

# Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) 2012

## Key Changes

### **Rationale for approach**

The ACSF has been in use in draft form for about three years. The plan was always to field test the draft and then to revise it in light of user feedback. While the ACSF was originally written for Language Literacy and Numeracy, LLN, specialists with a deep knowledge of LLN theory and practice, it is also being used for a broad range of purposes by non LLN specialists in the VET sector, and is gaining traction in the schools and higher education sectors.

In revising the draft, the team set out to make changes that would maintain the theoretical integrity and practical value of the Framework for LLN specialists, while making aspects of the ACSF more accessible to non specialists where this was possible. Changes made took into account observations from the field that the new user groups were not using the ACSF in the same ways or to the same depth as LLN specialists.

This document outlines all changes to the ACSF, with the major changes being:

- the shift from six Aspects of Communication to three Domains of Communication (page 2);
- realignment of Sample Activities to the Domains of Communication (page 2); and
- the inclusion of an additional assessment level, Pre Level 1 (page 2).

The other changes to the ACSF outlined in this document include those to:

- provide consistency across all five Core Skills (page 3)
- reduce ambiguity between the Performance Features (page 3)
- improve clarity in the Indicators of Performance (page 3 )
- provide clearer delineation between Indicators in some Focus Areas (page 4)
- restructure the ACSF Introduction (page 5)
- include a Glossary (page 6)
- editorial changes, font size and colour (page 6)

## Domains of Communication

The ACSF 2008 included the six Aspects of Communication that were originally part of the NRS. These have always been a mixed blessing. While they were useful in demonstrating the range of communication spaces where LLN activity occurs, they were actually a mixture of contexts (Personal, Cooperative, Systems, Public) and text types (Technical, Procedural). There was significant overlap between the Aspects and this often resulted in confusion.

In order to provide more clarity, ACSF 2012 includes three 'Domains of Communication' namely *personal and community; workplace and employment; education and training*. The change provides a consistent focus on context, describing where LLN skills performance and development occurs. However, in recognising the practical value of identifying common text types used in different contexts within each Domain, the coverage of text types has been extended to demonstrate the range and to show how these vary across Domains. (See ACSF 2012 Table 2, page 9)

## Sample Activities

Sample Activities have been aligned to the new Domains of Communication. They have been chosen to provide examples of tasks and text types from a range of contexts that reflect the real life experiences of adults. The Sample Activities provide ideas and guide the development of assessment tasks that are appropriate to the context and to the level.

## Pre Level 1 Supplement

There has been significant feedback from ACSF users and potential users about the need for descriptors of very low level ACSF performance. In Australia, there are a number of adults who are unable to demonstrate performance at exit level 1 of the ACSF. Although performance at pre level 1 is extremely limited, it is nonetheless possible to identify skills and progress at this level and to assess performance.

ACSF 2012 includes the Pre Level 1 Supplement encompassing a set of Performance Features and Sample Activities for each of the five ACSF core skills.

The Pre Level 1 Supplement provides a framework that:

- enables identification of the core skill requirements at ACSF pre level 1
- provides a common reference point for describing and discussing performance in the five core skill areas for pre level 1 performance
- guides delivery and assessment at ACSF pre level 1
- assists in reporting progress within and from ACSF pre level 1.

## The core skills

The introductions to each of the five core skills now follow a consistent pattern incorporating:

- detail on what each core skill encompasses overall.
- an explanation of how the skill has been broken into Indicators of Performance, Focus Areas and Performance Features.
- a diagram showing how the components fit together.

The degree of change made to the content of each core skill varies.

- Minor changes have been made to the Performance Features within Writing and Oral Communication.
- Somewhat more substantial changes have been made to Reading and Learning to clarify and streamline the Focus Areas. However, the Performance Features are still easily recognisable to current ACSF users.
- Numeracy has been more extensively revised both to enhance understanding and to ensure that the presentation is consistent with that of the other four core skills. Focus Areas have been reworked for all Indicators, with Performance Features clearly aligned to each Focus Area.

## Performance Features

Minor changes have been made to Performance Features throughout the Framework to make them more explicit and thus facilitate comprehension and consistent interpretation.

- Some changes have been made at level 1 to ensure there was no overlap with the new Pre Level 1 Supplement.
- Levels 4 and 5 have been revisited and reworked where applicable to ensure they are relevant to a broad range of users, including those in higher education.

## Indicators of Performance

The sentence stems used in the original draft have been deleted, (i.e. 'The first/second/third indicator addresses...'). Most Indicators of Performance statements (See Table 3 of the Framework) remain the same. However, the following Indicators have been slightly reworded to improve clarity.

Indicator	ACSF 2012	ACSF 2008
<b>.01 Learning</b>	Awareness of self as a learner, planning and management of learning	The active awareness of self as learner, learning orientations and approaches to the management of learning
<b>.03 Reading</b>	Audience, purpose and meaning-making	Audience, purpose and meaning-making strategies
<b>.05 Writing</b>	Audience, purpose and meaning-making	Audience, purpose and meaning-making strategies
<b>.06 Writing</b>	The mechanics of writing	Vocabulary, grammatical structure and the conventions of writing
<b>.10 Numeracy</b>	Using and applying mathematical knowledge and problem solving processes	Problem solving and mathematical processes used

## Focus Areas

Application of the ACSF 2008 over the three years has demonstrated clearly that some Focus Areas needed to change in order to make the delineation between the Indicators quite clear. The changes are outlined in the following tables.

ACSF 2012	ACSF 2008
<b>Learning .01</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learner identity</li> <li>- Goals and pathways</li> <li>- Planning and organising</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Goal setting</li> <li>- Designing and negotiating learning pathways</li> <li>- Self-awareness, strengths, weaknesses, ability to reflect on performance, learning style</li> <li>- Dispositions – active engagement in learning and degree of resilience</li> <li>- Constructing knowledge</li> <li>- Metacognition – designing, managing learning process</li> </ul>
<b>Learning .02</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Locating, evaluating and organising information</li> <li>- Using prior knowledge and scaffolding</li> <li>- Learning with and from others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strategies for designing, managing and monitoring learning</li> <li>- Finding, managing and evaluating learning resources</li> <li>- Transferring prior knowledge and skills</li> <li>- Selection and application of cognitive strategies to assist learning</li> <li>- Social construction</li> </ul>
<b>Reading .03</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Purpose</li> <li>- Complexity</li> <li>- Prediction and prior knowledge</li> <li>- Critical reading and text analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Purpose and audience</li> <li>- Complexity</li> <li>- Prediction and prior knowledge</li> <li>- Text structure</li> <li>- Textual analysis</li> <li>- Critical literacy</li> </ul>
<b>Reading .04</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Text navigation</li> <li>- Comprehension strategies</li> <li>- Decoding and fluency</li> <li>- Syntax and language patterns</li> <li>- Vocabulary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strategies</li> <li>- Textual clues</li> <li>- Grammar</li> <li>- Vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>Writing .05</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Range</li> <li>- Audience and purpose</li> <li>- Structure and cohesion</li> <li>- Register</li> <li>- Plan, draft, proof, review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Range</li> <li>- Audience</li> <li>- Structure and cohesion</li> <li>- Register</li> <li>- Plan, proof, draft, review</li> </ul>
<b>Writing .05</b>	
No change	

ACSF 2012	ACSF 2008
<b>Oral Communication .07 and .08</b>	
The only change to both is that paralinguistics has been replaced with 'non-verbal communication'	
<b>Numeracy .09</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Explicitness of mathematical information</li> <li>– Complexity of mathematical information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Level of comprehension of mathematical information</li> <li>– Explicitness of mathematical information</li> <li>– Complexity of mathematical information and representation</li> </ul>
<b>Numeracy .10</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Problem solving processes including estimating and reflecting</li> <li>– Mathematical methods and use of tools</li> <li>– Mathematical knowledge and skills: number and algebra</li> <li>– Mathematical knowledge and skills: measurement and geometry</li> <li>– Mathematical knowledge and skills: statistics and probability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Problem-solving processes</li> <li>– Estimating and reflecting</li> <li>– Methods of solution</li> <li>– Mathematical knowledge and skills: number and calculations, shape and space, data and statistics, measurement, location and direction, formulae and algebra</li> </ul>
<b>Numeracy .11</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Written mathematical language</li> <li>– Oral mathematical language</li> <li>– Complexity of mathematical symbolism, representation and conventions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Written mathematical language</li> <li>– Oral mathematical language</li> <li>– Complexity of mathematical symbolism, representation and conventions</li> </ul>

<b>ACSF Introduction</b>
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The structure of the Introduction has been reworked, although the information remains very similar.

- The order of presentation of the information has been changed to align with the layout of the Framework and some additional explanations incorporated as an aid to understanding.
- In response to requests from academics in the LLN field, a new section entitled 'Theoretical Underpinnings' provides a more detailed background on the theories informing the design and content of the ACSF. While it may not be of great interest to non specialist users of the Framework, and has not therefore been written for that audience, this section is an essential component of the Framework as it enhances the academic credibility of the ACSF.
- Tables, diagrams and figures have been clearly labelled.
- Graphs in the 'Application' section have been altered to provide applicable examples for the broad range of users.

**The Performance Variables Grid**

The key underpinnings table outlined in the Introduction and reproduced throughout the reference section has now been named the Performance Variables Grid, and several changes have been made.

- The statements in the "Support" column have been refined in order to facilitate uniform interpretation.
- The statements in the "Task Complexity" column have been enhanced and re-presented in order to facilitate increased understanding and provide guidance for task developers.

## **Glossary**

A glossary of key terms now forms part of the Appendices. This alphabetical listing provides an explanation of the specialised words or phrases retained in the new version. The glossary is seen as being useful to all users, but particularly to non LLN specialists.

## **Editorial changes, font size and colour, page numbering**

A number of editorial changes have been made.

- Font size has been increased and print changed from grey to black to improve readability.
- Page numbers have been increased in size and are now on the bottom of the page.
- Wording has been changed where it was felt that this would reduce ambiguity.
- Specialist language has been replaced in those instances where it was felt that nuances would not be lost.
- There have been a number of corrections of typos, spaces etc.