

MEDIA RELEASE

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Report makes strong case for core curriculum in key Year 12 subjects

The case is now strong for a common curriculum core in at least some senior school subjects, the chief executive of the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), Professor Geoff Masters, said today upon the release of a new report commissioned by the Federal Government.

Federal Education Minister Julie Bishop today released the report, *Year 12 Curriculum Content and Achievement Standards*, prepared by ACER.

The study, commissioned in May 2006, examined the content, curriculum and standards of Year 12 subjects across Australia in English, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Australian History.

It reveals that there is already a high degree of consistency in course content across the country in key subjects increasing the feasibility of a common curriculum in at least some subjects.

The ACER report estimated that 90 per cent of the content of Advanced Mathematics courses, 85 per cent of the content of Physics courses, and 95 per cent of the content of Chemistry courses in the senior school was common across all Australian states and territories.

The study also found a high level of consistency in what subject experts considered 'essential' curriculum content in these three subjects.

"It is difficult to justify the development of essentially the same Chemistry syllabus seven times across Australia, the use of seven different ways of examining this syllabus and seven different formats for reporting student results," Professor Masters said, adding that the situation was untenable in the long term.

"National examinations in Chemistry, Physics and Advanced Mathematics would provide results that could be compared across Australia for the first time," Professor Masters said.

The study also investigated Australian History and English subjects and found a lower level of consistency in course content although there was significant agreement on the kinds of skills students should develop in Australian History courses and the general types of texts that should be studied in English courses. The report calls for the establishment of a common curriculum 'core' in each of the key subjects to be expressed in terms of subject matter and skills, together with national standards for assessment to provide comparable student results across the country.

The report, *Year 12 Curriculum Content and Achievement Standards*, by Gabrielle Matters and Geoff Masters is available on the DEST website at

<http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/year12study>

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