



BLOOM-ED

LEARNING AREA: HEALTH & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY (HPE)

Please start by viewing the background information and proposed revisions to HPE [here](#).

Comparative information between current and proposed versions of the HPE curriculum can be found [here](#).

Instructions

Section 1 of the survey asks for your background information and asks you to nominate the levels, and the specific subjects (where relevant) that you wish to comment on.

Select Health and Physical Education.

Section 2 asks you to respond to several statements about the introductory section (the rationale, aims, organisation of the learning area, key connections and key considerations) and curriculum elements (level descriptions, achievement standards, content descriptions and content elaborations).

You will also be invited to add your general comments about what has improved and what needs further refinement across all year levels.

To make your submission to the Australian Curriculum Review Consultation click on this [link](#)

Note: You will need to scroll to the bottom of their page and select "click to start your survey"

Improvements

If you would like to provide feedback about general aspects of the revised learning area/subject (HPE) that **have improved**, consider the following:

- One of the key considerations for schools, in the in delivery of the HPE curriculum, is to meet the needs of diverse learners. The following statement (pp. 25-26) is commendable, particularly in light of the language used to describe the importance of inclusive education that is relevant to lived experience.

"... when teaching about reproduction and sexual health, to ensure that the needs of all students are met, including students who may be same-sex attracted, gender diverse or intersex."

- It is pleasing to see the revised curriculum comprehensively address the issue of consent. There is strong acknowledgement of various factors related to consent, such as communication, negotiation, empathy, boundary setting, stereotypes, power, coercion, and violence.



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To make it clearer for schools, that relationships and sexuality can and should be addressed across multiple learning areas, a curriculum connection document should be created.

Whilst the Respect Matters curriculum connection document is admirable, it should be replicated to consider the broader context of relationships and sexuality.

Needs Improvement

If you would like to provide feedback about general aspects of the revised learning area/subject (HPE) that need further improvement, consider the following:

ELABORATIONS SHOULD BE MANDATORY OR CONTENT ELABORATIONS REQUIRE MORE SPECIFIC LANGUAGE TO ENSURE CRITICAL CONCEPTS ARE TAUGHT

A primary concern is that the elaborations are (a) optional material only, and (b) this is not clear enough for educators (it is mentioned only once on p.2). This will lead to huge variability in how health will be taught across the country and what topics will or will not be covered. It opens schools up to criticism that they are not teaching the same content as their peers. Similarly, a health teacher that is delivering best-practice relationships and sexuality education, needs to be supported by very clear curriculum guidance so that their classroom teaching practices are supported by ACARA.

If elaborations are merely optional, provided to “illustrate and exemplify content descriptions with a diverse range of examples” (p.2) then additional elaborations, specific to relationships and sexuality should be written. Schools can then elect not to teach these if they wish. Greater clarity will protect educators who are already delivering relationships and sexuality education as per best-practice guidelines.

As examples:

- You will not find important phrases such as sexually transmissible infections, condoms, contraception, or pregnancy mentioned in any content descriptors or elaborations. It is not enough that some of these terms are mentioned in other sections (e.g., HPE introduction, band descriptions, achievement standards), as the typical classroom teacher will jump straight to the content descriptors and elaborations.
- ‘consent’ is mentioned in various elaborations from Band 1 (Year 1 and 2) onwards but does not appear in content descriptions until Band 5 (Years 7 and 8). This allows for the omission of consent education until students are adolescents. This does not align with current evidence-based guidelines or the 21st century needs of Australian students.

AUDITING OF DELIVERY

Currently there is no requirement for teachers or schools to demonstrate how they are addressing each content description or assessing HPE content.

EACH HEALTH FOCUS AREA SHOULD BE ADDRESSED EQUALLY

The proposed curriculum does not stipulate how much time should be spent on each area (p.8). The guidance states that “planning decisions should consider local needs, available resources, students’ readiness and community priorities.” Whilst this enables schools to adapt content to their school context, there is a risk that not all areas will receive adequate attention. Relationships and sexuality education is probably the most challenging area for schools to address, and without more explicit guidance, schools are open to address these concepts in a superficial manner.



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Needs Improvement

continued...

DIVERSE LEARNERS STATEMENT SHOULD BE APPLICABLE TO ALL EDUCATORS, NOT JUST HPE TEACHERS

The statement about diverse learners (p.25-26) is admirable and should be mentioned in all other curriculum and guidance documents created by ACARA. All learning areas should be directed to ensure their teaching is inclusive and reflective of lived experience. This is not just important for individual students who may be same-sex attracted, gender diverse or intersex, but it also acknowledges that these identities are pervasive in the broader school community.

SPECIFIC LANGUAGE ABOUT DIVERSITY IS REQUIRED

Valuing diversity is a concept that appears several times throughout the proposed curriculum. However, without more specific language, educators may fail to address diversity of sex, gender and/or sexuality. It is critical this aspect of human diversity is addressed in an age-appropriate way across the curriculum.

SPECIFIC LANGUAGE ABOUT IDENTITIES IS REQUIRED

The terms “identity” or “identities” are present throughout the proposed HPE curriculum. However, there is a lack of clarity as what identities educators should explore. Specific language should be added to ensure gender and sexual identities are addressed. Similarly, reference is often made to the identify of “others” in various content descriptors but should also consider the identity of “self.”

THE SECTION REGARDING LINKS BETWEEN HPE AND OTHER LEARNING AREAS REQUIRES MORE RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EXAMPLES

Relationships and sexuality education is not just the responsibility of HPE teachers. The section where links between HP and other learning areas are considered (p.20) should clearly outline the opportunities to teach or reinforce relationships and sexuality education in other learning areas. Such as:

- In **HASS** (supported by HPE), there is opportunity to explore how gender and sexuality are understood through a lens of civics and citizenship, law, and/or history. Any exploration of families should consider the broad variety of family structures (e.g., adoptive, foster, single parent, large families, blended families, grandparent families, same-sex parents, etc.)
- In **Science** (supported by HPE), there is opportunity to learn about the human reproductive system. However, based on current language here, schools can address reproduction in the context of flora and fauna only.
- In **Technologies** (supported by HPE), there is opportunity to learn about critical digital literacy skills and how to remain safe online.
- In **English** (supported by HPE), there is an opportunity to examine media that showcases diverse human identities and experiences, and has been developed by diverse authors/creators.

OTHER

- Text around health-promoting school policies and processes (p. 26) may need to be changed or explained in greater detail. “Whole-school approach” is often a better understood phrase and aligns with World Health Organization guidance.
- Where the focus area of “relationships and sexuality” is explained (p.11) the word should be added for improved clarity: negotiating permission and consent (such as asking permission to use toys or borrow possessions in younger years, gaining consent from friends to publish photos online, and giving and gaining consent in intimate relationships).



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Optional

Section 3 is optional. It enables you to make specific comments about particular year levels/bands.

If you would like to provide comments about aspects of the revised learning area/subject (HPE) for band/level curriculum that need further improvement, consider stating:

[Note: If you comment on specific content descriptions or elaborations, please reference the code number]

For Band Level 6 (Year 9 and 10):

- Within “Making healthy, safe and active choices” there is no content descriptor that specifically addresses intimate or sexual relationships. The proposed content descriptor wording lacks clarity and at no point within this sub-strand are relationships mentioned. This is a critical issue for students in these year levels and its inclusion aligns with ‘International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education’ document produced by UNESCO. To provide more clarity and support for educators we propose a new content descriptor be produced referencing: safer sex practices (not just blood practices), consent relating to sexual and romantic relationships, sexual health strategies (STI testing, barrier methods of contraception, hormonal contraception), sexual behaviours, pleasure and sexual rights. Omitting specific sexual health content descriptor may cause comprehensive sexuality education not to be taught as elaborations are not mandated.
- Reference to relationships should include specific adjectives such as romantic, intimate or sexual to ensure schools do not refrain from addressing these relationships. At the current time only elaborations AC9HP10P03_E4 and AC9HP10P03_E6 has this level of specificity.

For Band Level 4 (Year 5 & 6)

- (AC9HP6P03_E3). “Exploring the steps of giving consent.” This should become content description, rather than an elaboration, to ensure that it is delivered. Elaborations for this content descriptor could include: exploration of when consent may or may not be required; practicing skills related to consent negotiation such as asking, listening and responding; examine the emotional implications of consent acceptance or denial.

For Band Level 5 (Year 7 and 8):

- Any reference to relationships should include specific adjectives such as romantic, to ensure schools do not refrain from addressing these forms of relationships.
- The sub-strand “making healthy, safe and active choices” does not address the context of intimate or sexual relationships.
- (AC9HP8P04_E3). Repetitive terms here. Proposed change: developing strategies to challenge narrow views of sex, gender, sexuality, race, culture, violence, and ability to contribute to inclusive communities.
- (AC9HP8P06_E5). This elaboration refers to the importance of bystanders in an online situation. There should be a separate elaboration created to ensure that students learn how to be bystanders in an offline situation as well.
- (AC9HP8P04_E1). Need to rephrase this to also consider discrimination based on gender and religion. Proposed change: Investigating how respecting diversity and challenging discrimination based on sex, gender, sexuality, religion and disability influence individual and community health and wellbeing.
- (AC9HP8P03). Power is included in the Year 9 and 10 content descriptor (AC9HP10P03) but missing from the year 7 and 8 equivalent (AC9HP8P03). In order to analyse consent, respect and empathy, power needs to be included to fully develop and explore these concepts.
- (AC9HP8P01_E5). This elaboration is far too vague and provides no guidance or examples to educators as to what to teach, which is the specific goal of elaborations.