

Hobart College Submission for ACER 9-12 Review

The feedback below was collated from the comments of approximately 50 teachers.

Feedback on the key curriculum characteristics that require further consideration and national comparison include:

Tasmania's single year courses in Years 11 and 12:

- The overwhelming majority of teachers considered single year courses to be a positive thing for students as they allow for a breadth of experiences across a range of subject areas and broaden students' horizons.
- Provides more flexibility to support pathways.
- Students more likely to be engaged by the courses that they choose. The variety of subject options makes for greater engagement across all levels of aspiration. The Year 11 class does not become a "teaching to the middle" scenario. The bright students are challenged; the lower level students are not out of their depth.
- Spreads ATAR attainment across two years rather than concentrating the stress into one year. Many students are capable of achieving pre-tertiary results in year 11 and do not need to do the foundation year. One year courses allow for specialization where it is desired and diversity for those students who have a wider range of possible pathways.
- Electives are reduced if subjects are required to be taught over two years. Many subjects would disappear due to them not being considered core.
- Single year subjects allow for students who change their mind about their pathway in year 11.

Tasmania's 50, 100 and 150 hour courses in Years 11 and 12, and where relevant alignment to the Australian Curriculum:

- The first 50 hours of the 150-hour course allows sufficient time for skill development.
- Broadens the offerings and allows for more individualisation.
- Some TASC subjects lead on well from Australian Curriculum and include units from the ACARA having a good pathway and K-12 stream.
- The option of shorter courses is more suited to students at risk- leads to greater engagement.
- Changing to 120-hour course would have a negative impact on Visual Art subjects where time is needed to develop the skills, ideas and personal language of expression. 150 hours allows for deeper learning and engagement.

Tasmania's use of criterion based assessment for internal and external assessment purposes in Years 11 and 12:

- As we understand it, all systems use criteria or a rubric to arrive at the summative assessment. That Tasmania's success criteria are explicitly known by students from the outset is an advantage. Criterion based assessment leads to giving better formative feedback to students.
- Criterion based assessment allows for students to be assessed against actual skills rather than getting a norm referenced award that does not address their strengths and weaknesses.
- In some subjects (e.g. Maths) there is a mismatch between exams and CBA; the awarding of final ratings from exams is marks based and does not actually map to the course document.

The alignment between the Australian Curriculum Kindergarten-Year 10 (K-10) and Years 11 and 12 curriculum and assessment practices:

- All rewritten TASC courses have ACARA outcomes embedded. Allows for local focus and specifically Tasmanian content
- One difficulty around the lack of alignment between K-10 and 11-12 is the differences in assessment language and students' lack of knowledge and experience with criterion based assessment.
- We rely on the Curriculum Teacher Leaders to ensure that updated TASC courses are in line with the Australian curriculum. We see this as being part of the core work of the Education Department as a whole, not of individual teachers.

The nature, quality of the delivery and cost effectiveness of Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Vocational Education and Learning (VEL) in sectors and schools and how this aligns with student pathways

- VET courses are practical, engaging and provide an extremely valuable pathway for a cohort of students that may not be engaged by more academic content. They are supported by a school environment and pastoral care.
- A VET pathway is very important in training/skilling up students to ensure they are industry ready. Pathways are more easily found and delivered within an environment with a breadth of VET courses available. Not all students are on a University pathway and nor should they be.

Public perception (including that of employers) of VET/VEL undertaken in schools.

- There is a close relationship between the business community and the college that is mutually beneficial. Parents and students value nationally recognized certification that they can see leads to apprenticeships and career paths. The current system

allows students to keep tertiary options open whilst also gaining a vocational qualification. Hobart College has a reputation for providing students with the opportunity to participate in high quality work placements and this experience is highly valued by the students and their parents.

- Because students are supported by the college infrastructure they are more protected from unscrupulous providers and are not subject to economic exploitation. They have fallback positions if they are unsuccessful or become disinterested.
- It is quite common for the college VET Co-ordinators to be contacted to provide candidates for a potential apprenticeship. The colleges are seen as a good supply of well trained and motivated students who are “job ready” so the perception in the community is high for those people in the know.

Feedback on the TCE:

- There was unanimous support for a review of the requirements of the TCE and particularly the subjects that provide the literacy, numeracy and ICT ticks.
Comments included:
 - o The requirements of the TCE seem to be harder than other states' completion certificates. This needs to be investigated.
 - o We would like to see Grade 10 students assessed for everyday adult literacy, numeracy and ICT. Could NAPLAN results be used for Recognition for Prior Learning?
 - o If the tick system is maintained, the list of subjects that grant the ticks needs extensive review. The current model of ticks and the limited range of subjects that have ticks embedded influences students' subject choices and safety net tests become a popular form of gaining ticks.
 - o Any level 3 subject with an external exam should indicate that a student is literate to a basic level.
 - o Some teachers argued that the ICT requirement should be scrapped altogether as this standard has been developed and maintained by people who were born before computers. The current students are younger than the internet, they find computers boring because they are so familiar with them and they have high level skills in problem solving with the devices.

Other General Comments:

- Hobart College staff strongly support the retention of the college system as a separate entity except in isolated areas. It allows for a breadth of subject offerings which is critical in a small and sparsely populated state such as Tasmania. It also allows for the development of a specialized workforce with the skills and subject knowledge to deliver a diversity of courses for both academic and vocational pathways.

- Students value the opportunity to be more independent and autonomous in the college setting; they also value the 'fresh start' college offers and they can reinvent themselves as self-directed learners.
- Colleges engage students who are nearly or actually adult in an environment that is better suited to encourage independence and maturity.
- A large cohort of similarly aged students concentrated in a college environment broadens horizons and allows personalization of courses.
- College students are better prepared for the independent environment of the university or the workplace.
- The relationships between colleges and their associated high schools is crucial in supporting the successful transition of students.
- Lack of supported accommodation and transport are barriers to students living in rural and isolated areas and wanting to access the broader range of subject offerings in colleges.