



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 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.

Name the specific requirement and process impacting on teachers.

For example, consider compliance requirements stemming from:

- School registration (which aspects)

Who sets the process for responding to the requirement in schools?

What does the task involve?

What exactly is challenging about it?

Please unpack specifically what the challenge/problem is. We are trying to understand exactly what actions, functions, complexities

(Question 3.) What specific solutions can you suggest to minimise the impact of any NESA requirements that you identified as time consuming for teachers?

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Teacher accreditation</i> • <i>Assessment Certification Examination (ACE) Manual</i> 			<p><i>are taking up too much teacher time.</i></p> <p><i>Do you consider any of these tasks to be unnecessary? If so, please explain why.</i></p>	
Face to face time	Principal	Principal reducing face to face hours due to small class sizes	Classes of 9 in senior school the principal wants to run to increase offering, however wants to run a tight budget so only gives 6 periods not 8 periods. There is still 240 hours of content to teach. This impacts teachers' time as more work gets placed onto planning/online learning for students. Students still require feedback, all that happens is the teacher loses prep time.	NESA must define indicative hours and what must be timetabled and what are the 'variations' to timetable that are acceptable e.g. is this at principals discretion or is it due to major calendar events only?
Documentation collection	Principal	Keeping samples of all student tasks.	In a digital world, why do tasks have to be saved and annotated for compliance?	Explain why these tasks/samples are required. If an inspection occurs, faculties are not given PD on internal standards setting, so what is the value of keeping these standard setting resources.
Diverse Learning students	Principal/Head of Diverse Learning	Reading/signing profiles, adjusting etc.	Preparing a lesson with multiple adjustments takes a significant amount of time, these lessons	Ensure that teachers' aides are given the authority to differentiate programs for students whom they

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			then need to be documented against the adjustment.	assist, this would take some of the workload off teachers.
VET	RTO and Principal	VET teachers	<p>Excessive amount of admin, that aims to meet RTO and ASQA requirements. Much of the data collection is unnecessary.</p> <p>The time the VET course Hospitality requires of a teacher to maintain currency is unrealistic, considering the competency level required of students. Also the constant changes to the course requiring renumbering of sections and elements of the course, restructuring of sections and remodelling programs is so time consuming, professionally insulting and simply unnecessary.</p>	Schools to appoint VET ancillary that complete all admin tasks, such as data entry and scanning/uploading.
PL	Principal / Leadership team	Teacher professional learning	<p>More PL is being placed into teacher preparation time and less is being completed during professional development days.</p> <p>During school time- teachers are being loaded up with more administrative tasks on top of teaching and learning requirements.</p>	<p>Time, added to the school day to complete mandated PL</p> <p>More calendarised PD days, to ensure teachers can complete mandated PL during work time vs during lesson preparation time.</p>

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VET- QMS administrative requirements	RTO	Time for teachers to scan and upload all tasks	Time and access to technology to complete evidence uploading	Time/ team to oversee the process, RTO requirement yet teachers/ schools mandated requirement to deliver VET frameworks
NCCD Adjustments	Principal/ Additional Needs Coordinator	Documenting all adjustments, modifying programs	We have always made modifications for students that need help and rightly so. However, now everything must be specifically documented and the funding for these students depends on our documentation.	Accept teacher's decisions without making everything need documentation. Allow others (ie aides, coordinators) to document teacher's adjustments.

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?

INCREASED WORKLOAD AT SCHOOL LEVEL

- School day is now being, mandated by Principal to end 3.50pm one day per week and 4.15 the alternate week to complete all mandated tasks such as PL, faculty meetings to meet the requirements of NESA.
- Not enough time to do what is required, workload and compliance is increasing with no time given to teachers to do the required documentation let alone complete quality lessons prep and give adequate feedback to students on assessment tasks and overall learning. Documentation is completed afterhours to ensure compliance is met.
- Expectation to provide opportunities to work on major projects over holiday breaks and after school hours - to complete a high quality major project requires the student to be guided by the teacher and the normal teaching day and lesson does not allow for this.
- School professional development days are now consumed by sitting at a computer filling in surveys and being trained and tested by NESA. When new staff and casual staff are employed they have to be paid a day's salary to sit at a computer and complete online mandatory training.
- Teachers are employed by the Department of Education to deliver high quality lessons which takes priority over everything. There are not enough hours in the day to cope with the preparation of lessons and meet all the requirements of NESA.
- Verification of the work being done by the student needs stricter requirements. There appears to be considerable variation from school to school and the source of anxiety for teachers.
- Increased WHS issues and stress of teaching Years 7 and 8 Mandatory Technology Food units in commercial kitchens. These rooms are designed for year 11-12 Hospitality and can be unsafe for younger students. Decisions to install commercial kitchens in schools to accommodate Hospitality have had unintended consequences.

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

- Collaboration and regular meetings with staff/ faculty

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- PLT meetings
- Being paid to complete compliance requirements in the workplace.
- Ensures consistency between schools and sectors (such as mandated competency tasks in VET produced at the RTO level ensures similar tasks are delivered at similar levels across multiple schools. Delivery of content is higher and students are receiving better/higher levels of training and experience

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

- A consistent, cross sector approach to compliance training would support record management and ensure a safer workplace
- Positive lessons gained from learning from home can be applied to teacher compliance training to create a consistent cross sector approach
- Differentiated PD to acknowledge a teacher's knowledge/years of service. Beginning teachers need different PD in compliance vs long standing teachers who may need an annual refresher. (NESA Interim Principle of effective professional learning 3 *Recognise the experience and prior knowledge of learners*)

6. In what practical ways can NESA 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)?

- Establish realistic timeframes that acknowledge the demands of teacher workload. Seeking feedback and providing updates at the end of a term/year (eg. Release of Interim PD arrangements) is the polar opposite of the purpose of this Teacher Time Discussion Paper.
- Streamline communications via direct emails to individual accounts to ensure receipt of key messages.
- Develop consultation and communication periods that **are of a sustained duration** (NESA Interim Principle of professional learning 2). Teacher voice is devalued by the rigid timeframes that demonstrate limited understanding of teacher life and workloads.

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- Development of consistent templates and transparent guides (standard for all sectors) to processes to reduce teacher workload and allow the focus to be placed on the delivery of quality teaching and learning experiences.
- Audit current compliance documentation (scope and sequence, programs, registrations, monitoring folders). Develop technological solutions to increase efficiency in data entry and document management.
- Establish clarity around content knowledge and practical skills on a continuum supported by best practice examples of programs/assessments and resources that to be applied across all sectors.
- Provision of high-quality PD opportunities to develop consistent teacher judgements around grade and/or band levels. These opportunities should be accessible through each sector as well as professional associations and networks. Focus should be placed on not only developing a consistent teacher judgement but strategies on how to support students to improve their marks to achieve at a higher level.
- Extend consultation to other stakeholders (eg Registered Training Organisations RTOs) to work with NESAs ensure VET training packages address all required compliance rather than teachers having to navigate differing expectations.

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)

Overall, there is greater support for the use of the term *contemporary issues content*. It is felt that this term provides greater breadth and provides opportunities to respond to issues that are happening at that particular time.

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

It was agreed that *contemporary issues content* are reflective of society and the emerging concerns.

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The importance of acknowledging the impact of the local context is highlighted by many respondents. For this reason, support for schools from NESAs and at sector level is required to ensure these issues are addressed in a culturally appropriate and sensitive manner. Some examples provided were: youth suicide, religion, culture, geography and socioeconomic issues.

Concern was expressed about the negative impact media can play on the interpretation of contemporary issues content. Some examples provided were: political, racial, gender equality and consent. It was recommended that these issues not be included within subject syllabuses. The reinstatement of the optional HSC course General Studies was offered as a suggestion to cover the ever emerging issues in society today and in the future. Guidelines around how an issue is to be addressed as well as appropriate training for teachers delivering the course would need to be developed.

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?

Some of the contemporary issues that were identified as having impacted on the teaching curriculum included: gender equality, gay equality, black lives matter, domestic abuse, child pornography, paedophilia, poverty, human rights issues, refugees, and sustainability issues, climate change, paid work issues.

Impact on teachers

- Loss of face to face teaching time to address these issues through scheduled lessons or guest speakers.
- Increased pressure on teacher to deliver required syllabus content within a shortened time frame.
- Expectations to undertake training and develop lessons to ensure this additional content can be delivered effectively and correctly to students.
- Loss of external support agencies (Eg Curriculum Development Unit)

4. What are the benefits of contemporary issues content?

The inclusion of contemporary issues content provides schools and teachers the flexibility to teach what will engage and meet the needs of their students. When implemented effectively positive support for the school and wider community can be achieved. Issues identified included: social, cultural, rural and remote.

The provision of a sustained focus on including contemporary issues content ensures a holistic educational experience, and reinforces the notion of 'lifelong learning'. Teaching about contemporary issues empowers students to know about and ask questions that are going to impact their lives personally. The importance of decision making based on sound evidence bases was stressed, and are considered essential problem solving skills.

It was suggested that in some cases assigning an issue to a subject or learning area can ensure that the issue is not addressed in a tokenistic manner and can provide opportunities for content to evolve. Consideration of age and cognitive development

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stages needs to be acknowledged. Parameters around when specific content should be included, supported by sound evidence is required.

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

Stakeholders

All stakeholders (teachers, students, parents, community leaders, educational experts, professional associations across all sectors) must be represented.

Timely

Collaborative decision making needs to be undertaken in a timely manner that takes into account the school calendar and teaching, learning and compliance responsibilities.

Evidence-based

Research and data to support inclusion of a new topic. Include a global perspective and leverage from positive lessons that have been learned in leading educational institutions around the world.

Currency

Need to monitor and assess issues to determine if they should be added, remain or be removed from the contemporary issues content.

Transparency

Decisions, validated by evidence need to be communicated in a transparent manner to all stakeholders in a timely manner.

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

All stakeholders (teachers, students, parents, community leaders, educational experts, professional associations across all sectors) must be represented.

The consultative groups need to contain a high percentage of school-based teachers to ensure appropriate decisions are made.

Professional associations need to be leveraged as a constant between the different sectors and a group that is able to gather wide representation if given appropriate time frames and opportunities to support the consultation process.

VET - RTO's should be consulted and actually take into account the training package that we need to deliver as well as the NESAs requirements.

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

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DISADVANTAGES

Expertise – What criteria will be applied to the selection of teachers to deliver this content?

Concern that it will create a group of specialist teachers.

Resourcing

Teacher training employing high quality professional learning principles will need to be developed.

Which organisation and/or sector will have responsibility for the development and delivery of this training?

How will this training be implemented and funded?

Timetabling concerns – how will this impact indicative hours identified for all subjects?

Content

Currency of content – clear review processes will need to be established to ensure current issues are being delivered.

Relevance and priority – clear processes around consultation to decide which issues are to be focused on is required.

ADVANTAGES

Flexibility – ability to increase student engagement through developing relevant connections to emerging issues

Authentic opportunities to apply critical and creative thinking and employ collaborative cross curricular approaches to increase student engagement with content.

Opportunities to address diversity and increase student awareness and exposure to issues.

Current opportunities:

The 25 hour Life Ready course in Year 11 already exists. Opportunity to extend to a Year 12 course which might be considered for an examinable 1 hour exam for the HSC.

Possible opportunities:

The concept of a General Studies subject for 1 period a week when students can engage in contemporary issues instead of them being embedded into syllabuses 'board courses'.

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

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NESA needs to be firm on indicative hours/nominated hours.

A syllabus is meant to be relevant to all students – there should be no need for teacher interpretation, just teach students a body of knowledge as set out in the syllabus. Many indicated that teacher interpretation can lead to biases influencing the selection and delivery of contemporary issues.

The application of professional knowledge and judgement to selection of appropriate issues provides opportunities to address the local context and increase student engagement. Transparent and consistent guidelines and expectations, developed through a collaborative consultation process will support the successful implementation of this content.