



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

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School Curriculum and Standards Authority

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## INTRODUCTION

On Monday 21 January 2013 the Premier and the Minister for Education announced reforms to the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) to take effect for Year 11 students in 2015 and Year 12 students in 2016. The reforms were based on the report *The Western Australian Certificate of Education 2015: Responding and adapting* produced by the Senior School Curriculum and Certification Committee which was established by the Minister for Education to review the current WACE.

The Report proposed that from 2016, to achieve a WACE, students would need to:

- complete a Literacy and Numeracy Assessment to demonstrate a minimum standard;
- achieve an ATAR<sup>1</sup> or complete a Certificate II (or higher);
- complete two Year 11 English units and two Year 12 English units;
- complete at least one pair of Year 12 units from a List A course and one pair of Year 12 units from a List B course;
- complete at least 20 units (or equivalents<sup>2</sup>), including a minimum of 10 Year 12 units; and
- achieve a minimum of 6 C grades in Year 11 units and 8 C grades in four pairs of Year 12 units (or equivalents).

*Note 1: The achievement of an ATAR requires students to complete a minimum of four Year 12 ATAR courses.*

*Note 2: Of the 20 units required for a WACE, up to a maximum of four Year 11 units and four Year 12 units may be substituted by VET programs and endorsed programs. A student may choose to substitute units with only VET programs (up to a total of eight units) OR with endorsed programs (up to a total of four units) OR with a combination of VET and endorsed programs (up to a total of eight units but with a maximum of four units with endorsed programs).*

Subsequently, the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (Authority) Chief Executive Officer and senior staff have conducted 54 presentations to staff from the government and Catholic education systems and independent school sector, rural and overseas schools (by teleconference/webinar), state training providers, universities, the Department of Training and Workforce Development and home education providers. In addition, the Authority established opportunities for engagement through an online forum and dedicated telephone and email services.

As a result of these discussions the Authority has identified several issues that require additional consideration or clarification to ensure that the overall objectives of the reforms are best met.

We acknowledge that there may be the need for some further fine tuning and any changes will be communicated in the draft *WACE Manual 2015-16*.

# 1. LITERACY AND NUMERACY ASSESSMENT

## Issue 1.1 Literacy and Numeracy Assessment – Year 9 NAPLAN results

In *The Western Australian Certificate of Education 2015: Responding and adapting* it was proposed that students would need to demonstrate literacy and numeracy achievement at or above a minimum standard in order to receive a WACE. A Literacy and Numeracy Assessment is being developed, which is indicative of Level 3 of the *Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF)*, and is identified as the minimum standard required for individuals to meet the demands of everyday life and work in a knowledge-based economy.

Following the analysis of the results of a trial of the OLN in September 2013 we advise that students who have achieved Band 8 or higher in the corresponding Year 9 NAPLAN component (reading, writing and numeracy) will be recognised as meeting the standard required for that component to achieve a WACE.

### *Position statement*

- Students who achieve Band 8 or above in any component (reading, writing or numeracy) in the Year 9 NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy tests will be recognised as meeting the minimum standard required for that component to achieve a WACE.
- Students undertaking the SCSA Literacy and Numeracy Assessment will be required to satisfy both the reading and writing components in order to demonstrate the minimum WACE literacy standard.

## Issue 1.2 Literacy and Numeracy Assessment – requirement for students to sit the SCSA Literacy and Numeracy Assessment in Year 10

In *The Western Australian Certificate of Education 2015: Responding and adapting* it was proposed that during their senior secondary schooling, students will have multiple opportunities to demonstrate achievement at or above the minimum literacy and numeracy standard. Students will be able to access the SCSA Literacy and Numeracy Assessment in Semester 1, Year 10 and may repeat the Assessment at semester intervals.

Schools and students will be able to use the results of the SCSA Literacy and Numeracy Assessment, taken in Year 10, to help determine their course selections in Years 11 and 12. For students whose literacy and numeracy are **well below the required standard**, Foundations of English and Foundations of Mathematics may be appropriate courses that will facilitate student development in these critically important areas.

### *Position statement*

- Students will be required to undertake the SCSA Literacy and Numeracy Assessment in Semester 1, Year 10 unless, on the basis of their Year 9 NAPLAN results, they have demonstrated the minimum standard of literacy and/or numeracy required for the WACE. Students will be required to sit the assessment for any component in which they have not achieved Band 8 or higher.
- Students are required to sit the numeracy, reading and/or writing components of the Literacy and Numeracy Assessment in Semester 1. If the student does not meet the standard in Semester 1, then they must sit in Semester 2, Year 10, and, if required, Semester 1, Year 11. From then on, and if required, students may choose when next to sit the assessment.
  - International and mature age students will sit the test at the first available opportunity.
  - Students with identified special needs may choose not to sit the assessment and will therefore be ineligible for a WACE.

- Students enrolling in mainstream schools from Curriculum and Re-engagement in Education (CARE) schools are required to sit the OLNA at the first opportunity upon their enrolment in the mainstream school.
- In relation to Home School students accessing the OLNA:
  - these students (as home schoolers) can access the OLNA at a school; at a site with a supervisor approved by the SCSA where invigilation can be guaranteed; or at the SCSA premises; and
  - where these students subsequently enrol in a registered school and have not either pre-qualified in WACE literacy and numeracy through NAPLAN 9 or through the OLNA, they must access the OLNA at the first opportunity upon their enrolment in the registered school.

## 2. ARCHITECTURE OF YEAR 11 AND 12 COURSES

### Issue 2.1 Year 11 and 12 courses – sequential development

The design brief for the amended WACE included two elements that have particular relevance to this issue, viz:

- construct a system of certification and courses that encourages students to select courses that are personally challenging and reward student achievement; and
- modify the current WACE structure to allow for the eventual integration of the Senior Secondary Australian Curriculum (SSAC).

The architecture of the SSAC is such that courses include two Year 11 units (units 1 & 2) and two linked Year 12 units (units 3 & 4). It was proposed that as the SSAC becomes available appropriate courses will be adopted with adaptation to suit Western Australian requirements.

The ATAR courses that are not part of the phase one SSAC will be constructed using the content that is currently described in Stage 2 (for Year 11) and Stage 3 (for Year 12) in order to match the architecture of the SSAC. Units 3 & 4 are more challenging and require the demonstration of higher order knowledge, skills and techniques than expected in units 1 & 2. In all ATAR courses it is a fundamental assumption that units 3 & 4 are designed to challenge students to demonstrate a higher standard than units 1 & 2.

The General courses, with some modification, will be constructed using the content that is currently described in Stage 1 (for Year 11) and Stage 2 (for Year 12). The same model of content development applies to General courses as ATAR courses, i.e. it is a fundamental assumption that there should be an increasing level of difficulty and complexity from Year 11 units to Year 12 units.

The design brief for the writers of all ATAR and General courses requires that units must demonstrate an increasing level of complexity from Year 11 to Year 12. Although it can be argued that content in some courses is 'naturally' more hierarchical or sequential than in others, it is reasonable to require that all courses require an increasing level of complexity of knowledge, skills and techniques in Year 12 than is expected in Year 11.

It is therefore expected that students study Year 11 units **before** studying Year 12 units. It is not educationally appropriate for students to be studying course units out of sequence because of the increasing conceptual difficulty of Year 12 course units compared with Year 11 course units.

The Authority does not formally require that Year 11 units are pre-requisites for study of Year 12 units. However, it does acknowledge that Year 12 units are conceptually more challenging and are designed for

students to engage with as a final pair of units in a study program. Students may enrol in Year 12 units without having studied Year 11 units in the same course.

#### **Position statement**

- Course units must be completed sequentially, with Year 11 units (1 & 2) being undertaken before Year 12 units (3 & 4) unless students enrol directly in Year 12 units without completing Year 11 units.
- Enrolment in Year 11 units after completing Year 12 units in the same course pathway will not be permitted.

### **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 and Foundation Mathematics 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.

### Issue 2.3 Maximum credit allowed in the WACE from study in a single subject

The revised WACE allows students to select from a wide range of ATAR and General courses depending on their interests and abilities. It is anticipated that most students studying a particular course in Year 11 and 12 will study either the ATAR or General course in both years. However, it is likely that some students will change from an ATAR course to a General course, or vice versa, particularly in Year 11. However, it is intended that students can only achieve credit for a maximum of four units in any one subject. For example, students could receive credit for four Geography General course units or four Geography ATAR course units or two Year 11 Geography General course units and two Year 12 Geography ATAR course units, but may not accrue credit for two Geography General course units and four Geography ATAR course units (i.e. a total of six units).

#### *Position statement*

- Students can achieve credit towards the WACE for a maximum of four units within any one subject (e.g. four ATAR course units, four General course units or a combination of four ATAR and General course units).

## 3. REQUIREMENTS IN YEARS 11 AND 12

### Issue 3.1 C grade requirements in Years 11 and 12

In *The Western Australian Certificate of Education 2015: Responding and adapting* it was proposed that students must achieve six C grades in Year 11 (out of a likely enrolment in 12 units) and eight C grades in Year 12 (out of a likely enrolment in 10 units). The change from requiring students to achieve a 'C average' across 20 units to requiring a minimum of 14 C grades was intended to place greater emphasis on students achieving a satisfactory standard across the majority of their course units in Years 11 and 12.

Many principals have welcomed the requirement for students to demonstrate a satisfactory level of achievement in a reasonable number of courses rather than the previous C grade average approach. However, concern has been raised that the Year 11 six C grade requirement may result in students not attempting ATAR courses in Year 11 in case they achieve so poorly that the situation cannot be retrieved in their Year 12 study program.

It has also been suggested that the Year 12 eight C grade requirement in units 3 & 4 may cause students to choose General courses rather than ATAR courses in Year 12 because if they 'pass' only three of their five ATAR courses (i.e. achieve six C grades and four D grades) they would be ineligible for the WACE. This could result in a lower percentage of students being eligible for an ATAR than is currently the case. Data from 2012 shows that 3% of students eligible for an ATAR did not achieve six C grades in Year 12 and that 8% of students eligible for an ATAR did not achieve eight C grades in Year 12.

It is proposed that these concerns can be addressed by maintaining a requirement for a student to achieve 14 C (or better) grades across Years 11 and 12 with a minimum of six C grades in Year 12 units. This would provide more flexibility for students who wish to try the ATAR courses in Year 11 and should also reduce concerns about not achieving a WACE if students only achieve six C grades in Year 12.

### Position statement

- To achieve a WACE, students must obtain a minimum of 14 C grades or higher in Year 11 and 12 units with a minimum of six Year 12 C grades in units 3 & 4.

## Issue 3.2 List A and B requirements

In *The Western Australian Certificate of Education 2015: Responding and adapting* it was proposed that students must complete at least one pair of Year 12 units from a List A course and one pair of Year 12 units from a List B course. This is a continuation of current requirements. Given that all students are required to undertake two Year 11 and two Year 12 English units the List A/B requirement is essentially that students must undertake two Year 12 List B (mathematics/sciences/technologies) course units.

It has been suggested that VET studies should be able to contribute to the fulfilment of this requirement.

The revised WACE provides flexibility for students to undertake up to eight units in VET programs and/or endorsed programs. Students are expected to undertake studies in at least a further 12 ATAR or General (and in some cases Foundation) course units. These studies represent an important component of a broad general education that students should experience as part of the WACE. The breadth of learning requirement within the WACE was deliberately included to ensure that students are exposed to some study in both English/the arts/languages/social sciences and mathematics/sciences/technologies.

### Position statement

- The breadth of study requirement for one pair of units from a Year 12 List A course (English/the arts/languages/social sciences) and one pair of units from a Year 12 List B course (mathematics/sciences/technologies) must be fulfilled through ATAR or General (and Foundation) courses.

## 4. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET)

### Issue 4.1 VET – unit equivalences

#### Credit for Certificates I, II, III and above

In *The Western Australian Certificate of Education 2015: Responding and adapting* the following VET program unit equivalences were proposed:

Completed qualification	Equivalence (total)	Credit allocation (units)	
		11	12
Certificate I	2 units	2	-
Certificate II/III	4 units	2	2
Certificate IV and higher	6 units	2	4

- credit is split across Years 11 and 12 for completion of a Certificate II or higher qualification; and
- students may only use eight units of VET (VET and endorsed program units) for WACE recognition (40% of the 20 unit requirement). Students may elect to undertake additional VET programs and endorsed program units but will be limited to a maximum of eight units credit as part of the requirement to complete a minimum of 20 units over Years 11 and 12.



It has been proposed that completed Certificate III qualifications should be awarded the same credit towards the WACE as was proposed for Certificate IVs and above.

The following points have been made in support of this position:

- students undertaking a Certificate III are required to operate at a higher level than in pre-employment qualifications at Certificate II level and should be awarded credit accordingly;
- the initially proposed unit equivalence allocation does not encourage higher level qualification achievement; and
- few students have the opportunity to complete a Certificate IV. In 2012 only 3% of Year 12 enrolments in VET were at Certificate IV level or higher.

In addressing this issue, the Authority has also considered the variation in complexity and time requirements for certificates at the same and at different levels. It has also considered the additional request (see below) to allow partially completed Certificate IIIs and above (in restricted areas) to satisfy the VET qualification requirement. On balance, the Authority has accepted the proposal that the credit allocated for completed Certificate IIIs should be increased to six units – two Year 11 units and four Year 12 units. The enhanced credit allocation has ramifications for the amount of credit that students may accrue for Workplace Learning which is discussed in Section 5.

#### **Position statement**

- The credit provided towards the WACE for completed Certificate III or higher qualifications will be increased to two Year 11 units and four Year 12 units as indicated in the following table of revised VET program unit equivalences\*:

Completed qualification	Equivalence (total)	Credit allocation (units)	
		11	12
Certificate I	2 units	2	-
Certificate II	4 units	2	2
Certificate III and higher	6 units	2	4

#### **\* VET program unit equivalences**

- For a completed Certificate I, a student is credited with two Year 11 units provided that the achievement in units of competency is equal to or greater than 110 nominal hours. Where the number of hours is less than 110 students may choose more substantial elective units within the qualification to ensure that the Certificate I meets the requirements for the full allocation of unit equivalents. Certificate I qualifications where student achievement in units of competency are less than 110 nominal hours in total will not be awarded any unit equivalence towards the WACE.
- For a completed Certificate II, a student is credited with two Year 11 units and two Year 12 units provided that the achievement in units of competency is equal to or greater than 220 nominal hours. Where the number of hours is less than 220 students may choose more substantial elective units within the qualification to ensure that the Certificate II meets the requirements for the full allocation of unit equivalents. A student who achieves a Certificate II qualification with units of competency that are less than 220 nominal hours in total will be able to meet the minimum Certificate II qualification requirement but the qualification will only contribute towards the WACE as two Year 11 unit equivalents.

### Credit for partially completed Certificate IIIs and above

Queries have been received regarding whether a partially completed Certificate III or higher should qualify for unit equivalence within the WACE and as meeting the minimum Certificate II completion requirement. It is recognised that in some specific and specialised Certificate IIIs and above, students may not have sufficient time to complete the requirements by the end of Year 12 or there may be age restrictions associated with the qualification. It was therefore proposed that unit equivalence within the WACE on the basis of partially completed VET qualifications should be provided under specified conditions.

#### *Position statement*

A student may be awarded unit equivalence for the partial achievement of a Certificate III or higher and deemed to have satisfied the Certificate II minimum qualification requirement where it has been demonstrated that:

- they have insufficient time to complete the qualification by the end of Year 12; or
- there are age or other appropriate restrictions associated with the qualification (such as in a school based traineeship or apprenticeship);

and

- they are enrolled to complete\*, in the current year, the equivalent of at least four WACE course units (220 nominal hours of VET) from Year 12 VET enrolments only.

\*Nominal hours will not be calculated for results that identify that the student has already achieved the unit in previous academic years or, has been withdrawn, or where the student did not commence/participate in the first instance.

No credit will be allocated for a partially completed Certificate III or higher achieved in prior academic years.

Students who are enrolled in a Certificate III or above and who meet these requirements are eligible for four units of credit towards the WACE (two Year 11 units and two Year 12 units) as indicated below, and will satisfy the minimum VET qualification requirement (the completion of a Certificate II or higher) for the WACE:

Completed qualification		Equivalence (total)	Credit allocation (units)	
			11	12
Certificate III and higher	Partial	4 units	2	2
	Full	6 units	2	4

#### **VET industry specific courses**

Consistent with the discussion included under Issue 3.2 the Authority wishes to ensure that all students are exposed to a broad general education including some study in both English/the arts/languages/social sciences and mathematics/sciences/technologies. It is expected that this requirement will be met through enrolment in ATAR and General courses rather than through VET industry specific courses or other VET programs.

#### *Position statement*

- To support students being exposed to a broad general education, including study in Mathematics/Science/Technology, the VET industry specific courses will no longer be identified as List A or List B and will not satisfy the List B breadth requirement for the WACE.

#### *Further considerations*

VET industry specific courses include a full qualification from a training package and contribute to the WACE as a General course. Credit for a VET industry specific course is awarded upon completion of all course components.

The current VET industry specific courses were reviewed as part of the WACE course revisions. Changes to current arrangements include:

- amended VET industry specific course structures for the Hospitality and Tourism and Creative Industries courses;
- the inclusion of a new VET industry specific course in Engineering;
- the following VET industry specific course structure and associated unit credit:

VET industry specific course qualification	General course units		Meets minimum qualification requirement for WACE
	Yr 11	Yr 12	
Certificate I	Unit 1/2	✘	✘
Certificate II	Unit 1/2	Unit 3/4	✓
Certificate III	Unit 1/2	Unit 3/4	✓

- Year 11 VET industry specific course units (units 1 & 2), in addition to Year 12 course units (units 3 & 4), are paired (i.e. there is no semesterised unit credit for VET industry specific courses commencing for Year 11 in 2015); and
- an incomplete Certificate II or III VET industry specific course may be allocated credit for two Year 11 course units (units 1 & 2) providing the following requirements are met:
  - Qualification component: the successful completion of 110 or more nominal hours in the qualification; and
  - Workplace Learning component: at least one unit of workplace learning relevant to the VET industry specific industry area; and
  - The total commitment for Year 11 course units 1 & 2 for VET industry specific Certificate II or III courses equates to 110 nominal hours (two General course units) in addition to at least 55 hours of workplace learning (165 hours in total).

## Issue 4.2 Additional points relating to VET programs and recognition

### *Position statement*

- Students may 'bank' achievement of VET qualifications – i.e. VET qualifications can be achieved before Year 12 (note: restrictions relating to recognition of partially completed Certificates III and higher detailed above).
- Qualifications are awarded credit (as VET industry specific course units or unit equivalence) towards the WACE regardless of the academic year in which the student completes the VET qualification.
- Qualifications from the suite of Certificates of General Education for Adults (CGEA) and other general education qualifications will be reported on a student's Western Australian Statement of Student Achievement (WASSA) but will not be allocated credit nor recognised as meeting the requirement of achieving a Certificate II or higher for WACE completion.
- The Authority reserves the right to identify some VET qualifications from nationally recognised accredited courses which it does not recognise for unit equivalence within the WACE.

## 5. WORKPLACE LEARNING

### Issue 5.1 Workplace Learning

Currently students can gain credit for Workplace Learning through Stage 1 Courses and as endorsed programs. Four Stage 1 Workplace Learning units are available: 1AWPL, 1BWPL, 1CWPL and 1DWPL. Endorsed program options include Workplace Learning On-the-job Training (WL1), Workplace Learning Employability Skills (WL2 and WL2B), Work Skills (PGWS), Work Skills for the Music Industry (PWSM), Work Skills for the Sport and Recreation Industry (PWSSR) and ASDAN Preparatory Award Program – Workright (CWR100).

The Authority has reviewed the range of offerings in Workplace Learning and has endorsed a simplification of course/unit offerings. It recognises the value of Workplace Learning and the requirement for Workplace Learning to achieve some VET qualifications. The Authority proposes that four units of Workplace Learning be available, two Year 11 units and two Year 12 units. These units will be sufficiently generic to allow for a variety of workplace experiences. The Workplace Learning units will be offered as endorsed programs.

The Authority also considers that all students, including those who undertake a significant component of VET and Workplace Learning within the context of a school-based education, should be exposed to a broad general education. It is therefore proposed that the Workplace Learning units (which are designated as endorsed programs), along with VET programs and other endorsed program units can only be used to accrue credit up to a combined maximum of four Year 11 units and four Year 12 units. Students may elect to undertake additional VET programs and endorsed program units but will be limited to a maximum of eight units credit as part of the requirement to complete a minimum of 20 units over Years 11 and 12.

#### **Position statement**

The following changes will be made to Year 11 and 12 Workplace Learning options within the WACE:

- Current Workplace Learning offerings will be discontinued and will be replaced by one endorsed program (which allows students to accrue a maximum of two Year 11 units and two Year 12 units) that is generic in nature and meets the needs of all students who wish to use Workplace Learning within their WACE.

## 6. PRIVATE CANDIDATES IN ATAR COURSE EXAMINATIONS

Currently, individuals are eligible to enrol to sit a WACE examination for a course/stage as a private candidate.

These candidates do not undertake the school-based assessment that is usually required and their assessment is based solely on their examination results. This provision was put in place primarily so that students unable to undertake normal school-based enrolment in courses would not be disadvantaged.

#### **Position statement**

Private candidature be discontinued except for students:

- seeking entry to university as a mature-age applicant, or
- undertaking language courses through interstate language offerings where the course is not offered by the school, or
- undertaking French, German and Italian Background Language courses where the course is not offered by the school.

## 7. ENDORSED PROGRAMS—REVIEW OF CURRENT OFFERINGS

Endorsed programs were introduced in 2007 as alternative study options for students in Years 10, 11 and 12. They enabled recognition of a range of formal and informal learning activities not covered by WACE courses or VET programs.

### *Position statement*

The Endorsed Programs Committee (a sub-committee of the Curriculum and Assessment Committee) has been charged by the Authority to provide advice for the consideration of the Curriculum and Assessment Committee and the Board on the following:

- the desirability and feasibility of separating completely the use of endorsed programs for credit within the WACE from providing students with a record of other achievements on their Western Australian Statement of Student Achievement (WASSA);
- strengthening policies and processes regarding the approval of endorsed programs for credit within the WACE;
- significantly reducing the number of endorsed programs on offer;
- removing the variety of grading schemes currently provided within endorsed programs;
- discontinuing the use of endorsed programs for credit within the WACE where the proposed courses have significant overlap with WACE courses;
- reviewing the nature of university courses that are suitable for registration as endorsed programs for credit within the WACE;
- investigating how the Authority can better quality assure those endorsed programs that are available for credit within the WACE; and
- allowing for credit within the WACE only those endorsed programs that are the equivalent of a full WACE unit.

## 8. MODERATION AND USE OF EXTERNALLY SET TASKS

Externally Set Tasks (ESTs) will be used for moderation of General courses and integrated into the overall Authority work plan.

### Issue 8.1 Externally set tasks for Year 12 General courses

The Authority has a suite of moderation processes which aim to ensure comparability of marking and grading between schools. The processes currently used are:

- consensus moderation;
- school moderation program (documentation and grading reviews by visit or mail);
- statistical moderation of school marks; and
- small group moderation.

Currently the statistical moderation of school marks occurs for Stage 2 and Stage 3 using the school's WACE examination marks distribution to ensure marks from schools are on the same numerical scale.

For General courses, statistical moderation of school marks will not be possible as there will not be WACE examinations for these courses.

An externally set task (EST) process will be introduced as part of the Authority's suite of moderation processes for General courses (including Foundation courses but excluding Preliminary courses) at Year 12.

The EST process will:

- have an educative role in establishing common understandings of the course standards and related content;
- provide access to feedback which will encourage teachers to review and where appropriate adjust their marking, assessment and teaching;
- model best assessment practice which teachers can apply to other school-based assessment tasks;
- enable analysis by the Authority across schools and/or courses;
- inform the Authority's selection of schools for which grading reviews will be conducted; and
- enhance public confidence in school-based grades for these non-examination courses and maintain the credibility of certification.

#### **Inclusion of the EST in the assessment table**

The EST will be included in the assessment table in the Year 12 syllabus.

#### **Rotation**

All Year 12 students enrolled in a General courses (including Foundation) will complete the EST for that course. These tasks will be marked by the teacher using the marking key provided and contribute to the final mark for the pair of units (as indicated in the assessment table for the course).

## **9. TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS**

Current arrangements regarding student requirements to achieve a WACE continue in 2014 and 2015 but are replaced by the new requirements from 2016. Because 2015 is a transition year for schools the Authority will put in place transition arrangements to ensure that the needs of students and obligations of schools can be met. The following table identifies:

- enrolment information for students anticipating completing their WACE in 2014, 2015 and 2016 – note that Stage 1, 2 and 3 enrolments will not be available from 2016;
- information relating to external examinations; and
- recognition arrangements regarding Stage 1, 2 and 3 course/unit completions achieved prior to 2016.

#### ***Position statement***

- The student enrolment and course recognition arrangements, for the period 2014–2016, are outlined in tables on the following pages.

Student enrolment and course recognition arrangements – 2014

Course level	Year 11 *	Year 12	WACE recognition in 2016 and beyond
<b>Existing WACE</b>			
<b>Stage 1</b>	Yes	Yes	11 General
<b>Stage 2 **</b> (continuing to Stage 3)	Yes	Yes	11 ATAR
<b>Stage 2 ***</b> (exiting course)	Yes	Yes	12 General
<b>Stage 3</b>	Limited availability (students on accelerated pathways)	Yes	12 ATAR
<b>11 Foundation</b>	Not available	Not available	
<b>12 Foundation</b>	Not available	Not available	
<b>11 General</b>	Not available	Not available	
<b>12 General</b>	Not available	Not available	
<b>11 ATAR</b>	Not available	Not available	
<b>12 ATAR</b>	Not available	Not available	

\* Year 10 students enrolled in WACE courses follow the same recognition arrangements as provided for Year 11.

\*\* Students completing Stage 2 who complete Stage 3 in the following year.

\*\*\* Students completing Stage 2 and exiting the course.

Student enrolment and course recognition arrangements – 2015

Course level	Year 11	Year 12	WACE recognition in 2016 and beyond
<b>Existing WACE</b>			
<b>Stage 1</b>	Not available	Yes	11 General
<b>Stage 2</b>	Not available	Yes	11 ATAR / 12 General
<b>Stage 3</b>	Limited availability (students on accelerated pathways)	Yes	12 ATAR
<b>WACE 2016</b>			
<b>11 Foundation</b>	Yes	No	
<b>12 Foundation</b>	Not available	Not available	
<b>11 General</b>	Yes	No	
<b>12 General</b>	Not available	Not available	
<b>11 ATAR</b>	Yes	No	
<b>12 ATAR</b>	Not available	Not available	



Student enrolment and course recognition arrangements – 2016

Course level	Year 11	Year 12	Recognition
<b>Existing WACE</b>			
<b>Stage 1</b>	Not available	Not available	
<b>Stage 2</b>	Not available	Not available	
<b>Stage 3</b>	Not available	Not available	
<b>WACE 2016</b>			
<b>11 Foundation</b>	Yes	Limited availability (for students who have not achieved a C in the unit or unit pair in Year 11)	
<b>12 Foundation</b>	No	Yes	
<b>11 General</b>	Yes	Limited availability but is not permitted for students who have achieved a C or better in the corresponding Year 12 General course	Accept completion of related Stage 1 unit or unit pair as the equivalent
<b>12 General</b>	No	Yes	Accept completion of related Stage 2 unit or unit pair as the equivalent
<b>11 ATAR</b>	Yes	Limited availability	Accept completion of related Stage 2 unit or unit pair as the equivalent
<b>12 ATAR</b>	Limited availability (students on accelerated pathways)	Yes	Accept completion of related Stage 3 unit or unit pair as the equivalent

## 10. DISCONTINUATION OF COURSES WITH LESS THAN 100 ENROLMENTS

In *The Western Australian Certificate of Education 2015: Responding and adapting* it was proposed that from 2015 all courses (excluding languages) with fewer than 100 students and courses with defined contexts with fewer than 100 students within a context, for two consecutive years will be placed on notice and, if enrolments remain at or below 100 students for a third year, the course will be removed from the course list(s). Concerns have been raised from a small number of subject discipline areas regarding this proposal.

### *Position statement*

- The issue of course enrolments and possible course discontinuation will be monitored and decisions made by the Authority Board at the appropriate time.

## 11. CONSIDERATIONS OF SPECIAL NEEDS

### Issue 11.1 Eligibility for Foundation and Preliminary Units

#### *Position statement*

- Enrolment in Preliminary courses will be restricted to students who have been identified as having a learning difficulty, 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.

### Issue 11.2 Literacy and Numeracy Assessment – requirement for students to sit the SCSA Literacy and Numeracy Assessment in Year 10

- Students with a language background other than English, who arrived from overseas and have been attending school in Australia for less than a year before the SCSA Literacy and Numeracy Assessment, or whose schooling is being carried out in an Intensive English Centre, should be given the opportunity to attempt the assessments, but may be exempted from the assessment in Semester 1, Year 10.
- Students with significant intellectual disability and/or those with significant co-existing conditions which severely limit their capacity to participate in the SCSA Literacy and Numeracy Assessment may be exempted from sitting the assessment in Semester 1, Year 10. This will be determined after consultation has occurred, involving the principal, student, and the relevant parent/carer, and a decision is reached that the student is not able to access the assessment with the disability provisions available.
- Students who meet the criteria for exemption but who sit any or all components of the Literacy and Numeracy Assessment under test conditions, will be counted as assessed students and will be notified that they have or have not demonstrated achievement at or above the minimum literacy and numeracy standard.
- Students with identified special needs may choose not to sit the assessment and will therefore be ineligible for a WACE.

## 12. CERTIFICATES OF MERIT AND DISTINCTION

*The Western Australian Certificate of Education 2015: Responding and adapting* foreshadowed the development of two new awards (Certificates of Distinction and Certificates of Merit) designed to recognise students' achievement depending on the degree of difficulty of the courses and programs undertaken. These certificates will replace the current Certificates of Commendation.

These awards will be based solely on the grades awarded to students by their schools and the levels of the courses and programs undertaken. It is anticipated that approximately 5% of students would achieve a Certificate of Distinction and an additional 10% of students would achieve a Certificate of Merit.

### **Position statement**

- Two new awards, Certificates of Distinction and Certificates of Merit, will be established that are based on students' achievement (measured by the grades awarded by schools) and the levels of the courses and programs undertaken. Certificates will be determined through the allocation of points as set out below:

### Rules for calculating points for Certificates of Merit and Distinction

- Points are accrued at the unit level.
- Points are accrued from 20 Year 11 and 12 units of which at least 10 must be Year 12 units.
- The units used to calculate a student's points will be those that maximise the student's score (maximum points = 200).
- Repeated course units cannot be used in the determination of this award.
- Points can be accrued through completed training qualifications at Certificate II and higher.
- Unit equivalents for training qualifications will be allocated as follows:
  - Cert Is count as two Year 11 units;
  - Cert IIs count as two Year 11 units and two Year 12 units; and
  - Cert IIIs\* and above count as two Year 11 units and four Year 12 units.
- Training qualifications are allocated points as follows:
  - Cert IIs – 24 points;
  - Cert IIIs\* – 48 points; and
  - Cert IVs and above – 54 points.
- Cert IIIs and Cert IVs must be completed to attract points.
- Endorsed programs are not allocated points.
- Points required for Certificates are as follows:
  - Certificate of Merit – 150-189 points; and
  - Certificate of Distinction – 190-200 points.

\* VET industry specific courses represent a special case in the allocation of points for Certificates of Merit and Distinction. Students who complete a Certificate III through a VET industry specific course will be allocated 48 points but will only be able to accrue points from a further 14 units.

Points (per unit)	ATAR courses	General courses	Foundation courses	VET qualifications	Points (per unit)
10	A				10
9	B			Cert IV+ Replaces two Year 11 and four Year 12 units	9
8		A		Cert III Replaces two Year 11 and four Year 12 units	8
7					7
6				Cert II Replaces two Year 11 and two Year 12 units	6

#### EXAMPLES:

##### For students taking exclusively ATAR courses

10 ATAR As (100) + 10 ATAR Bs (90) = 190 points – distinction – (Note: 50% As and 50% Bs)

8 ATAR As (80) + 12 ATAR Bs (108) = 188 points – merit – (Note: 40% As and 60% Bs)

6 ATAR As (60) + 14 ATAR Bs (126) = 186 points – merit – (Note: 30% As and 70% Bs)

4 ATAR As (40) + 16 ATAR Bs (144) = 184 points – merit – (Note: 20% As and 80% Bs)

20 ATAR Bs (180) = 180 points – merit

18 ATAR Bs (162) = 162 points – merit

16 ATAR Bs (144) = 144 points – no award

##### For students taking both ATAR courses and VET programs

Cert IV (54 points) + 10 ATAR As (100) + 4 ATAR Bs (36) = 190 points – distinction

Cert III (48 points) + 14 ATAR Bs (126 points) = 174 points – merit

Cert III (48 points) + 12 ATAR Bs (108 points) = 156 points – merit

Cert II (24 points) + 16 ATAR Bs (144 points) = 168 points – merit

Cert II (24 points) + 14 ATAR Bs (126 points) = 150 points – merit

##### For students taking exclusively General courses and VET programs

Cert II (24 points) + 16 General As (128 points) = 152 points – merit (Note: As in all units)

Cert II (24 points) + 14 General As (112 points) = 136 points – no award (Note: As in 14/16 units)

Cert III (48 points) + 14 General As (112 points) = 160 points – merit (Note: As in all units)

Cert III (48 points) + 12 General As (96 points) = 144 points – no award (Note: As in 12/14 units)

Cert IV (54 points) + 14 General As (112 points) = 166 points – merit (Note: As in all units)

Cert IV (54 points) + 12 General As (96 points) = 150 points – merit (Note: As in 12/14 units)

Cert IV (54 points) + 10 General As (80 points) = 134 points – no award (Note: As in 10/14 units)

##### For students taking both ATAR and General courses and VET programs

Cert II (24 points) + 4 ATAR As (40 points) + 12 General As (96 points) = 160 points – merit

Cert II (24 points) + 4 ATAR Bs (36 points) + 12 General As (96 points) = 156 points – merit

Cert II (24 points) + 4 ATAR Bs (36 points) + 10 General As (80 points) = 140 points – no award

Cert III (48 points) + 4 ATAR As (40 points) + 10 General As (80 points) = 168 points – merit

Cert III (48 points) + 4 ATAR Bs (36 points) + 10 General As (80 points) = 164 points – merit

Cert III (48 points) + 4 ATAR Bs (36 points) + 8 General As (64 points) = 148 points – no award

Cert IV (54 points) + 4 ATAR As (40 points) + 10 General As (80 points) = 174 points – merit

Cert IV (54 points) + 4 ATAR Bs (36 points) + 10 General As (80 points) = 170 points – merit

Cert IV (54 points) + 4 ATAR Bs (36 points) + 8 General As (64 points) = 154 points – merit