

STAGE 4 – CURRICULUM INFORMATION

YEARS 7 & 8

2024



Finigan

School of Distance Education

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Curriculum

The Stage 4 (Years 7 and 8) Curriculum is determined by the Department of Education. All students follow the same curriculum as offered in all NSW schools.

Key Learning Areas (KLA)

The curriculum courses are arranged into the following areas:

English

Mathematics

Science

Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE)

Languages

Technological and Applied Studies (TAS)

Creative Arts

Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE)



Course Descriptions

English

The English course is designed to deepen students' understanding and enjoyment of the English language, enhancing their ability to communicate effectively.

Students will explore a variety of texts and learn to express themselves through creative, interpretive, and analytical writing. They'll aim for clarity and precision, tailoring their communication to different audiences and purposes. The curriculum includes literature from different times and cultures, as well as a mix of spoken, visual, and digital media.

What students learn

Students will expand their ability to use language thoughtfully and accurately in various settings. They'll engage in imaginative, interpretive, and critical thinking. By examining and creating texts, they'll learn to differentiate facts from opinions and to question different viewpoints. These activities will help them understand more about themselves, others, and the wider world.

They'll develop skills in writing, reading, listening, speaking, viewing, and presenting ideas. Strategies to structure their writing with coherence and to enhance their use of grammar, vocabulary, and spelling will be a key focus.

Course Requirements

Students will study a broad selection of texts, including fiction, non-fiction, poetry, films, and digital media. They'll respond to and enjoy texts considered to be of high quality, including Australian literature and works that reflect the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, as well as international texts that offer a variety of perspectives.



Mathematics

Mathematical ideas have evolved and continue to develop across cultures and have been practised in Australia by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples for thousands of years. Through the study of mathematics, students apply their knowledge and skills to deepen their understanding of the world.

Mathematics is a reasoning and creative activity, integral to scientific and technological advances across many fields of endeavour. The symbolic nature of mathematics provides a powerful and precise means of communication.

Making connections across mathematical concepts and other subject areas enhances students' ability to understand the purpose of learning mathematics and to develop a deeper conceptual understanding. This helps students to recognise the role of mathematics in solving problems in the world around them, applying their understanding to familiar and unfamiliar situations.

By studying mathematics, students develop essential numeracy skills and fluency, while nurturing the ability to think logically, critically and creatively. They learn about patterns and reason about relationships, creating opportunities to generalise their solutions and to solve non-routine problems.

When students enjoy learning mathematics, they develop a positive self-concept and become self-motivated learners through active participation in appropriately challenging tasks. This can enhance their resilience in solving mathematical problems relevant to further education and their everyday lives.

What students learn

Students develop understanding and fluency in mathematics through inquiry, exploring and connecting mathematical concepts, choosing and applying problem-solving skills and mathematical techniques, communication, and reasoning.

The topics that students study include Computation of integers, fractions, decimals and percentages, Ratios and rates, Algebraic techniques, Indices, Equations, Linear relationships, Length, Right-angled triangles (Pythagoras's theorem, Area, Volume, Angle relationships and the Properties of geometrical figures.

Course Requirements

All students are required to have a scientific calculator and are encouraged to purchase either the Casio fx-82AU PLUS II 2nd Edition Scientific Calculator or the Casio 8200AU Scientific Calculator. It may be advantageous for students to become familiar with the Casio 8200AU Scientific Calculator as this will be the recommended calculator for Years 11 & 12.



Science

Science develops students' skills, knowledge and understanding in explaining and making sense of the biological, physical and technological world. Through applying the processes of working scientifically, students develop understanding of the importance of scientific evidence in enabling them as individuals and as part of the community to make informed, responsible decisions about the use and influence of science and technology on their lives.

What students learn

Through their study of science, students develop knowledge of scientific concepts and ideas about the living and non-living world. They gain increased understanding about the unique nature and development of scientific knowledge, the use of science and its influence on society, and the relationship between science and technology.

Students actively engage in scientific inquiry. They use the processes of working scientifically to plan and conduct investigations. By identifying questions and making predictions based on scientific knowledge and drawing evidence-based conclusions from their investigations, students develop their understanding of scientific ideas and concepts, and their skills in critical thinking and problem-solving. They gain experience in making evidence-based decisions and in communicating their understanding and viewpoints.

Course Requirements

All students are required to undertake at least one research project during Year 7 or 8.

Teachers will provide Mini Kits/Resources for units of work as required.



Human Society and its Environment

Geography and History are studied for one semester each in both Year 7 and Year 8.

Geography

Geography develops in students, an interest in and engagement with the world. Through geographical inquiry, students will develop an understanding of the interactions between people, places and environments across a range of scales in order to become informed, responsible and active citizens.

What students learn

Students learn how to undertake geographical inquiry and fieldwork to build and extend knowledge and understanding about people, places and environments. They propose explanations for significant patterns, trends, relationships and anomalies in geographical phenomena. Students learn to apply geographical concepts including place, space, environment, interconnection, scale, sustainability and change to identify questions and guide their investigations.

The study of geography also provides opportunities for students to learn to use a wide range of geographical tools including maps, fieldwork, graphs and statistics, spatial technologies and visual representations.

Students will have the opportunity to explore geographical processes that influence the features of places and environments across a range of scales. They investigate how places are valued differently and interconnections within environments and between people, places and environments. Students learn about geographical phenomena, the liveability of places, and management strategies.

Course Requirements

Fieldwork is an essential part of the study of Geography. All students must undertake fieldwork

History

History develops in students an interest in and enjoyment of exploring the past. A study of history provides opportunities for examining events, people and societies from ancient, medieval and modern times. Opportunities to develop a deeper understanding of civics and citizenship are a feature throughout the history course.

What students learn

Students learn to apply the skills of investigating history, including analysing sources and evidence and sequencing major historical events to show an understanding of historical concepts including change and continuity, causation, contestability and significance. Students develop research and communication skills and examine different perspectives to develop an empathetic understanding of a wide variety of viewpoints. Students also learn to construct logical historical arguments supported by relevant evidence and to communicate effectively about the past for different audiences and different purposes.

Students explore the nature of history, how historians investigate the past and the importance of conserving our heritage, including the heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Aspects of the ancient, medieval and early modern world are studied, including daily life, beliefs and values, law and religion. The nature of colonisation and contact history may also be investigated. One ancient Asian society is a mandatory study.

Course Requirements

All students must complete a site study in Year 7 or Year 8.



Languages

At Finigan School of Distance Education, Year 8 students can select either Japanese or French to study.

Languages courses provide students with the opportunity to gain effective skills in communicating in the chosen language, to explore the relationship between languages and English, and to develop an understanding of the cultures associated with the chosen language.

What students learn

Students develop the knowledge, understanding and skills necessary for effective communication in a language. They learn to interact, access and respond to information and compose texts.

They develop an understanding of the language system including sound, writing, grammar and text structure.

Students also develop intercultural understanding of the interrelationship between language and culture and consider how interaction shapes communication and identity.

Students develop the skills to communicate in another language. They listen and respond to spoken language. They learn to read and respond to written texts in the language they are learning. Students establish and maintain communication in familiar situations using the language.

Students explore the diverse ways in which meaning is conveyed by comparing and contrasting features of the language. They develop a capacity to interact with people, their culture and their language.



Technological and Applied Studies

Technology Mandatory engages students in design and production activities as they develop solutions to identified needs and opportunities. Through the practical application of knowledge and understanding, they learn about Agriculture and Food Technologies, Digital Technologies, Engineered Systems and Material Technologies.

What students learn

Students develop knowledge and understanding of the four Technology contexts through the design and production of solutions to meet identified needs or opportunities.

In Agriculture and Food Technologies, students learn about the processes of food and fibre production and investigate the innovative and sustainable supply of agriculturally produced raw materials. Students are provided with opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding about food selection and preparation, food safety and how to make informed choices when experimenting with and preparing nutritious food.

The Digital Technologies context encourages students to develop an empowered attitude towards digital technologies, use abstractions to represent and deconstruct real-world problems, and implement and evaluate digital solutions. Students have the opportunity to become innovative creators of digital technologies, in addition to effective users of digital systems and critical consumers of the information they convey. Students are provided with opportunities to develop fluency in a general-purpose programming language and use these skills to solve information problems and to automate repetitive tasks.

The Engineered Systems context focuses on how force, motion and energy can be used in systems, machines and structures. Students are provided with opportunities to experiment and develop prototypes to test their solutions. They are lead to understand how forces and the properties of materials affect the behaviour and performance of engineered systems, machines and structures. Knowledge of these principles and systems enables the design and production of sustainable, engineered solutions.

The Material Technologies context focuses on the application of specialist skills and techniques to a broad range of traditional, contemporary and advancing materials. Students develop knowledge and understanding of the characteristics and properties of a range of materials through research, experimentation and practical investigation. These are applied when they produce products to satisfy identified needs and opportunities.



Creative Arts

Music and Visual Arts are studied for one semester each in both Year 7 and Year 8.

Music

All students should have the opportunity to develop their musical abilities and potential. As an artform, music pervades society and occupies a significant place in world cultures and in the oral and recorded history of all civilisations. Music plays important roles in the social, cultural, aesthetic and spiritual lives of people. At an individual level, music is a medium of personal expression. It enables the sharing of ideas, feelings and experiences. The nature of musical study also allows students to develop their capacity to manage their own learning, engage in problem-solving, work collaboratively and engage in activity that reflects the real world practice of performers, composers and audiences.

What students learn

Students will study the concepts of music (duration, pitch, dynamics and expressive techniques, tone colour, texture and structure) through the learning experiences of performing, composing and listening, within the context of a range of styles, periods and genres.

The mandatory course requires students to work in a broad range of musical contexts, including an exposure to art music and music that represents the diversity of Australian culture.

In Music, students learn to perform music in a range of musical contexts, compose music that represents the topics they have studied and listen with discrimination, meaning and appreciation to a broad range of musical styles.

Visual Arts

Visual Arts provides opportunities for students to enjoy the making and studying of art. It builds an understanding of the role of art in all forms of media, both in the contemporary and historical world, and enables students to represent their ideas and interests in artworks. The Visual Arts course enables students to become informed about, understand and write about their contemporary world.

What students learn

Students learn about the pleasure and enjoyment of making different kinds of artworks in 2D, 3D and/or 4D forms. They learn to represent their ideas and interests with reference to contemporary trends and how artists, including painters, sculptors, architects, designers, photographers and ceramists, make artworks.

Students learn about how art is shaped by different beliefs, values and meanings by exploring artists and artworks from different times and places and relationships in the artworld between the artist – artwork – world – audience. They also explore how their own lives and experiences can influence their artmaking and critical and historical studies.

Students learn to make artworks using a range of materials and techniques in 2D, 3D and 4D forms, including traditional and more contemporary forms, site-specific works, installations, video and digital media and other ICT forms, to build a body of work over time. They learn to develop their research skills, approaches to experimentation and how to make informed personal choices and judgements. They learn to record procedures and activities about their artmaking practice in their Visual Arts diary.

They learn to investigate and respond to a wide range of artists and artworks in artmaking, critical and historical studies. They also learn to interpret and explain the function of and relationships in the artworld between the artist – artwork – world – audience to make and study artworks.



Personal Development, Health and Physical Education

The Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) course provides a strengths-based approach towards developing the knowledge, understanding and skills students need to enhance their own and others' health, safety, wellbeing and participation in physical activity in varied and changing contexts. The course provides opportunities for students to develop self-management, interpersonal and movement skills to help students become empowered, self-confident and socially responsible citizens.

What students learn

The course is organised into three content strands with a focus on three skills. All students will be provided with opportunities to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills across a range of health and physical education concepts and contexts by studying content in an integrated manner and through practical application. The three strands include:

- Health, Wellbeing and Relationships – Students develop the knowledge, understanding and skills important for building respectful relationships, enhancing personal strengths and exploring personal identity to promote the health, safety and wellbeing of themselves and others. They develop strategies to manage change, challenges, power, abuse, violence and learn how to protect themselves and others in a range of situations.
- Movement Skill and Performance – Students focus on active participation in a broad range of movement contexts to develop movement skill and enhance performance. They develop confidence and competence to engage in physical activity. Students develop an understanding of movement concepts and the features of movement composition as they engage in a variety of planned and improvised movement experiences. They create and compose movement to achieve specific purposes and performance goals. Through movement experiences, students also develop self-management and interpersonal skills to support them to strive for enhanced performance and participation in a lifetime of physical activity.
- Healthy, Safe and Active Lifestyles – Students focus on the interrelationship between health and physical activity concepts. They develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to empower them to make healthy and safe choices and take action to promote the health, safety and wellbeing of their communities. They engage with a range of health issues and identify strategies to keep them healthy, safe and active.

Throughout the course, students develop, strengthen and refine key PDHPE skills that allow them to take action and advocate for health, safety, wellbeing and participation in physical activity of themselves and others. This includes an emphasis on self-management, interpersonal and movement skills.

