



Our ref: ER0208/21856–2014/21856

To the Principal
All Secondary Schools

Dear Principal

ELIGIBILITY FOR YEAR 11 AND 12 FOUNDATION AND PRELIMINARY COURSES

As part of the reforms to the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE), the School Curriculum and Standards Authority developed Foundation and Preliminary courses to ensure that we cater for the full range of student abilities and interests. The intent of these courses is as follows:

Foundation courses – provide a focus on functional literacy and numeracy skills, practical work-related experience and the opportunity to build personal skills that are important for life and work. These courses are intended for those students who have not yet met the minimum standard of literacy and/or numeracy through the Online Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (OLNA).

Preliminary courses – focus on providing a relevant option for students with special education needs, in particular those students who cannot access the ATAR or General course content with adjustment and/or disability provisions; students with a learning difficulty or an intellectual disability or who have had a severely disrupted learning pathway; and students who are unable to progress directly to training from school or who require modified and individual/documentated education plans.

Enrolments in Foundation and Preliminary courses will be restricted to students for whom they are designed. The Authority's position was previously published in the document *Supplementary information to the Report: The Western Australian Certificate of Education 2015: Responding and adapting*, which was sent to all schools on 25 November 2013. An extract of the document detailing the Authority's policy position is attached for your information.

We are confident you will agree with the premise that each **student should be given the opportunity to achieve to their maximum potential by taking courses that are personally challenging, enhance their development and maximise their future study and career options.**

Foundation Courses are designed only for those students who are unable to demonstrate minimum levels of literacy and numeracy and are intended to enable those students to reach the levels of literacy and numeracy required. The **Foundation courses are not designed to be an alternative senior secondary pathway.**

It has come to our attention that some schools may seek to enrol students in courses for which they are not academically suited and in which they are not eligible to enrol. We are writing to re-state and emphasise that the Authority has enrolment restrictions in the Student Information Record System (SIRS) database which will prevent schools from enrolling students in Foundation courses who:

- have met the literacy and/or numeracy minimum standard, whether through OLNA or prequalification through Year 9 NAPLAN, or
- **have not met the literacy and/or numeracy minimum standard through Year 9 NAPLAN and have not sat the OLNA.**

Ineligibility for enrolment in these courses means that they cannot contribute to a student's WACE.

It is also concerning to hear that some schools are considering enrolling students in Preliminary courses in order to avoid the requirement to sit the OLNA. **Enrolment in Preliminary courses is restricted to students who have been identified as having a learning difficulty, intellectual disability or a severely disrupted learning pathway.** Schools may be asked to provide evidence to the Authority through an audit process for students they enrol in these courses. Importantly, Preliminary courses do not contribute towards the achievement of a WACE and enrolling students in these courses unnecessarily will considerably reduce their opportunity to achieve a WACE.

We look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure the successful implementation of the WACE reforms.

Yours sincerely

PATRICK GARNETT
CHAIR

JUANITA HEALY
A/CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

7 August 2014

Att.

Attachment: Extract from Supplementary information to the Report: The Western Australian Certificate of Education 2015: Responding and adapting

Issue 2.2 Year 11 and 12 courses – eligibility restrictions for Foundation and Preliminary units

The *Western Australian Certificate of Education 2015: Responding and adapting* report identified, as an issue of considerable concern, the high level of Year 12 student enrolments in Stage 1 course units. A major principle identified within the proposed reforms was to ensure that “students should engage with courses that are personally challenging, that enhance their development and maximise their future study and career options”.

The report did recognise, however, that appropriate levels of courses need to be provided to cater for the full range of student abilities and interests. It was proposed that Foundation and Preliminary courses would be provided as follows:

- Foundation courses – typically based on Stage 1 course units and providing a focus on literacy and numeracy skills, practical work-related experience and the opportunity to build personal skills that are important for life and work; and
- Preliminary courses – focussed on providing a relevant option for students with special education needs, in particular those students who cannot access the ATAR or General course content with adjustment and/or disability provisions; students with a learning difficulty or an intellectual disability or who have had a severely disrupted learning pathway; and students who are unable to progress directly to training from school or who require modified and individual/documentated education plans.

It was anticipated that the reforms will significantly reduce the use of lower level courses and that enrolments in Foundation and Preliminary courses will be restricted to students for whom they are designed. Furthermore, the report indicated that the Authority would investigate strategies to ensure that enrolments in Foundation and Preliminary courses would be restricted to students for whom they are designed. The Authority wants to ensure that enrolment in Foundation English (List A) and Foundation Mathematics (List B) courses is restricted to students for whom these courses are appropriate.

Position statement

- Students who have achieved the minimum standard of literacy in the literacy component of the Year 10 Literacy and Numeracy Assessment are not eligible to enrol in Foundation English and other List A Foundation courses.
- Students who have achieved the minimum standard of numeracy in the numeracy component of the Year 10 Literacy and Numeracy Assessment are not eligible to enrol in Foundation Mathematics and other List B Foundation courses.
- Enrolment in Preliminary courses will be restricted to students who have been identified as having a learning difficulty or an intellectual disability or who have had a severely disrupted learning pathway to the extent that the Foundation courses do not address their needs appropriately.
- Students who achieve the minimum standard of literacy and/or numeracy in semester 1 of Year 11 are not eligible to continue in the associated Foundation courses in Semester 2 of that year.
- Students who achieve the minimum standard of literacy in Semester 2 of Year 11 or during Year 12 will be permitted to continue in Foundation English and other List A Foundation courses in Year 12.
- Students who achieve the minimum standard of numeracy in Semester 2 of Year 11 or during Year 12 will be permitted to enrol in Foundation Mathematics and other List B Foundation courses in Year 12.