



Our Ref: 2023/35624

To the Principal
All Western Australian Secondary Schools

Dear Principal

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

The Board of the Authority recognises that it has now been over 10 years since the development of the current WACE commenced and seven years since the first students received the 'new' WACE certification, initially presented under the banner of WACE 2015–16. You would also be aware that the Board of the Authority has always committed to carefully considered evolution of the WACE, recognising that parents, students and teachers must be provided with a sense of stability in terms of curriculum, standards, supporting documentation, assessments and examinations where applicable. This stability has served us well.

The Board of the Authority has approved modifications to the WACE over the course of the past seven years and recognises that carefully considered refreshment is required to maintain the WACE as a robust, rigorous and contemporary senior certificate that aligns with others across the nation and internationally. To that end, the Board has developed a plan for the 'refreshment' of the WACE. The areas that the Board has asked the staff of the Authority to investigate for refreshment are identified in Attachment 1.

A detailed and inclusive plan for research, design and consultation has been developed. It is the absolute commitment of the Board that any modifications introduced will be to maximise the value of the WACE for students as they move into further education, training, and employment, and to minimise impact on schools and teachers wherever possible. The process of development and consultation has commenced with the intention that there will be a carefully considered implementation plan for any modifications that may emerge.

The WACE refreshment will run alongside the Pathways to Post-School Success review, recently announced by the Hon. Dr Tony Buti MLA, Minister for Education, which is being led by the Department of Education in partnership with Catholic Education Western Australia and the Association of Independent Schools Western Australia.

School leader online briefings

During Term 3, the Authority will be scheduling school leader online briefings to provide updates on both the WACE refreshment and adopting and adapting of the Pre-primary to Year 10 Australian Curriculum Version 9. Once confirmed, dates will be communicated directly to Principals and published via the Authority's 11to12 eCircular.

The Authority is very aware that the process of adopting and adapting the Pre-primary to Year 10 Australian Curriculum within the *Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline* (the *Outline*) will be occurring concurrently with the refreshment of the WACE and, therefore, implementation timelines will be subject to consultation with stakeholders and carefully considered.

Thank you for your continued support of the Authority's work.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "P White".

**PAULINE WHITE
CHAIR
SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND STANDARDS AUTHORITY**

27 June 2023

Att

Attachment 1: Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) refreshments

Areas of the WACE that the Board have asked staff of the Authority to investigate, with the view for potential refreshment include, but are not limited to:

- reviewing the impact of decreasing the number of ATAR and General courses and the impact on the structure of List A versus List B
- reviewing the nomenclature of ATAR courses
- reviewing the requirement that students who are enrolled in a Year 12 ATAR course pair of units are required to sit the ATAR course examination
- reviewing the role, function, value and timing of externally set tasks (EST)
- considering how the completion of an ATAR course can be rewarded as compared to a General course
- exploring the form and function of English
- reviewing the role of endorsed programs, including university enabling programs
- exploring how achievement of first year university courses for approved accelerated students could be recognised
- exploring how vocational education and training (VET) could contribute to the combined score from which an ATAR is calculated (joint project with the Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification)
- examining whether the VET industry specific courses could be examined for the purposes for contributing to the combined score from which an ATAR is calculated
- examining the appropriateness of senior secondary students completing Certificate IV as an element of the WACE
- investigating how skill sets and micro-credentials could be recognised
- investigating the role of learner profiles/portfolios/wallets
- investigating the assessment of and reporting of students' Information and Communications Technology (ICT) skills on the Western Australian Statement of Student Achievement (WASSA)
- investigating the assessment of and reporting of the General Capabilities on the WASSA
- investigating the development of a senior secondary certification for students with a recognised disability, as identified under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, who cannot access the ATAR, General or Foundation course content with adjustment and/or disability provisions.