing National Assessment Program reforms agreed by the Education Ministers Meeting*
- *researching, developing and supporting activities required for high quality assessments*
- *managing the planning development, delivery and reporting for the National Assessment Program (NAP) – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and the National Assessment Program (NAP) sample assessments.*

In delivering this strategic direction, ACARA will address the following priorities:

- *ensure an effective transition of NAPLAN to Term One from 2023, and the phased implementation of “opt-in” assessments in Science, Civics and Citizenship and Digital Literacy from 2024*
- *ensure that the suite of online assessments is directly linked to the new national curriculum*
- *research the implications of emerging technologies for educational assessment and provide advice to ministers on new initiatives to improve the National Assessment Program in light of this research*
- *aim to minimise administrative impact of reforms on schools*
- *collaborate with education authorities to improve teacher understanding of the principles and practice of good classroom assessment and the interpretation and use of assessment results.*

Data and Reporting

ACARA will:

- provide and apply a comprehensive and reliable national measurement framework

- facilitate the use and dissemination of data for research and policy development in accordance with agreed protocols
- present detailed, accessible, timely and meaningful school education performance information

This strategic direction will be achieved through:

- *monitoring, reviewing and improving the existing national key performance measures for schools, and producing comprehensive and authoritative national reports*
- *managing the collection and quality assurance of data, and providing national school information, including through the My School website*
- *managing the sharing and dissemination of data.*

In delivering this strategic direction, ACARA will address the following priorities:

- *assess data needs to review and, if necessary, introduce new performance indicators in the measurement framework, as agreed through Education Ministers Meeting, to support measurement of progress on the national goals of the Mparntwe Declaration*
- *produce a revitalised, timely, accessible and interactive digital version of the National Report on Schooling which meets the goals for national performance reporting, while ensuring it provides an enduring historical record.*

Collaboration and Leadership

ACARA will:

- provide effective national leadership in curriculum development, educational assessment and national reporting
- pursue the national education agenda with jurisdictions, the non-government education sector and relevant stakeholders' agenda and identify opportunities for reform

This strategic direction will be achieved through:

- *communicating information about ACARA's work and achievements to partners, stakeholders and the broader community*

providing national leadership in curriculum, assessment, data collection and reporting directly and in collaboration with the Commonwealth, states, territories, non-government sector, AITSL, Education Services Australia, AERO and other stakeholder groups. and ensure liaison with key stakeholders across all matters relating to curriculum, assessment and reporting. In delivering this strategic direction, ACARA will address the following priorities:

- *undertake relevant research, as set out in quadrennial workplans agreed by Education Ministers Meeting, in best practice in curriculum, assessment and reporting and provide advice to Education Ministers on potential initiatives to support improvement in these areas*
- *actively promote and lead public conversation on curriculum, assessment and reporting issues.*

Principles

ACARA operates according to the following principles in its work:

- **National Interest:** ACARA's priorities are based on initiatives that are collectively agreed by the Education Ministers Meeting, focusing on matters that are most effectively undertaken at a national level
- **Alignment:** work streams undertaken by ACARA align internally and complement the national education agenda
- **Quality and Innovation:** delivering superior, creative and effective products and services that are fit for purpose and actively assist jurisdictions in the implementation of the national education agenda
- **Efficiency:** ensuring products and services are developed and delivered in a timely manner within agreed budgets
- **Transparency and Accountability:** ACARA's planning and reporting is undertaken in a manner that provides assurance to the Education Ministers Meeting that ACARA's work is in the national interest
- **Engagement:** working collaboratively with all jurisdictions, the non-government education sector, Ministerial companies and authorities and relevant stakeholders, to ensure ACARA's outputs are aligned with the national education agenda and ACARA communicates effectively with and seeks input from the general public.

In performing its functions, ACARA will:

- act in accordance with the directions and decisions of the Education Ministers Meeting, including in response to emerging priorities; and
- progress advice to the Education Ministers Meeting in accordance with protocols, procedures and/or arrangements agreed by the Education Ministers Meeting or the Australian Education Senior Officials Committee (AESOC).

Accountability and Reporting

ACARA is required to operate in accordance with the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Act 2008 and related Charter.

ACARA's Charter is implemented through ACARA's rolling four-year work plan, which refers to Charter directions and priorities and presents planned key activities for the quadrennium.

Each year ACARA will:

- in accordance with the Charter, develop and present a four-year work plan and budget to the Education Ministers Meeting for endorsement
- develop and present to the Education Ministers Meeting an annual report against its work plan for the financial year.

Schedule 1

Section 6(a) of the *ACARA Act* states that the functions of ACARA include to ‘*develop and administer a national school curriculum, including content of the curriculum and achievement standards, for school subjects specified in the Charter.*’

For the purposes of section 6(a), ACARA will develop and administer a national school curriculum, including curriculum content and achievement standards, and as amended from time to time by the Education Ministers Meeting, for:

Foundation to Year 10

English

Mathematics

Science

Humanities and Social Science (HASS)

- F-6/7 HASS
- 7-10 History
- 7-10 Geography
- 7-10 Civics and Citizenship
- 7-10 Economics and Business

The Arts

- Dance
- Drama
- Media Arts
- Music
- Visual Arts

Technologies

- Design and Technologies
- Digital Technologies

Health and Physical Education

Languages

- Arabic
- Auslan
- Chinese
- Classical Greek
- Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages
- Framework for Classical Languages
- French
- German
- Hindi
- Indonesian

- Italian
- Japanese
- Korean
- Latin
- Modern Greek
- Spanish
- Turkish
- Vietnamese

9-10 Work Studies (optional)

Year 11 and Year 12

English

- English
- English as an Additional Language or Dialect
- Essential English
- Literature

Mathematics

- Essential Mathematics
- General Mathematics
- Mathematical Methods
- Specialist Mathematics

Science

- Biology
- Chemistry
- Earth and Environmental Science
- Physics

Humanities and Social Sciences

- Ancient History
- Geography
- Modern History

Developing and administering a national school curriculum includes ACARA determining whether alternative curriculum frameworks meet the requirements of the national curriculum.