Guidelines for educational programs for non-State schools

Purpose

The Non-State Schools Accreditation Board has developed these guidelines regarding the requirements for a school's written educational program under section 9 of the *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017* (Regulation) to assist and provide clarity of expectations to existing non-State schools and to inform applicants applying for accreditation of a non-State school in Queensland.

Requirements for Non-State Schools

Division 4 of the Regulation outlines the legislative requirements for educational programs for non-State schools in Queensland.

Statement of philosophy and aims (section 10 of the Regulation)

A school must have a written statement of philosophy and aims, adopted by its governing body, that is used as:

a. the basis for the school's education program; and
b. a guide for the school's educational and organisational practices.

The statement must be consistent with and align with the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration.

Educational programs (section 9(1) of the Regulation)

A school's written educational program should reflects its values, beliefs and aspirations. The program will serve to enables the development and implementation of curriculum that reflects the school's philosophy and aims.

Schools are required to demonstrate the scope and implementation of the curriculum for each year level, or each band, in three levels of planning to enact the curriculum in meaningful ways:

1. provision of a whole-school curriculum;
2. year level or band plans for each learning area and/or subjects; and
3. unit plans.

Assessment is an integral component of curriculum delivery. Schools need to demonstrate the way assessment and reporting are incorporated into the school's educational program within the three levels of planning.

Applicants for accreditation must provide a whole-school curriculum plan that provides an overview of how the school proposes to deliver the curriculum that includes a summary of the learning areas and/or subjects for each year level or band, and an explanation of how time is to be allocated across the educational program. This should reflect how the program will be implemented considering the needs of the students, the particular philosophy and aims of the school and any other influences such as the structure of the school.

The written educational program is also required to demonstrate how the implemented curriculum will meet the learning needs of students as they progress through school. The relative emphasis given to each of the eight learning areas will vary across the stages of schooling. The program must also demonstrate continuity in the learning experiences of the students and provide the breadth, depth and balance of learning appropriate to students' phases of development and across a range of learning areas, as required under section 9(1) of the Regulation.

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Preparatory year to year 10 (sections 9(2), 9(3) and 9(5) of the Regulation)

Non-State schools are required to plan and implement (teach, assess and report on) learning areas included in the Australian Curriculum for preparatory year to year 10 or an alternative curriculum framework for learning areas recognised by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) that meets the requirements of the national curriculum.

The Australian Curriculum is a three-dimensional written curriculum of eight learning areas, with content descriptions, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities, as well as achievement standards. The Australian Curriculum identifies the essential knowledge, understanding and skills that should be developed in increasing depth across the years of schooling and that provide the opportunities for students to transfer and apply their increasingly deep understanding to a variety of meaningful contexts (ACARA, March 2012).

For some learning areas, the Australian Curriculum is written with the expectation that they will be taught in each year of schooling from preparatory year to year 10. For other areas, the Australian Curriculum will describe an entitlement that students will have the opportunity to learn across preparatory year to year 8, as well as additional learning they may choose and/or schools may choose to provide in years 9-10 (ACARA, June 2020, p.11).

The Australian Curriculum content for any learning area should be able to be taught within the indicative time allocation that ACARA set for writers as outlined in the *Curriculum Design Paper (*ACARA, June 2013, p.9). The Queensland Curriculum and Assessment and Authority (QCAA, June 2016), Queensland Department of Education (Edited April 2020) and Independent Schools Queensland have developed recommended time allocations from ACARA's paper. Those recommendations have been transposed into tables 1-3 in the Appendices to assist schools with time allocations for learning areas in year levels, or bands. These guidelines allow flexibility for schools to make decisions specific to their individual context on how to organise learning and are not required hours.

The Australian Curriculum is written with the intention that English and Mathematics are taught to all students in each year of schooling from preparatory year to year 10. The Australian Curriculum is designed to take up not more than 80 per cent of the total teaching time available in schools. This proportion peaks in years 7 and 8 and reduces significantly in years 9 and 10 as core expectations are reduced (ACARA, June 2020, p.21).

The flexibility of the Australian Curriculum allows for the treatment of the curriculum in year levels or bands, in multi-age or composite settings. Schools decide how best to deliver the curriculum and determine pedagogical and other delivery considerations that account for students' needs, interests and the school and community context (ACARA, June 2020).

Preparatory year to the end of year 6

Schools must provide a written educational program that demonstrates preparatory year to year 6 students are offered all learning areas of the Australian Curriculum, together with how, and when, schools report on the achievement standards. The time allocations for implementation of the learning areas can be located in table 1, in the Appendices.

The Australian Curriculum introduces and develops critical foundation skills in the early years and provides the basis for developing depth of knowledge, understanding and skill, and opportunities to transfer and apply that knowledge, understanding and skill across the years of schooling. It maintains a focus on literacy and numeracy foundations, while supporting deep discipline-based knowledge (ACARA June 2020, p.10).

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Schools teach and assess English, Mathematics, Science, Humanities and Social Sciences, and Health and Physical Education (HPE) in each semester every year in the primary years of schooling. From preparatory year to year 4, English (and literacy development) and Mathematics (and numeracy development) should be priority areas with increasing emphasis placed on all eight learning areas in the upper primary years (ACARA June 2020, p21).

A school curriculum plan should demonstrate the implementation of each of The Arts subjects (Dance, Drama, Media Studies, Music and Visual Arts) in a flexible way to allow school choice in The Arts subjects they deliver in each band which meet the needs of students, the availability of teachers and school specific educational philosophies. Schools may wish to implement The Arts learning area as integrated experiences with the reporting based on the learning area achievement standard rather than as individual subjects.

With regard to Technologies, a school curriculum plan should demonstrate the implementation of both Digital Technologies and Design and Technologies. Schools have the flexibility to report on the learning area achievement standard or individual subject achievement standards in preparatory year to year 6.

For Languages, schools maintain flexibility about which language/s should be learnt and when to introduce language learning into the curriculum in preparatory year to year 6. Schools are encouraged to implement languages as soon as possible in the primary years. This will be dependent on the size of the school, the availability of teachers and other school-specific contexts.

The diversity of non-State schools means that schools implement the curriculum in different ways. Education programs may be organised within learning areas by year level, multi-age or in bands; and these may include integrated or project-based units.

Schools provide opportunities for students to demonstrate the achievement standards for the learning area/subject for the curriculum they have been taught.

Schools differentiate and make adjustments to teaching, learning and assessment to support students' learning. QCAA website provides further information for schools on supporting student diversity and making adjustments for personalised learning.

Schools allow opportunities for students to demonstrate the achievement standards at the appropriate level by differentiating and making adjustments so that students' learning needs are met in ways appropriate to their age and context in order to access the curriculum.

Schools may also offer other courses or programs, studies and subjects within the discretionary time allocation. These are decided by the school's governing body and are in addition to the Australian Curriculum. Note these programs must not replace the Australian Curriculum learning area or an alternative curriculum recognised by ACARA.

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Year 7 to the end of year 8

Years 7 and 8 constitute a period of schooling in Queensland that consolidates learning area content and skills, positioning the student for future learning pathways. The curriculum aims to deepen a student's knowledge and skills while providing opportunities for students to explore their interests and learning styles. Schools use the Australian Curriculum for all learning areas or learning areas recognised by ACARA as part of the alternative curriculum framework to develop programs that meet the specific learning needs of young adolescents.

In this band there remains emphasis on the learning areas and/subjects of English, Mathematics, Science, Humanities and Social Sciences (History, Geography, Business and Economics, Civics and Citizenship) and HPE, as fundamental to success in future pathways.

Students also continue their learning in The Arts, Technologies and Languages to provide students with the broadest range of learning enabling them to make informed choices for their future learning. Teachers design courses that meet the needs of the cohort context and the individual students.

The time allocations for years 7 and 8 recognise that in this band, English, Mathematics, Science, Humanities and Social Sciences, and HPE are essential for all students at each year level. While the other learning areas are implemented in ways that will ensure that all students are able to access the curriculum at some point across the band. Guidelines for recommended time allocation can be located in table 2 within the Appendices.

Year 9 to the end of year 10

The focus of learning in years 9 and 10 should be on student engagement and entitlement to a curriculum that is best suited to the individual's future pathways. It is in these developmental years that students more clearly demonstrate their preferences and engagement, and acquire the requisite content knowledge, understandings, skills and capabilities. In this band, students can make decisions about elective areas of study that support their future pathways.

The Australian Curriculum provides flexibility in years 9 and 10 and recognises that many students commence senior secondary pathways and programs, including vocational pathways, in these years (ACARA, June 2020, p22).

The curriculum is designed to provide increased opportunities for students to make choices about learning pathways and to deepen their understanding in each learning area. It is based on the assumption that schools provide learning opportunities in English, Mathematics, Science, History, and HPE for all students; and provide learning opportunities from other learning areas and in vocational and applied learning. In these years, there is flexibility for students to undertake more specialised learning pathways that ensure all students are fully engaged and prepared to continue learning into the senior years (ACARA, June 2020, p22).

English, Mathematics, Science and Humanities and Social Sciences form the core of the curriculum for year 9, with teachers designing courses that meet the needs of the cohort context and the individual students.

In year 9 schools should implement History for at least one semester and offer the other subjects (Geography, Economics and Business and Civics and Citizenship) as electives. In year 10, Humanities and Social Sciences (HaSS) subjects (History, Geography, Economics and Business and Civics and Citizenship) are offered as electives to enable students' flexibility to make choices within that learning area. Students must study not less than two semesters of HASS across years 9 and 10, one of which must be History.

The Arts, Technologies and Languages are optional and may be provided as electives for years 9 and 10.

For years 9 and 10 schools may include additional courses and/or accredited vocational education courses in conjunction with the Australian Curriculum.

Specific arrangements for year 10

Year 10 is the final year of the Australian Curriculum, which forms the foundation knowledge and skills required for senior schooling. Year 10 is the start of the senior phase of learning. In year 10, students make important decisions about their senior secondary school and education, training and career goals.

Schools need to plan their year 10 curriculum and assessment programs to provide a smooth transition between the Australian Curriculum and senior pathways. The best preparation is to teach, assess and report on Australian Curriculum prior to commencement of senior studies. It may be more appropriate for students who are not be able to access the Australian Curriculum English and Mathematics to complete Short Courses in Literacy and Numeracy.

The Australian Curriculum does recognise that many students may commence senior secondary pathways and programs during years 9 and 10, including vocational learning (ACARA June 2020, p. 22).

As well as the Australian Curriculum, a school's educational program may also include vocational education and training courses at level 1 or above under the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Refer to QCAA's website for information on supporting students' decisions about future pathways and year 10 students completing Senior Education and Training (SET) planning and opening learning accounts.

Reporting for preparatory year to year 10

Schools and teachers are required to systematically collect evidence of assessment of learning to inform reporting processes. The Australian Government under s.59 of the *Australian Education Regulation 2013*, has set out specific requirements for years 1 to 10 for the provision of student reports to parents/carers by schools that includes reporting twice per year and the requirement for student achievement to be reported for each subject studied in terms of A − E (or an equivalent 5-point scale).

Reporting to parents is required to provide information about a student's demonstration of learning in relation to the achievement standards. Achievement standards describe what students are typically able to understand and do and describe the learning (understanding and skills) expected of students at each year level from preparatory year to year 10 (ACARA, October 2012). ACARA states "[t]he use of Australian Curriculum achievement standards as a common reference point for reporting to parents contributes to national consistency in reporting" (March 2012, p.16).

Senior secondary - years 11 and 12 (sections 9(4) and 9(5) of the Regulation)

A school accredited to provide senior secondary education <u>must</u> implement –

(a) if the school is offering a subject for which there is a syllabus developed, purchased or revised by the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority under the E*ducation (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority) Act 2014*, section 9 – the syllabus: or

(b) a program or syllabus endorsed by the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority as appropriate for senior secondary education; or

(c) a program authorised by the International Baccalaureate Organisation.

Therefore, a school accredited for senior secondary education is required to offer subjects and courses approved as appropriate for senior secondary by QCAA.

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As previously addressed above in "Educational programs", non-State schools need to provide a breadth, depth and balance of learning appropriate to a student's phase of development and across a range of learning areas.

Students need to be provided with the opportunity to achieve a Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) or Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement (QCIA). For students to receive a QCE in particular, they must achieve the set amount of learning, in the set standard, in a set pattern, while meeting literacy and numeracy requirements. The flexibility of the QCE enables students to choose from a wide range of learning options to suit their interests and career goals.

The QCAA administers both the QCE and QCIA. Its requirements for senior certification are detailed in the *QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook*, which is available via the QCAA website. This handbook constitutes QCAA's primary guideline for senior secondary curriculum, assessment, certification and reporting. Schools offering the qualification to their students are required to follow these policies and procedures. Schools confirm their intention to do so by signing an annual certification agreement with the QCAA so that their students can be issued with certifications and statements at the end of the year.

A school may also apply to QCAA to have a program or syllabus endorsed as appropriate for senior secondary education. The QCAA then reviews the proposed program of learning or individual syllabus using criteria that assess its curriculum, assessment requirements and quality assurance processes.

In addition, a school's senior secondary educational program may also include–

(a) a vocational education and training course at level 1 or above under the Australian Qualifications Framework: and

(b) recognised studies under the *Education (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority) Act 2014*, part 4, division 5; and

(c) other courses, programs, studies or subjects decided by the school's governing body. [Importantly, these are in addition to, rather than instead of, the approved and endorsed programs or syllabus.]

The diversity of learners and differentiation (sections 9(1) and 11 of the Regulation)

The written educational program for non-State schools must have regard to the ages, abilities, aptitudes and development of the school's students and be responsive to the needs of the school's students.

The Australian Curriculum provides teachers with flexibility to cater for the diverse needs of students and to personalise their learning. Teachers understand the diversity in the students they teach and are responsible for organising learning opportunities to meet individual learning needs. Schools make adjustments to the curriculum to best meet the needs of the individual student and to ensure an inclusive curriculum (ACARA, June 2020).

Non-State schools are required to include specific references to how they will differentiate the curriculum for the needs of individual students within their written educational program. This is a requirement for accreditation and is essential to providing evidence of curriculum adjustments for the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on Students with Disabilities (NCCD).

Schools must be able to provide evidence of specific adjustments made for individual students (rather than a broad global statement). To cater for an individual student, specific adjustments may need to be made to curriculum, teaching and learning, assessment and reporting.

On application for accreditation, a school must have written processes about how it will identify students with a disability and how it will devise an educational program specific to the needs of students with a disability. However, the educational program may not yet have any adjustments until the school commences operation as the needs of specific students will not be apparent.

Students who are provided with a different year-level curriculum than their age cohort for a learning area or subject are assessed and reported against the achievement standard for the year-level curriculum they are taught.

As previously stated, the QCAA website provides further information for schools on supporting student diversity and making adjustments for personalised learning.

Special assistance schools

A special assistance school is a school accredited to provide a fee-free specialised education program for school-age disengaged young people who are not enrolled or attending other eligible education, training or employment options. These schools must meet requirements of section 14 of the *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017* and section 13 of the Regulation.

These schools must deliver:

- the Australian Curriculum and/or an alternative curriculum recognised by ACARA for students from preparatory year to year 10
- QCAA endorsed syllabi for senior secondary education (Years 11 and 12).

These schools may also include vocational education and training courses under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

Special assistance schools cater for a very diverse range of students, many of whom have had interrupted schooling. Students are often well behind their age or year-level peers. An important part of providing an engaging educational experience is flexibility. Many students in these settings face particular complexities accessing the Australian Curriculum achievement standards for the appropriate year level. While the school has the responsibility to offer and ensure the Australian Curriculum is accessible to all students, in these settings it may be at a different level to the achievement standards for the student's year level. Schools will need to adapt the educational program to cater for the capabilities of students.

In year 10, it may be more appropriate for these schools to offer students the QCAA Short Courses *in lieu* of some of the learning areas of the Australian Curriculum to prepare them to access a senior schooling pathway and work towards credits for the QCE.

The legislation requires the educational program for special assistance schools to promote continuous engagement by the school's relevant students in primary education or secondary education, and must 'have a written standard of service, appropriate to the school's relevant students achieving learning standards under the educational program'.

Special assistance schools, as part of their standard of service need to demonstrate the ways in which they engage and support students to achieve relevant courses and qualifications.

Appendices

Table 1: Guidelines on time allocations - preparatory year to year 6 [1*]

The following learning areas have achievement standards written for each year. Schools teach and assess **English, Mathematics and Science** in each semester every year from prep to year 6. Schools teach and assess **Humanities and Social Sciences** in at least one semester each year from prep to year 6. Schools ensure that there is continuity of content and concepts across the year levels/bands. Schools retain the flexibility to deliver and assess the curriculum contexts appropriate for the philosophy and aims of the school.

Learning Areas	Hours	Prep	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
English	Per year	270 - 320	270 - 320	270 - 320	220 - 280	220 -280	200 -280	200 - 280
	Per week	6.75 - 8	6.75 - 8	6.75 - 8	5.5 - 7	5.5 - 7	5 - 7	5 - 7
Mathematics	Per year	180 - 200	180 - 200	180 - 200	180 - 200	180 - 200	160 - 180	160 -180
	Per week	4.5 - 5	4.5 - 5	4.5 - 5	4.5 - 5	4.5 - 5	4 – 4.5	4 – 4.5
Science	Per year	40 - 60	40 - 60	40 - 60	70 - 80	70 - 80	70 - 80	70 - 80
	Per week	1 - 1.5	1 - 1.5	1 - 1.5	1.75 - 2	1.75 - 2	1.75 - 2	1.75 - 2
HaSS[2]	Per year	40	40	40	80	80	100 - 120	100 - 120
	Per week	1	1	1	2	2	2.5 - 3	2.5 - 3

The following learning areas have achievement standards written in bands of years. Schools make decisions about when they will teach and assess the learning areas in each band.

Learning Areas	Hours	Prep	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Health and Physical Education	Per band	80	160 (80 per year)		160 (80 per year)		160 (80 per year)	
	Per week	2	2		2		2	
The Arts[3]	Per band	120 (40 per year)			100 -120 (50 - 60 per year)		100 - 120 (50 - 60 per year)	
	Per week	1			1.25-1.5		1.25 – 1.5	
Technologies[4]ˣ	Per band	60 - 120 (20 - 40 per year)			80 (40 per year)		120 (60 per year)	
	Per week	30 min			1		1.5	
Languages[5]	Across P-6	240 hours						
	Per band	120 (40 per year)			80 (40 per year)		8 (40 per year)	

Notes:

(1) ˣ this guideline table has been developed from time allocation table provided by QCAA in June 2016 outlining ACARA's recommended time allocations per learning area with QCAA's proposed time allocations having some significant variances particularly in English (QCAA, June 2016, p.13).

(2) Schools implement **HaSS** (or as subjects) in at least one semester each year (or two semesters per band).

(3) **The Arts** can be implemented as individual disciplines or integrated. Students are offered the opportunity to engage with all Arts subjects across the preparatory year to year 6.

(4) **Technologies** (as separate subjects or integrated). ˣ QCAA recommends 40 minutes per year for preparatory year to year 2.

(5) **Languages** are encouraged to be implemented from preparatory year. QCAA allocations have been provided which are less than ACARA's allocations of 1.25 hours per week or 50 hours per year.

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Table 2: Guidelines on time allocations - years 7 and 8**

The following learning areas have achievement standards written for each year. Schools teach, assess and report on English, Mathematics and Science each semester in each year of years 7 and 8. In years 7 and 8 electives may be implemented and taught in semester units across the band, e.g. a semester of History, a semester of Geography etc. to ensure that all students have access to the curriculum. All students participate in Health and Physical Education, the Arts, Technologies and Languages.

Learning Areas		Hours	Year 7	Year 8
English		Per year	120 – up to 240	120 - 140
		Per week	3 - 6	3.5 hrs
Mathematics		Per year	120 – up to 200	120 - 140
Science		Per year	100	100 - 120
Humanities and Social Sciences[2]		Per year	120	
or **HaSS**[3]	History	Per year	40 - 50	40 - 50
	Geography	Per year	40 - 50	40 - 50
	Civics and Citizenship	Per year	20	20
	Economics and Business	Per year	20	20
The following learning areas and/or subjects have achievement standards written in bands of years. Schools make decisions about when they will teach, assess and report on the learning areas and/or subjects in each band.				
Health and Physical Education[4]		Per band	160	
The Arts[5]	Dance	Per band	160	
	Drama			
	Media Arts			
	Music			
	Visual Arts			
Technologies[6]	Digital Technologies	Per band	160	
	Design and Technologies			
Languages[7] (when available in schools)		Per band	160	

Notes:

(1) ** this guideline table has been developed from ACARA's allocation of indicative times in Curriculum Design Paper Version 3 and recommended time allocations for Queensland Department of Education, edited April 2020.

(2) In year 7 schools implement **Humanities and Social Sciences** OR the individual subjects offered as electives (History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship, and Economics and Business) each semester. This means that a student will typically do **HaSS** or History or Geography or Economics and Business or Civics and Citizenship or any combination of these, over the two semesters.

(3) In year 8 schools implement **History** for at least one semester and may offer the other subjects as electives.

(4) In years 7 and 8 **HPE** is offered for at least one semester each year or two semesters across the band.

(5) In years 7 and 8 schools offer at least ONE of **The Arts** subjects for one semester across the band.

(6) In years 7 and 8 schools offer both **Technology** subjects for at least ONE semester each across the band.

(7) **Languages** are encouraged across Year 7 and 8 to provide students with an opportunity to continue a language through years 9 and 10 and the senior years of schooling.

(8) Special Assistance Schools may modify the time allocations to meet the needs of individual students or groups of students.

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Table 3: Guidelines on time allocations - years 9 and 10***

The time allocations for years 9 and 10 recognise that in this band, English, Mathematics and Science are core for all students, while the other learning areas are implemented in ways that ensure that all students are able to access the curriculum through electives.

The following learning areas have achievement standards written for each year. Schools teach and assess **English**, **Mathematics** and **Science** each semester in each year of years 9 and 10, except in schools offering subjects *in lieu* of the Australian Curriculum.

In years 9 and 10 electives may be implemented and taught across the band. Thus, all students would complete not less than two semesters of:

- **History** AND **Geography** OR **Civics and Citizenship** OR **Economics** and **Business** to ensure that all students achieve knowledge, capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities critical to their future in the Australian democracy and economy, as well as essential for their future work and study pathways.
- **Languages** in years 9 and 10 are offered as electives.

Learning Areas		Hours	Year 9	Year 10
English		Per year	120 - 140	120 - 130
Mathematics		Per year	120 - 140	120 - 130
Science		Per year	120	110 - 120
Humanities and Social Sciences	History	Per year	40 - 50	45 - 50
	Geography	Per year	40 - 50	45 - 50
	Economics and Business	Per year	40 - 50	45 - 50
	Civics and Citizenship	Per year	20	20

The following learning areas and/or subjects have achievement standards written in bands of years. Schools make decisions about when they will teach, assess and report on the learning areas and/or subjects in each band. Students make choices from HPE, The Arts, Technologies and Languages as electives according to the schedule below, i.e. if students choose an elective, the elective should offer the prescribed hours so that students are equipped for success in the senior secondary subjects.

Health and Physical Education		Per band	75	75
The Arts (as electives)	Dance	Per band	150	
	Drama			
	Media Arts			
	Music			
	Visual Arts			
Technologies (offered as electives)	Digital Technologies	Per band	150	
	Design and Technologies			
Languages (as elective)		Per band	150	

☐ Schools implement Australian Curriculum as electives in years 9 and 10.

(1) *** this guideline table has been developed from ACARA's allocation of indicative times in Curriculum Design Paper Version 3 and recommended time allocations for Queensland Department of Education, edited April 2020.

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