

Section 3: Course design

Course structure

The syllabus for new courses includes the following elements.

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| Rationale | The rationale defines the course in terms of its unifying ideas and makes explicit the purpose for learning in broad terms. |
| Outcomes | The outcomes are statements of what students should know, understand, value and be able to do as a result of what they are taught and what they learn in a course. |
| Course content | A broad structure for the organisation of the content is provided, along with details about the major content areas that are further elaborated in each of the course units. |
| Course units | The units and their content are structured from stage P (in some courses), to stage 3. The cognitive difficulty of the content increases with each stage and is referenced to the broad development of learning described in the course standards. |
| Time allocation and course completion | Requirements and time allocation for course completion are outlined. |
| Assessment | The types of assessment required for the course, the weightings of these types and the guidelines specific to the assessment for the course are provided. |
| Examination details | Requirements for examinations are identified. |
| Vocational education and training information | Information about integrating VET with courses is included for schools wishing to provide students with the opportunity to achieve VET units of competency while studying the course. Details of the relevant training packages are also provided. |
| Resources | Any recommended or set text lists are provided here. Reference is also made to a detailed list of relevant textbooks, teacher references, teacher guides and manuals that can be found at www.det.wa.edu.au/education/cmis/eval/curriculum/courses/ . |
| Unit syllabus | A separate syllabus is provided for each course unit. The unit syllabus includes information about the focus of the unit, provides some suggested learning contexts and gives details about the specific content that needs to be taught. |
| Course standards | The course standards describe, in broad terms, the expectations of learning for students in the different stage units P-3. In teaching a particular course unit, teachers use the course standards along with the unit content to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan appropriate lessons and activities for their students • develop specific assessment tasks • develop task-specific marking keys that reflect the intent of the course standards. |

The relationship of course standards to unit content

Course standards, along with content, will be used by teachers to guide the development and planning of their teaching and learning programs. They also provide direction in the development of assessments and associated marking keys. Levels and bands are no longer used as the scale to assess students directly or for reporting student performance to students (except for Year 12 students in 2007 only).

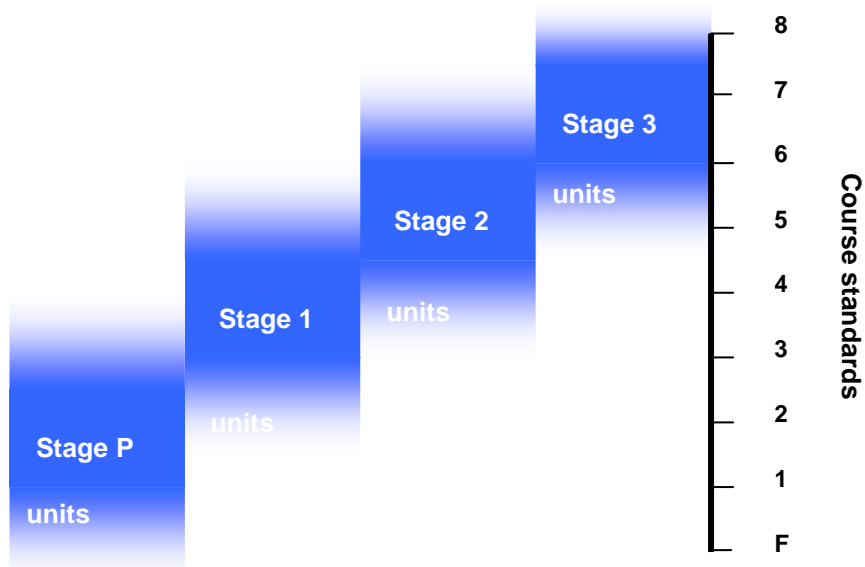
The cognitive difficulty of the content of units increases with each stage (preliminary, one, two and three) and is referenced to the broad development of learning described in the course standards.

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| Stage P units | Stage P units are designed for students with high support needs who are generally located in education support centres or who have learning difficulties in mainstream schools. The content is pitched at the foundation level and levels 1 and 2. Post-school pathways may include TAFE and the workplace. |
| Stage 1 units | Stage 1 units provide bridging support and a practical and applied focus to help students develop skills required for them to be successful upon leaving school or in the transition to stage 2 units. The content is generally pitched at levels 3 to 4. Post-school pathways generally include TAFE, apprenticeships, traineeships and the workplace. |
| Stage 2 units | Stage 2 units provide opportunities for applied learning with more focus on academic learning for transition to stage 3 or post-school options including TAFE, apprenticeships and traineeships, university and the workplace. The content is generally pitched at levels 4 to 6. |
| Stage 3 units | Stage 3 units provide opportunities to extend knowledge and understandings in academic learning contexts. The content is generally pitched at levels 6 to 8. The post-school pathway is typically university with some students opting for the workplace or to enrol in TAFE courses. |

In planning what to teach, teachers:

- read the course as a whole to understand its structure, how the content develops and to clarify the outcomes and expectations of learning of students in each stage, as described in the course standards, and
- refer directly to the unit/s to be taught to determine the specific content and the learning contexts available and the relevant parts of the course standards: for example, if units 2A and 2B are to be taught, then reference will be made generally to course standards levels 4 to 6 (see diagram 1).

Diagram 1: Course standards and unit content



Content

In Politics and Law, the content organisers are the same for each unit; however, they spiral in difficulty from Unit 1A to Unit 3B and relate to the unit description of each unit.

The content organisers are:

- Political and legal research
- Political and legal systems
- Political and legal issues

These content organisers reflect the outcomes. Political and legal research reflects Outcomes 1 and 4; Political and legal systems reflects Outcomes 2, 3 and 4; and Political and legal issues reflects Outcomes 2, 3 and 4.

The unit content is used to help develop a teaching/learning program. It will also be the source of examination questions.

Course contexts

The contexts for Politics and Law are the institutions, processes and practices of politics and law in Australia and where specified in the unit content, other systems. These are developed over the six units and are set out more specifically in the unit descriptions:

- Unit 1APAL: political and legal decision-making
- Unit 1BPAL: civil and political rights
- Unit 2APAL: political and legal systems
- Unit 2BPAL: representation and justice
- Unit 3APAL: political and legal power
- Unit 3BPAL: rights and governance

Within each context there are a variety of areas of study from which to choose. Teachers should choose an area of study from within the selected units which best suits their students. Examples of areas of study are set out in the unit learning contexts for each unit.

Scope and Sequence

| Course | pp. 9–10 | pp. 11–12 | pp. 13–14 | pp. 15–16 | pp. 17–18 | pp. 19–20 |
|------------------------------------|--|--|---|---|---|--|
| Content organiser | Unit 1A Political and legal decision-making | Unit 1B Civil and political rights | Unit 2A Australia's political and legal system | Unit 2B Representation and justice | Unit 3A Political and legal power | Unit 3B Rights and governance |
| Political and legal systems | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • principles of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the rule of law ▪ democracy ▪ representative government ▪ citizenship • characteristics and functions of laws • types of decision-making with reference to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ at least one democratic model ▪ at least one non democratic model • citizenship with reference to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the ways individuals can participate in the Australian political and legal system and at least one other system ▪ the ways groups can participate in the Australian political and legal system and at least one other system • how laws are made in Australia and at least one other political and legal system • how laws are enforced in Australia and at least one other political and legal system. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • principles of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ natural justice ▪ rule of law ▪ civil rights ▪ fairness • ways individuals can resolve disputes in political and legal systems • factors that promote and limit access to dispute resolution processes • ways political and legal decision-making can promote or undermine people's civil rights in Western Australia and at least one other political and legal system. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • principles of: democracy, rule of law, separation of powers, sovereignty of parliament, division of powers, representative government, responsible government, constitutionalism, federalism and citizenship • the roles of the legislative, executive and judicial arms of government • structures of political and legal systems including at least one democratic and one non democratic system • the structure of Australia's political and legal system • the key internal and external influences on the structure of Australia's political and legal system; nationalism, defence, economic, immigration the Westminster system of government, English common law and the American, Canadian and Swiss federal systems • types of laws made by parliaments, courts and subordinate authorities • legislative processes at state and national levels • the court hierarchy, rules of statutory interpretation and the doctrine of precedent • key processes of civil and criminal trials in Western Australia • key processes of at least one non common law system. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the principles of fair elections and natural justice • theory and practice of political representation: delegate, partisan, representative and mirror representation • the Western Australian and Commonwealth electoral and voting systems since Federation • the advantages and disadvantages Australia's electoral and voting systems • at least one electoral system of another country • ways individuals and political parties and pressure groups can participate in Australia's electoral processes • strengths and weaknesses of Western Australia's civil and criminal law processes • the role of mediation in the judicial process in theory and in practice • strengths and weaknesses of at least one non common law system's processes and procedures. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • principles of executive, legislative and judicial power in theory and in practice in Australia and at least one other political and legal system • federalism in Australia • constitutional powers of state and commonwealth parliaments • functions of the commonwealth parliament in theory and in practice • roles and powers of the Prime minister, cabinet and the ministry • roles and powers of the opposition and the shadow ministry at the commonwealth level • the role and powers of the public sector in theory and in practice with reference to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ state or commonwealth police ▪ the Director of Public Prosecutions at the state or commonwealth level ▪ at least one tribunal at the state or commonwealth level ▪ the Corruption and Crime Commission or at least one government inquiry. • political mandates in theory and in practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ lawmaking with reference to the roles and influence of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ individuals ▪ political parties ▪ pressure groups ▪ public opinion ▪ the media | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the principles of governance with reference to democracy, natural justice, the rule of law, rights, participation, open government, equity, consensus, effectiveness, and accountability • the accountability of the executive with reference to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ elected leaders ▪ government bodies • the accountability in theory and in practice of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ parliaments ▪ the executive including tribunals ▪ the courts • types of rights: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ civil ▪ political ▪ economic ▪ social ▪ cultural • the roles in political and legal systems of international: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ rights ▪ covenants ▪ protocols and treaties • constitutional, common law and statutory rights and their application in Australia and at least one other country • governance: the ways Australia and at least one other country can uphold or undermine democratic principles and citizenship practices with reference to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ natural justice ▪ the rule of law ▪ exercising of power ▪ judicial independence ▪ representation ▪ popular participation. |

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| Content organiser | Unit 1A Political and legal decision-making | Unit 1B Civil and political rights | Unit 2A Australia's political and legal system | Unit 2B Representation and justice | Unit 3A Political and legal power | Unit 3B Rights and governance |
| Political and legal systems | | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • internal and external factors influencing the exercise of political and legal power in Australia with reference to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ events ▪ internationalism ▪ globalisation • role and powers of the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supreme Court of Western Australia ▪ The High Court of Australia • methods of constitutional change: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ referendums ▪ High Court decisions ▪ referral of powers ▪ unchallenged legislation • methods of judicial interpretation: • legalism and activism with reference to at least one common law decision and one constitutional decision. | |

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|----------------------------|---|---|--|---|---|--|
| Content organiser | Unit 1A Political and legal decision-making | Unit 1B Civil and political rights | Unit 2A Australia's political and legal system | Unit 2B Representation and justice | Unit 3A Political and legal power | Unit 3B Rights and governance |
| Political and legal issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> at least one issue centering on political decision-making at least one issue centering on legal decision-making. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> civil and political rights of people in Western Australia and at least one other system at least one issue that relates to an individual's civil rights. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> at least one contemporary issue involving the legislative process at least one contemporary issue involving the judicial process. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> at least one contemporary issue centering on representation at least one contemporary issue centering on justice at least one proposal to reform Australia's electoral and voting systems at least one proposal to reform Western Australia's civil and or criminal law process. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> at least one reform proposal to change the Australian Constitution at least one contemporary issue relating to political power at least one contemporary issue relating to legal power. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the experience of rights and citizenship in terms of the access and equity of at least one individual or group in Australia the experience of rights and citizenship in terms of the access and equity of at least one individual or group in at least one other country. |

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|------------------------------|----------------------|---|---|--|---|--|---|
| Content organiser | | Unit 1A Political and legal decision-making | Unit 1B Civil and political rights | Unit 2A Australia's political and legal system | Unit 2B Representation and justice | Unit 3A Political and legal power | Unit 3B Rights and governance |
| Political and legal research | Research | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifying and defining principles describing and discussing the operation and key features of political and legal systems. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifying and defining principles describing and discussing the operation and key features of political and legal systems. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifying, defining and analysing principles describing, discussing and analysing the operation and key features of political and legal systems analysing statute law, common law, political decisions and legal decisions distinguishing between fact and opinion, theory and practice and formal and informal processes identifying alternative conclusions identifying or proposing solutions predicting intended or unintended consequences. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifying, defining and analysing principles describing, discussing and analysing the operation and key features of political and legal systems: analysing statute law, common law, political decisions and legal decisions distinguishing between fact and opinion, theory and practice and formal and informal processes identifying alternative conclusions identifying or proposing solutions predicting intended or unintended consequences. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifying, defining, analysing and evaluating principles describing, discussing, analysing and evaluating the key features of political and legal systems: analysing statute law, common law, political decisions and legal decisions distinguishing between fact and opinion, theory and practice and formal and informal processes identifying and evaluating alternative conclusions identifying or proposing solutions predicting intended or unintended consequences. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifying, defining, analysing and evaluating principles describing, discussing, analysing and evaluating the key features of political and legal systems analysing statute law, common law, political decisions and legal decisions distinguishing between fact and opinion, theory and practice and formal and informal processes identifying and evaluating alternative conclusions identifying or proposing solutions predicting intended or unintended consequences. |
| | Communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> political and legal formats, terminology and techniques to suit an audience methods to acknowledge and reference sources. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> political and legal formats, terminology and techniques to suit an audience methods to acknowledge and reference sources. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> political and legal formats, terminology and techniques to suit an audience methods to acknowledge and reference sources. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> political and legal formats, terminology and techniques to suit an audience methods to acknowledge and reference sources. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> political and legal formats, terminology and techniques to suit an audience methods to acknowledge and reference sources. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> political and legal formats, terminology and techniques to suit an audience methods to acknowledge and reference sources. |