

# Curriculum, assessment, reporting and certification for early childhood to Year 12 - policy

Northern Territory Board of Studies

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## 1. Legislative context

The *Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth)* in accordance with the Australian Education Regulations 2023 (Cth), defines national requirements for schools regarding the implementation of curriculum, and the provision of student reports, and how those reports are to be presented. Additionally, the national legislation also stipulates the requirement of schools to participate in the national assessment program.

The Northern Territory (NT) *Education Act 2015* (the Act) is the legislative foundation for the provision of school education in the NT. Part 2 Division 1 of the Act enables the Minister for Education to provide education services to all children and young people, in all sectors, in the NT.

Under the direction and control of the Minister for Education, the Chief Executive (CE) of the Department of Education has broad authority and responsibility for the curricula and standards of education in NT Government schools, in line with section 85 of the Act. Section 85(2)(a) states that the CE may, subject to the advice of Northern Territory Board of Studies (the Board), make available any examination, assessment systems or arrangements the CE considers necessary or desirable. Section 85(3) specifies that this includes making arrangements with one or more of the states or another territory that administers educational services, for the provision of them in the NT. Consistent with subsection 85(4), the CE may issue guidelines for or in relation to curricula or teaching methods. All NT Government schools must comply with any procedures or guidelines published under that subsection.

Approved early childhood education and care services (approved services) in the NT are regulated under the National Quality Framework (NQF) which operates under an applied law system, comprising the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Vic)* (the National Law) and the Education and Care Services National Regulations (the National Regulations) The National Law is adopted in the NT under the *Education and Care Services (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011*.

Pursuant to section 9(5) of that Act, the CE is the Regulatory Authority. Under section 262 of the National Law, the Regulatory Authority has delegated specific functions and powers to Quality Education and Care NT to administer the National Law and National Regulations in the NT.

### 1.1. Northern Territory Board of Studies

The Board is a statutory body established by section 24 of the Act.

Section 25 of the Act details the Board's functions, which includes providing advice to the minister and CE on curriculum policy in relation to:

- establishing and maintaining curriculum frameworks that address the needs of all students in the NT school education system
- establishing and maintaining procedures for student assessment, reporting and certification
- monitoring, evaluating and reporting on student performances
- improving student outcomes.

Section 35 of the Act provides the Board with the power to determine the certificates to be issued to a person in respect to the person's educational achievements, and to issue certificates to a person whose educational achievements qualify the person for the certificate.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all government and non-government schools and approved services in the NT.

## 3. Policy

In December 2019 all Australian Education Ministers committed to the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration (the Mparntwe Declaration). The Ministers declared the first Education Goal for Young Australians to be that the Australian education system promotes excellence and equity. Their eighth Commitment to Action was delivering world-class curriculum and assessment.

This policy supports the intent of the Mparntwe Declaration.

In delivering learning, educators must recognise and understand the diverse circumstances of children, young people, families and communities of the NT. Diversity needs to be understood and responded to by creating supportive, respectful and safe learning environments. Educators must provide appropriately challenging and supportive curriculum, assessment and educational pathways for all learners to optimise their engagement, learning, growth and achievement. This requires that educators have an awareness, understanding and responsiveness to cultural differences that may require differentiated approaches when delivering curricula and assessing progress.

Approved services and schools must comply with all relevant legislation, regulations, agreements and other national imperatives when planning and implementing their curriculum, assessment, reporting and certification practices.

### 3.1. Curriculum

Approved services and schools in the NT must use a curriculum which meets the requirements of the relevant legislation. The Board endorses the following curricula, appropriate to each main learning stage.

- Approved services and Transition to Year 2 education services use the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF).
- Transition to Year 10 use the current Australian Curriculum. Vocational Education and Training (VET) may be delivered in addition to the Australian Curriculum in Years 9 and 10. Stage 1 Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET) subjects may be delivered in Year 10.
- Years 11 and 12 use the NTCET, which incorporates South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) subjects and VET.
- The Indigenous Languages and Cultures curriculum may be used by schools in conjunction with the Australian Curriculum for the teaching of Aboriginal cultures and languages.

The use of an alternative curriculum framework may be approved through consultation with stakeholders, including, but not limited to, the department and the Board. Alternative curriculum frameworks must be formally recognised as meeting the requirements of the Australian Curriculum by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) Alternative Curriculum Recognition Committee.

Approval for use of curricula other than the EYLF for approved services, requires approval by the Ministerial Council as per the National Law.

## 3.2. Assessment

Regulation 74(1) of the National Regulations requires that educators employed in a regulated service ensure assessments of each child's developmental needs, interests, experiences, participation and progress against the outcomes of the educational program are documented.

Approved services, including preschools must use assessment practices informed by the principles, practices and outcomes of the EYLF.

Educators in Transition to Year 10 must assess all learners' progress and achievement using a balanced range of evidence collected against the Australian Curriculum achievement standards, or against the standards of the alternative approved curriculum. English as an additional language/dialect (EAL/D) learners must be assessed using the NT EAL/D learning progressions.

Educators in Years 11 and 12 must assess learners using the requirements of the subject-specific SACE Subject Outline, or the requirements relative to the alternative approved curriculum. Students studying Vocation Education and Training (VET) must be assessed against the relevant criteria for the VET qualification.

Schools must administer the prescribed national and systemic assessments within the National Assessment Program (NAP) annually. School must distribute the relevant reports to parents.

If selected, schools must participate in other assessment programs such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), as required by section 43(1) of the Australian Education Regulations 2023.

## 3.3. Reporting

Approved services, including preschools must:

- display information about the program in a place that is accessible to parents
- make available a copy of the educational program upon request by an authorised officer
- upon request, provide parents with a copy of the educational program as it relates to their child, information about their child's participation and any documents related to the assessment and evaluation of their child.

Schools must provide a written report to parents for each learner in Transition to Year 10 at least twice a year. This report must:

- be readily understandable to the parent
- be an accurate and objective assessment of the learner's progress and achievement, including an assessment of the learner's achievement:
  - against the Australian Curriculum Achievement Standards, unless they are using an alternative curriculum framework, in which case they are required to report student achievement against the relevant standards outlined in the alternative curriculum framework
  - relative to the performance of the learner's peer group
  - reported as A, B, C, D, or E, or an equivalent 5.0 point scale for each subject studied, clearly defined against specific learning standards.

Transition learners and learners on Education Adjustment Plans (EAP) may have varied reporting requirements.

Schools are required to report to parents of EAL/D learners twice a year using Australian Curriculum EAL/D phases.

Schools must report against the NTCET subject specific performance standards or approved curriculum for Year 11 and 12 learners following the SACE policies, procedures and guidelines. Progress and achievement reporting to parents must occur at least twice a year.

## 3.4. Certification

### 3.4.1. Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training

The Board is the certifying authority for the NTCET. The Board has determined that the NTCET will be based on and administered by SACE. Senior secondary schools must follow the SACE policies, guidelines and procedures in the delivery of the NTCET. Completion is undertaken in two stages – Stage 1 is usually in Year 11 and Stage 2 is usually in Year 12.

Learners must complete 200 credits of study to obtain the NTCET and individual subjects may be 10 credits – equal to one semester of study, or 20 credits – equal to two semesters. Learners must complete a number of compulsory elements with an A, B or C grade and this includes the Exploring Identities and Futures (EIF) subject, usually completed in Year 10. In addition to the compulsory elements, learners must achieve an A, B or C grade in at least 140 credits.

#### 3.4.1.1. Vocational Education and Training

Learning through vocational education and training may contribute to credit completion at both Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the NTCET. All VET Delivered to Secondary Students (VETDSS) qualifications or units of competency that make up a qualification in the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) can contribute to the completion requirements of the NTCET.

The SACE Board must determine whether the SACE credits earned for a particular VET qualification are recognised at Stage 1 or Stage 2 level as outlined in the VET Qualification Guidelines.

## 4. Related legislation, policy and more information

### 4.1. Legislation

- *Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth)* – <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C2013A00067>
- *Australian Education Regulations 2023 (Cth)* – <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2023C00719>
- *Education Act 2015* – <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Legislation/EDUCATION-ACT-2015>
- *Education Regulations* – <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/EDUCATION-REGULATIONS-2015>
- *Education and Care Services (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011* adopts the National Law in the NT – <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Legislation/EDUCATION-AND-CARE-SERVICES-NATIONAL-UNIFORM-LEGISLATION-ACT-2011>

- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Vic)* – <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/education-and-care-services-national-law-act-2010/019>
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (NSW)* – <https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2011-0653>
- Education and care services are regulated by the National Quality Framework – <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework>

## 4.2. Policy

- Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration – <https://www.dese.gov.au/indigenous-education/resources/alice-springs-mparntwe-education-declaration>
- Pre-compulsory years of schooling: Early Years Learning Framework Policy – <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/pre-compulsory-years-of-schooling-early-years-learning-framework>

## 4.3. More information

- NT Board of Studies – <https://education.nt.gov.au/committees-regulators-and-advisory-groups/northern-territory-board-of-studies>

Acronyms	Full form
ACARA	Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Agency
AQF	Australian Qualification Framework
CE	Chief Executive
EAL/D	English as an Additional Language/Dialect
EAP	Education Adjustment Plan
EIF	Exploring Identities and Futures
EYLF	Early Years Learning Framework
ILC	Indigenous Languages and Culture
NAP	National Assessment Program
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
NQF	National Quality Framework
NT	Northern Territory
NTBOS	Northern Territory Board of Studies
NTCET	Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
SACE	South Australian Certificate of Education

Acronyms	Full form
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VETDSS	VET Delivered to Secondary Students

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Version	Date	Author	Changes made
1	August 2021	Early Years and Education Services	First version - 50:D21:45942
2	December 2023	School Review and Operational Policy	Major review to update the legislative context and align to current Australian Curriculum.