



Response template for Teacher Time consultations on compliance and contemporary issues content

NSW Curriculum Reform – Curriculum Reform Taskforce

This template contains the questions from the corresponding Discussion Papers provided to your organisation. You may choose to use this response template to provide written feedback.

We would like to obtain as much detail as we can about what the specific issues are and specific solutions that you feel have merit. Text boxes can be expanded.

Compliance

1. Which specific NESA-set requirements (or the interpretation of such requirements) are taking up relatively more of teachers' time, and why? Please identify the discrete tasks, activities associated with those requirements.

<p>Name the specific requirement and process <u>impacting on teachers</u>.</p> <p>For example, consider compliance requirements stemming from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School registration (which aspects) • Teacher accreditation • Assessment Certification Examination (ACE) Manual 	<p>Who sets the process for responding to the requirement in schools?</p>	<p>What does the task involve?</p>	<p>What exactly is challenging about it?</p> <p>Please unpack specifically what the challenge/problem is. We are trying to understand exactly what actions, functions, complexities are taking up too much teacher time.</p> <p>Do you consider any of these tasks to be unnecessary? If so, please explain why.</p>	<p>(Question 3.) What specific solutions can you suggest to minimise the impact of any NESA requirements that you identified as time consuming for teachers?</p>
<p>Course monitoring</p>	<p>NESA (then adjusted by the school)</p>	<p>Administration in regards to task receipt, task design, acknowledgement, organisation</p>	<p>Early career teachers or those without support struggle to fulfil requirements and fully understand requirements. The SCA fields many questions from teachers requiring support to interpret the syllabus and assessment and</p>	<p>Increased range of quality, detailed samples (accurate samples!) related to course scope and sequence, assessment schedules, possible tasks, programming suggestions. NESA could utilise the experience of key stakeholders (such as teaching associations) to increase the amount of</p>

Teacher Time Discussion Papers Response Template

			reporting documents. Assistance is also often requested by teachers to provide support in regards to the design of quality tasks (specific to the subject)	resources available to teachers, to allow further understanding of the range of task types and styles that can be developed to ensure quality and authentic assessment practices.
Teacher accreditation	NESA	Attending PL sessions to receive accredited hours	Removal of accreditation criteria for professional learning developed and delivered by teaching associations has had a significant impact on both Associations and member teachers. While we understand that greater monitoring needed to occur, this essentially gave the impression that NESA did not value the professional learning that Associations provide, when evidence from previous PL sessions has been gathered to show the effectiveness of these sessions, especially in regards to the manner in which they support teachers, building capacity, sharing knowledge and resources and in essence saving time.	Streamline accreditation processes – provide scope for Associations to upload evaluations of their courses into Etams to support teachers.

- 2. In what ways is the workload for meeting NESA compliance requirements increased, or made more efficient, when those requirements are interpreted as policies/procedures at the sector and school level?**

Schools who support compliance through adequate professional learning and administrative support experience far greater success in meeting compliance requirements. A streamlined process allows for improved understanding and develops clear guidelines for all staff. However, the level of interpretation by some schools will then also mean that additional workload occurs. (E.g. mandating number of student work samples, having additional checklists outside of NESA requirements)

- 4. What are some positive examples of how compliance requirements have been managed?**

NESA has been prompt to make changes and communicate them clearly when required – e.g. PIP marking criteria

- 5. In what specific ways can the approach to compliance requirements support teachers?**

If managed effectively, supports consistency across schools. This can then ensure greater equity for students. However, NESA compliance is often perceived as a means of control/punishment and generates fear and uncertainty for some teachers, who clearly respect the requirements but do not necessarily have enough support at either a faculty, whole school or department level to ensure a full understanding of this. Communication and documentation related to compliance is extensive, and often requires translating from more experienced teachers- and then the true message is lost. One again, time to interpret and clear, simplified resources are key to support teachers. Most recently, the SCA conducted a professional learning session related to the Year 11 course that was supported by Julie Pyne, presenting on assessment on behalf of NESA. As a past Society and Culture teacher, and HSC markers, Julie was able to provide relevant course examples for the teachers attending the session. Targeted PL such as this is extremely effective – initially, the stronger HSC standard PL (in particular) was perceived to be too general.

6. In what practical ways can NESAs balance:

- a. Calls to be more flexible (not over-prescriptive) allowing teachers to make their own interpretation
- b. Calls to be more specific about exactly what evidence/actions will meet the requirement (to avoid teachers doing excess to requirements)?

Ongoing consultation with experienced classroom teachers who have designed engaging assessments, programs and resources. Develop a wider range of samples. Increase availability of NESAs staff to communicate with teachers and clarify questions. Often, teachers are relying on answers provided anecdotally via social media pages (not necessarily association run), as answers are given promptly. There is, unfortunately a perceived 'us' vs 'them' mentality, which does not encourage a positive relationship.

"Content rich/heavy" syllabus do offer some clarity on what must be taught, learnt and examined, however this is a very traditional way of delivery of curriculum that can make teachers and students feel like they are locked into a chase of dot point and can lose that curiosity, love of learning and engagements we as educators would all aspire to. A tried and recommended way of enhancing learning is to make the focus on conceptual understandings which are grouped into interlocking themes. This clear model of guidance allows for teachers to have choice in the content they use to explore the themes and gives students tools for understanding an analysis when they see and engage with knowledge through a conceptual lens.

Contemporary issues content

1. Do you think the term 'contemporary issues content' is a good descriptor of this additional content? (the term 'extra-curricular' is not accurate to use)

It is crucial that there be a contemporary context to any work in schools otherwise its knowledge for knowledge sake and only serves to reinforce the paradigms of the past. Yes, students do need to understand the cultural and historical context of knowledge but it must be applied to their lives to give in meaning. It is imperative however, that teachers are supported to deliver this. In the wake of the Parliamentary enquiry into the NSW Curriculum Review, there is a danger that teachers will be limited by their ability to include contemporary issues content, without being labelled as being 'politically-leaning'. The term is a far more effective descriptor, and links well to the Society and Culture syllabus as it currently stands, as each syllabus component for the subject asks for a 'contemporary context' to be integrated across learning. This is also relevant in other areas of HSIE, such as Legal Studies, Ancient History and Business Studies where current legislation, ethical issues in history and recent business case studies must be integrated.

2. In your experience, for what types of reasons, and from what types of sources does contemporary issues content emerge?

It comes from quality journalism; from the artists in every field; from those that contemplate the future: scientists, inventors, innovators. It comes from the young who look at issues with fresh eyes and it comes from elders who carry the wisdom of extensive life experience to see through the busy-ness of life and vision what we really need to understand.

3. What contemporary issues content are you aware of, that has been added to the school curriculum? What has been the impact of this on teachers?

We cannot walk away from an across the curriculum commitment to ATSI, Asia literacy and sustainability. These have not been determined as key to good knowledge on a whim – they have been established and endorsed as they are vital understandings. However, it is crucial that we ensure these are delivered in a way that is beyond being tokenistic and superficial.

4. What are the benefits of contemporary issues content?

Engaged students and teachers, developing skills in critical discernment, empathy and perspectives.

5. What criteria should apply to a policy about whether and how new topics should be added outside of a full curriculum review?

Ensure that a range of perspectives are presented. However, there also needs to be a framework to unpack fact and opinion. Allow for, and encourage teacher and principal discretion based on the needs of the school. Have specified support available to clarify 'grey' areas and provide alternative suggestions.

6. Who should NESA consult with when considering whether or not to include a suggested contemporary issues topic in the curriculum?

Associations who are dedicated to providing excellence quality of delivery in their subject area/s.

Academics, Media outlets (able to offer a wide range of perspectives) and enhance understanding of bias and critical discernment.

7. What are the advantages and disadvantages of creating a dedicated cross-disciplinary subject dedicated to contemporary social and citizenship issues?

Advantage: A relevant curriculum.

Disadvantage: it requires teachers to deliver integrated and conceptual content that is relevant to students. Most have these skills but it is not universal. Effective PL required to ensure all teachers can deliver on this.

Additionally, many subject areas are already doing this exceptionally well. The general capabilities framework, alongside specific syllabus requirements in Society and Culture in particular is designed to build the capacity of students in regards to active and informed citizenship.

8. Would it help teachers to better manage the time impacts of contemporary issues content if NESA provided more explicit advice about what is required to be taught from the NESA syllabuses?

No – avoid prescriptive syllabuses. See arguments above. Conceptual frameworks are the key. If NESA want to provide resources, it is better suited towards guidelines related to sample tasks, scope and sequences and potential programs, not mandated. Historically, NESA and BOS/TES have not delivered these effectively – but this may be an area already targeted for future progress. In essence, Teaching Associations are the expert groups to contribute as they have done for decades.