**Video transcript: WACE 2015-16 – Humanities and Social Sciences**

Year 11 students in 2015 and Year 11 and Year 12 students in 2016 will study the revised Western Australian Senior Secondary Curriculum for the first time.

The Western Australian Curriculum will include the Australian Curriculum courses which have been adopted and adapted to suit Western Australian needs and WACE courses which have been adapted to suit the revised structure.

There is increased rigour in the syllabuses. The changes are not about making school harder for students. They do raise the bar, though. Raising expectations means that we are supporting students to achieve at a higher standard.

For more information about the changes to the WACE starting in 2015 we recommend you watch the WACE 2015-16 overview video.

Courses in Humanities and Social Sciences build on the current WACE courses and/or the courses developed for the Australian Curriculum.

This learning area includes a wide range of courses that cover Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies, Accounting and Finance, Ancient History, Business Management and Enterprise, Career and Enterprise, Economics, Geography, Modern History, Philosophy and Ethics, Politics and Law and Religion and Life.

The Humanities and Social Sciences courses are available as ATAR or General. The General suite includes a Foundation course for Career and Enterprise and Preliminary courses for Business Management and Enterprise and Religion and Life.

Foundation courses are typically for students with severely limited English literacy and numeracy skills. Only students who have not demonstrated the minimum standard in the relevant component of the literacy and numeracy requirement may enrol in these courses.

Preliminary courses are for students who have identified special needs.

It is important to remember that students who have achieved the literacy standard are not eligible to enrol in Foundation English and other List A Foundation courses. As well as this, students who achieve the minimum standard of literacy in Semester 1 of Year 11 are not eligible to continue in the associated Foundation courses in Semester 2 of that year.

Information about the literacy standard is available on the Authority website

There is a syllabus for each year of each course that sets out the content to be covered in each unit. The Year 11 syllabus details Units 1 and 2. The Year 12 syllabus details Units 3 and 4.

Units 1 and 2 are typically studied as a pair. Units 3 and 4 must be studied as a pair.

The complexity of the syllabus content increases from Year 11 to Year 12. For this reason, a student cannot complete Year 12 units and then move to Year 11 units.

Typically, the Year 11 and 12 Western Australian syllabuses follow the same structure. They all begin with a rationale and aims that are followed by information about the organisation of the course. Unit information includes a unit description, learning outcomes and unit content.

The syllabuses include information about school-based assessment and grading, which is supported through grade descriptions. The grade descriptions have been modified from the current WACE courses. These are interim descriptions and will be refined during the early years of implementation.

The grade descriptions are included in an appendix of the syllabuses. Many courses also have a glossary that defines key words in the context of the course.

Consistent with the Australian Curriculum, the organisation section of the syllabuses includes reference to general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities. The unit information, specifically the unit content, identifies the expected learning within each syllabus. Unless they are identified within the specified unit content, the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities are not assessed.

Some syllabus elements are course and year specific.

In general, the progression from Year 7–10 in the Year 11 syllabuses shows how the courses build on knowledge, understandings and skills.

The Year 11 and 12 ATAR course syllabuses adopted and adapted from the Australian Curriculum are organised around the course aims and unit learning outcomes.

The Year 12 ATAR courses contain the WACE examination design briefs.

The Year 11 and 12 ATAR course syllabuses based on the current Stage 2 and Stage 3 WACE courses are organised around the course outcomes.

Year 12 General courses, except Preliminary, include information about the externally set tasks, known as ESTs, which are part of the Authority’s moderation processes from 2016. There are sample externally set tasks on our website.

Ancient History, Modern History and Geography ATAR courses have all been adapted from the Australian Curriculum.

There have been modifications to the knowledge and understandings. The skills have been adopted and the knowledge and understandings have been adapted.

It should be noted that, for clarity, minor refinements have been made to the content dot points in all courses.

For example, in Politics and Law, the time periods ‘recent’ and ‘contemporary’ have been clarified, while in Economics, the skills have been modified and expanded to reflect the P–10 Economics and Business Australian Curriculum.

The exception is Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies, for which the content has been revised and substantially rewritten.

All other HASS ATAR courses are based on the current Stage 2 and Stage 3 WACE syllabuses.

Additionally, the Australian Curriculum for Economics and Business has informed the review of Accounting and Finance, Business Management and Enterprise and Economics. The Civics and Citizenship Australian Curriculum has informed the review of Politics and Law.

The Work Studies 9–10 Australian Curriculum has informed the review of Career and Enterprise.

The content for every HASS General course is based on the current Stage 1 and Stage 2 WACE syllabus except for Ancient History, Modern History and Geography, for which the changes have been informed by the Australian Curriculum to create a more seamless link to the ATAR courses and provide consistency with, and progression from, the P–10 curriculum.

Specifically:

* Year 11 and 12 Ancient History units have been extensively re-written with the Australian Curriculum skills added
* Year 11 and 12 Modern History have included the skills from the Australian Curriculum
* Year 12 Geography syllabus is aligned with the Year 11 ATAR syllabus, adapted from the Australian Curriculum.

Minor refinements to the content in all courses have been made to suit the anticipated cohort. For example, the Career and Enterprise General and Foundation courses have been made more practical.

Career and Enterprise Foundation focuses on knowledge, skills and understandings associated with employment and workplace readiness.

Business Management and Enterprise Preliminary focuses on ‘what is business’ and business processes. It provides an opportunity for students to engage in business activity and apply interpersonal and business skills.

Religion and Life Preliminary focuses on ‘what is religion’ and its place in society.

The units in both courses are sequential and developmental but not prescribed for a particular year.

There is flexibility to allow students to move from Career and Enterprise Foundation into Career and Enterprise General.

A course unit is completed when a grade is assigned.

This means a student must have had the opportunity to complete the structured education program and the assessment program for the course unit, unless the school accepts there are exceptional and justifiable circumstances.

The assessment program is summarised in the assessment table.

You will notice the assessment tables for Year 12 now show fixed assessment weightings rather than having a weighting range.

Examinations are now specified as a separate assessment type.

The assessment table for every HASS course has been revised.

Some Year 11 courses have weighting ranges for one or more assessment types: for example, Ancient History, Modern History and Religion and Life.

Other minor changes include the re-naming of particular assessment types. For example, in Accounting and Finance, application and response have been changed and combined into tests.

In Ancient History and Politics and Law, explanation has been separated into short answer and essay.

In addition, the description of particular assessment types has been clarified while some assessment types have been added. For example, investigation has been added to Economics General, examination to all ATAR courses, and externally set task to all General courses.

One of the options for achieving a WACE is to complete a minimum of four Year 12 ATAR courses including the external examinations for those courses. When sitting an external examination, it is critical that students make a genuine attempt.

The examination design brief for every HASS course has been reviewed.

Minor changes have been made to the examination design brief for Accounting and Finance, Business Management and Enterprise, Geography, Philosophy and Ethics and Religion and Life.

The examination design brief for the remaining HASS courses have had more substantial change.

For example, in Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies the practical (oral) examination has been removed.

In Ancient History, a new section – short answer – has been added to section three.

In Modern History, both source analysis sections now have four sources and five parts to the question.

In Career and Enterprise, previewed sources are no longer included. Also, in the extended answer section, the compulsory question has been removed and students are now required to answer two out of three questions.

In Economics, information has been included to clarify that the focus for the examination is the Australian economy and its performance over time.

In Politics and Law, the restrictions on questions from particular units have been removed.

WACE examinations will reflect these changes from 2016.

For Ancient History, Modern History and Geography, which have been adapted from the Australian Curriculum, a sample examination is available on the Authority website.

Students who enrol in General courses, except Preliminary, must make a genuine attempt in the externally set task to complete a course.

The ESTs will be written assessments of 60 minutes duration. The Authority will inform all schools during Term 3 of the preceding year of the section/s of the Unit 3 syllabus content on which an EST will be based.

The ESTs will be worth 15 per cent of a student’s final mark for the pair of units.

More information about ESTs is available on the Authority website.

In HASS General courses the EST will typically consist of three to five questions that will require responses of varying lengths from one sentence to one page.

The task or some of the questions can require students to respond to source material with the exception of Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies, and Philosophy and Ethics.

The structure varies between courses. Sample externally set tasks are available on the Authority website.

All syllabuses will be reviewed typically on a five-year cyclical basis, according to learning area. The schedule of review will be published later this year.

The Australian Government announced a review of the Australian Curriculum in January 2014. The report on the review is due to be completed by 31 July 2014. Any changes that the Australian and Western Australian Governments may endorse as a result of the review will be considered in the Western Australian syllabuses as part of our syllabus review cycle.

A range of support materials for teachers can be found on the Authority’s website.

We encourage teachers to participate in briefings and discussions and to register for the Authority’s eCircular to keep up to date.