



Our Ref: 2024/16862

To the Principal
All Western Australian Secondary Schools

Dear Principal

WACE REFRESHMENT – REVIEWING THE IMPACT OF DECREASING THE NUMBER OF ATAR AND GENERAL COURSES AND THE EFFECT ON THE STRUCTURE OF LIST A VERSUS LIST B

Today, I write to provide you with an update on the work the Board of the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) is undertaking in relation to refreshment of the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE).

Retirement of courses

As part of its WACE Refreshment process, the Board requested a review of the impact of decreasing the number of ATAR and General courses and the impact on the structure of List A versus List B.

During 2023, the Board of the Authority and its two Statutory Committees – the Standards Committee and the Curriculum and Assessment Committee – considered the revisions and re-development of courses, as part of monitoring the implementation of courses and the syllabus review process, along with the implications on breadth and depth in course offerings associated with the removal of low candidature courses.

The initial outcome of this review is a decision to retire a number of low candidature courses and to develop new courses that are contemporary, flexible and can be contextualised by schools to meet the needs of their students and local community context. The retirement of courses does not impact on those students currently enrolled in those Years 11 or 12 courses.

ATAR courses to be retired

The three ATAR courses being retired that will be available for teaching to current Year 11 students in 2024 and Year 12 students in 2025 are:

- Career and Enterprise
- Children Family and the Community
- Integrated Science.

Note: students will continue to have access to General courses related to these subjects. A new Career and Enterprise General course will be implemented and available in 2025 for Year 11 students and 2026 for Year 12 students. The current Children, Family and Community General course will continue. Implementation of the new Year 11 Science in Practice General course commenced this year, providing an opportunity for students who prefer to study a range of science disciplines in one course.

General courses to be retired

The seven General courses being retired that will be available for teaching to current Year 11 students in 2024 and Year 12 students in 2025 are:

- Biology
- Earth and Environmental Science
- Economics
- Literature
- Philosophy and Ethics
- Physics
- Politics and Law.

Students will continue to have access to ATAR courses related to these subjects. Additionally, I am pleased to advise you of the progress of two new General courses developed for the Science and Humanities and Social Sciences learning areas:

- The new Science in Practice General course is already available for Year 11 in 2024 and for Year 12 in 2025. This course integrates various science disciplines such as Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science and Physics and provides the option for schools to develop their own units or modify approved units, with approval by the Authority, prior to the commencement of teaching.
- The new Humanities and Social Sciences in Action General course is in development and intended to be available for Year 11 in 2025 and Year 12 in 2026. This course will encourage students to become socially aware and active participants in society and develop their skills to make informed choices about important social issues.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone, including members of the Authority's Curriculum Advisory Committees and teachers engaging in consultation, who have participated in the syllabus review process in the revision and re-development of courses.

Should you or your staff require further information regarding the courses due for retirement and/or newly developed please don't hesitate to contact Ms Gabby Raggio, A/Assistant Executive Director, Curriculum, Assessment and Strategic Policy via info@scsa.wa.edu.au.

The Board remains committed to its position that modifications introduced to the WACE will be to maximise its value for students as they move into further education, training, and employment, and to minimise impact on schools and teachers wherever possible.

I will provide further information as the WACE Refreshment proceeds. Best wishes to you and your staff for a restful break over the upcoming school holiday period.

Yours sincerely



PAULINE WHITE
CHAIR
SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND STANDARDS AUTHORITY

21 March 2024