

Section 3: Course design

Course structure

The syllabus for new courses includes the following elements.

Rationale	The rationale defines the course in terms of its unifying ideas and makes explicit the purpose for learning in broad terms.
Course outcomes	The course 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 outcome progressions.
Time allocation and completion requirements	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.
Grades	Grade descriptors are used in reporting student achievement at the end of a course unit. The grades package for this course is available at http://newwace.curriculum.wa.edu.au/pages/home.asp .
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/cmisis/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.
Outcome progressions	The outcome progressions describe, in broad terms, the expectations of learning for students. In teaching a particular course unit, teachers use the outcome progressions along with the unit content to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan appropriate lessons and activities for their students • develop specific assessment tasks and marking keys.

The relationship of outcome progressions to unit content

Outcome progressions, along with content, should 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).

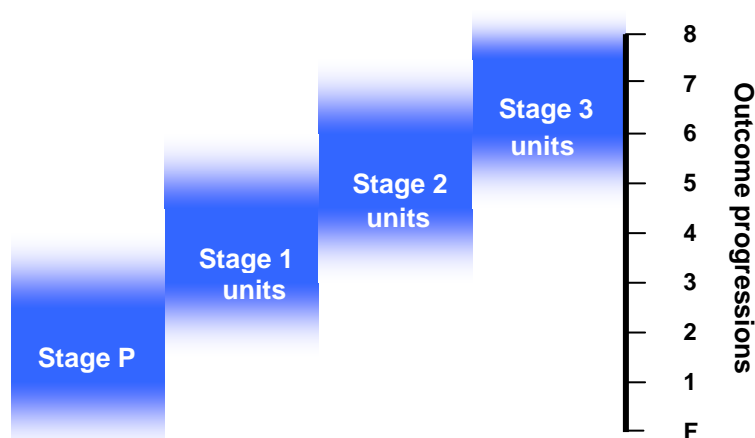
The cognitive difficulty of the content of units increases with each stage (preliminary, one, two and three) and is referenced to the broad development of learning described in the outcome progressions.

Stage P units	Stage P units provide opportunities for practical and well supported learning to help students develop skills required for them to be successful upon leaving school or in the transition to stage 1 units. The content is pitched at Foundation and levels 1–2. Post-school pathways may include TAFE and the workplace.
Stage 1 units	Units in stage 1 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 may 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. The content is generally pitched at levels 4 to 6. Post-school options may include TAFE, apprenticeships and traineeships, university and the workplace.
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.
- 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 outcome progressions.

Diagram 1: Outcome progressions and unit content



Content

The course content is divided into three content areas and each connects to one of three branches of philosophy:

- how do we know? (epistemology)
- what is real? (metaphysics)
- how should we live? (ethics)

Each content area spirals in difficulty up through the stages and contains content organisers that run across all the units. The content organisers refer to key concepts and issues in Philosophy and Ethics which allow for scope, depth and complexity in teaching and learning.

Content organisers are:

- How do we know?
 - Critical reasoning
 - Methods of inquiry
 - Imagination and interpretation
 - Analysing, clarifying and evaluating concepts
- What is real?
 - Scientific world view
 - Conceptions of ultimate reality
 - Persons
- How should we live?
 - Governance
 - Communities and cultures
 - Self and others

Content organisers are used to plan a teaching program for a unit and can be cross referenced. For example, a two week focus on Persons can also include a focus on Self and others, or a focus on Governance. The arrangement of the content organisers in a program is a matter of teacher autonomy, depending on learning contexts, interests and texts used.

Learning contexts

The course content for Philosophy and Ethics is elaborated through unit learning contexts which are neither exhaustive nor prescriptive. Each unit provides a list of learning contexts which may be used by teachers. Alternatively, teachers may provide other learning contexts so long as these learning contexts fit the course content and the unit description.

Content organiser	Scope and sequencing chart—How do we know?					
	Unit 1A	Unit 1B	Unit 2A	Unit 2B	Unit 3A	Unit 3B
Critical reasoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognition of facts and giving reasons for opinions the use of experience and other kinds of evidence to understand problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understanding what it means to make an inference recognising the role of assumptions and intuitions in reasoning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognising and evaluating an argument in terms of its premises, inferences and conclusions recognising argument in a variety of texts as distinct from description, narration and/or explanation understanding modus ponens and modus tollens. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> distinguishing between strong and weak arguments identifying some of the major informal fallacies e.g. the genetic fallacy, ad hominem arguments, hasty generalisation, argument from irrelevant authority, argument from ignorance and equivocation identifying formal fallacies e.g. denying the antecedent and affirming the consequent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mapping and evaluating simple arguments in diagram form exploring more informal fallacies e.g. appeal to adverse consequences such as scare tactics, false dichotomy, begging the question and straw man identifying weasel words, e.g. intentionally ambiguous words. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mapping and evaluating complex arguments in diagram form exploring more fallacies e.g. the definist fallacy, post hoc ergo propter hoc, non sequitur, and confusion of correlation and causation distinguishing between analytic and synthetic statements.
Methods of inquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognising and being able to ask both closed (fact-based) and open (debatable) questions formulating simple hypotheses and using practical observations to obtain evidence for or against these hypotheses understanding the idea of goodness in inquiry types of inquiry: dialogue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the use of examples and counter-examples in arguing for or against a proposition diagnosing, from practical observation, a range of problems and generating and testing hypotheses to resolve these types of inquiry: elenchus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> distinction between empirical evidence and rational proof inductive and deductive arguments observation and thought-experiment types of inquiry: dialectic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the use of observation, hypotheses and theories in constructing explanations the role of metaphor and analogy in inquiry types of inquiry: hermeneutics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the scientific method in philosophical and ethical inquiry the method of sceptical doubt in philosophical and ethical inquiry types of inquiry: phenomenology exploring a school of thought e.g. Marxism, feminism, post-colonialism, existentialism, Confucianism and Taoism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> limitations of the scientific method in philosophical and ethical inquiry limitations to sceptical doubt in philosophical and ethical inquiry exploring a school of thought e.g. scholasticism, postmodernism, empiricism, rationalism, idealism, positivism, intuitionism.

Content organiser	Scope and sequencing chart—How do we know?					
	Unit 1A	Unit 1B	Unit 2A	Unit 2B	Unit 3A	Unit 3B
Imagination and interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the distinction between invention and discovery devising possible ways of solving problems using imagination and interpretation 'lateral' thinking as an act of imagination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use of imagination to develop different types of questions use of imaginative analogies in developing arguments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> distinction between perception, introspection, rational reflection and imagination various sources of imagination such as dreams, daydreams, subconscious thought, intentional reflection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> interpreting works of art such as painting, sculpture, music, and/or film interpreting literature such as poetry, drama, novels and/or short stories criteria for good interpretations e.g. coherence, consistency, comprehensiveness and consilience imagination as a necessary element in interpretation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the idea of a good society the concepts of utopia and dystopia in works of imagination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> religion as an interpretation of religious and mystical experiences comparison with scientific 'experience' interpretative methodologies and the possibility of misinterpretation.
Analysing, clarifying and evaluating concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the concepts of work, leisure and play understanding what an obligation is and recognising that some obligations are mutual the concepts of safety, duty, harm and benefit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> concepts of pleasure, happiness and wellbeing as examples of conceptual clarification the concept of a game the concept of fairness in games, and the role of umpires and other arbitrators in games the concept of fairness in a broader social context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> concepts of mind, body and personhood concepts of action, intention, will, motives and reasons the idea of free will. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> various aesthetic concepts such as beauty, taste, judgement, appreciation, symmetry, form and harmony the concept of interpretation use of symbols, signs and signification (semiosis) to understand the world disputes about realism and the limits of interpretation e.g. modernism and postmodernism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the concepts of justice, fairness, liberty, tolerance and democracy criteria for a good society e.g. communication, security, education, health and welfare, parenting and agreed decision-making processes and procedures ideas of the common good and of public goods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the concept of theism and the various forms of theism e.g. monotheism, polytheism, animism, pantheism and panentheism ideas of divinity e.g. personified, impersonal, transcendent and immanent concepts of naturalism, materialism, atheism and agnosticism.

Content organiser	Scope and sequencing chart—What is real?					
	Unit 1A	Unit 1B	Unit 2A	Unit 2B	Unit 3A	Unit 3B
Scientific world view	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> distinction between subjective judgement and objective information, and how science uses these concepts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> connections between science and technology criteria for evaluating new technologies the idea of material/scientific progress and its relationship to human happiness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> science as a way of classifying the world and constructing our understanding of what is real in human nature different ideas of human nature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> perception and aesthetic appreciation the concept of objectivity understanding the idea of 'subjectivity'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> various relationships between science and society the idea of a 'social science'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> different definitions of science and reason evolution and religion Darwin's theory of evolution as an example of scientific theorising.
Conceptions of ultimate reality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> different ways of thinking about ultimate reality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> different ideas of what is a good life and how to achieve it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the conceptual difficulties of free-will, determinism and agency (human action) concepts of change and causation different theories of causation the idea of universal causation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use of symbols and concepts to understand the way things are ideas of truth, representation and reality and their interrelationship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> social dimension of religions and other world views humanism, secular society, religion and ultimate values. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> religious and non-religious ideas of the meaning of life death and the meaning of life theism and the problem of evil.
Persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> general characteristics that help to define being a person such as consciousness, reason, language, social membership, emotions, intentional actions, creativity, embodiment, accountability, responsibility, and authenticity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the ideas of pleasure, happiness, fulfilment and wellbeing material wellbeing and psychological wellbeing roles of family and friendship in wellbeing the idea of personal autonomy the idea of authenticity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the concept of being 'an individual' relationship between individuals and societies the social element in individual identity personal identity, gender, race, class and ethnicity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> interrelationships between personhood, emotion and reason emotions and emotional responses e.g. how artwork, music, literature and film can help us to understand better. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> idea of social identity and social membership social conformity and the idea of individualism the concept of marginalisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ideas of faith, belief, knowledge, reason and meaning, and their interrelationships self-sacrifice, marginalisation and authentic social roles e.g. parenting and employment.

Content organiser	Scope and sequencing chart—How should we live?					
	Unit 1A	Unit 1B	Unit 2A	Unit 2B	Unit 3A	Unit 3B
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the nature of laws distinction between laws and rules legal and moral rights the basis for rights fairness and rights. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the concept of rights various sources of rights the concept of leadership various forms of leadership social roles of umpires, judges, law-makers and citizens. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> various forms of contractual relationships such as employment and citizenship various forms of non-contractual relationships such as families and friendships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> freedom of expression the limits of privacy government interference and surveillance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the idea of a social contract and its forms the concept of liberal democracy and its forms concepts of liberty and liberalism values of liberal democracy the concept of a republic and its relationship to the idea of democracy social policy, social planning and public goods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> citizenship, civic involvement, the public sphere and meaningful lives.
Communities and cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> various kinds of paid and unpaid work relationship between work and community life voluntary community work the value of work to individuals, families and more broadly, what counts as good work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the diversity of cultural mores understanding cultural differences cultural differences and human happiness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> characteristics of patriarchy and matriarchy and non-sexist societies characteristics of indigenous, colonial and post-colonial societies justice, fairness and power relations e.g. race, gender and class. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the concept of culture e. g. consumer culture, sporting culture and intellectual culture the anthropological concept of culture the artistic concept of culture self-expression and culture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> concepts of shame, guilt and saving face in different cultures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the possibility of moral standards, values and rules that apply in all cultures e.g. moral universalism and moral absolutism standards, values and rules that are right for one culture, but not another e.g. moral particularism and cultural relativism.

Content organiser	Scope and sequencing chart—How should we live?					
	Unit 1A	Unit 1B	Unit 2A	Unit 2B	Unit 3A	Unit 3B
Self and others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rights of individuals moral and legal duties to others identification of some of the moral virtues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the concept of friendship the value and importance of friendship ethics of friendship e.g. responsibility, accountability, fulfilment, right, wrong peer pressure and friendship moral virtues and friendship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ways in which the cultivation of virtues and avoidance of vices are important in the development of a personal ethic and personal responsibility the concept of care e.g. care for, care about and taking care the role of principled decisions in ethics e.g. the Golden Rule. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> friendship and other personal relationships authenticity and social responsibility the I-thou relationship as a fundamental element of ethics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the idea of social responsibility obligations to those in my society and to those outside my society obligations society has to people and the person obligations to the non-human world the idea of moral considerations when making moral judgements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ethical issues of life and death such as murder, manslaughter, killing in war, abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment and the killing of animals.