



INCA *International Review of Curriculum and Assessment Frameworks Internet Archive*

Thematic Probe
Curriculum review in the INCA countries: June 2010

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Foreword

Whenever the National Curriculum has been reviewed in England there has been a debate, often heated about what our children should be taught. Many people and organisations, quite reasonably, have a view of what is wrong with the current curriculum and what needs to be done to put it right. Is England unique in this lively controversy generated by the National Curriculum?

This international review looks at how other countries manage their own curriculum reviews. What do we learn? The picture is in many ways reassuring. We are not alone in seeking to reduce prescription so teachers can have more discretion over what they teach. It is also interesting to note that the challenges for children growing up in a dynamic, rapidly changing world are a key driver of curriculum reform in many countries. Any National Curriculum faces two ways; introducing our children, in Matthew Arnold's words, to "the best of which has been thought and said", and as a preparation for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. Striking the right balance will always be problematic, especially as the challenges our children face continue to evolve, sometimes unpredictably.

As we enter another period of review of the National Curriculum I hope that this report, along with other INCA reviews of curriculum and assessment across the world, will provide a useful and timely contribution.

Sylvia McNamara, Executive Director of Policy Implementation, QCDA

Abstract

This probe examines the review and development of curriculum in Australia, British Columbia (Canada), Ontario (Canada), Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the USA, Kentucky (USA), Maryland (USA) and Wales. It aims to answer questions about the scheduling of curriculum review, coverage and drivers for curriculum reviews, and the extent to which consistency of curriculum across phases is a feature of these changes.

It finds that regular, scheduled review of the curriculum is common in only seven of the 23 countries/states covered by the study; in the remainder review takes place on an ad hoc basis. The main drivers for such reviews are:

- political/government change
- attempts to rebalance or thin down the curriculum to combat what has been described as curriculum overload
- contributing to an excellent and equitable education system
- curriculum modernisation to focus on the skills required for the demands of life in the 21st century.

In the majority of the countries and states, recent reviews have tended to consider all phases of compulsory education simultaneously or in some 'joined up' way. Only in a small number of countries have reviews focused on a particular phase of education. The study does not find that consistency and coherence present a particular challenge to curriculum review. Where these issues do exist, they are generally around transfer at the end of a phase. Most countries appear to consider the curriculum in its entirety and to a greater or lesser extent to consider linkage, coherence, continuity and consistency as important and key to review.

Summary

The Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA) is responsible for developing the curriculum in England, improving and delivering assessments and reviewing and reforming qualifications. QCDA consequently has a keen interest in how other countries undertake the review and development of the curriculum, and is currently focusing particularly on how countries develop their curriculum across the various phases of education, for example early years to primary level or primary to secondary level education.

In this context, the International Information Unit (IIU) at the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) was commissioned to complete a rapid desk study of the countries included in the International Review of Curriculum and Assessment Frameworks Internet Archive (INCA) (www.inca.org.uk). The study sought to answer the following research questions:

- Are reviews of the curriculum scheduled at regular intervals or are they *ad hoc* in response to emerging issues?
- Have the most recent reviews of the curriculum covered all ages and phases? Have they included pre-school education?
- What were the reasons for the most recent changes to the curriculum? What were the aims or purposes of these changes?
- To what extent has the consistency of the curriculum framework *across phases* been an issue for these changes? What challenges have arisen and how have they been addressed?

There follows a brief summary of the desk study findings. This is complemented by a series of tables providing, for each individual INCA country or state – Australia, British Columbia (Canada), Ontario (Canada), Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the USA, Kentucky (USA), Maryland (USA) and Wales - a set of detailed findings in response to each research question. At the request of QCDA, a table for Finland (not an INCA country) has also been included.

The curriculum review cycle

Regular, scheduled review of the curriculum is common in seven of the countries (or states) considered by this desk study probe. In Hungary, as a requirement of the Act on Public Education 1993, the National Core Curriculum (and the accompanying pre-school curriculum) must be evaluated regularly - and at least every five years - and review must subsequently take place if judged necessary. In the Netherlands, the attainment targets of the primary and lower secondary curriculum frameworks are also reviewed every five years. Review cycles are longer in Japan, where the 'Courses of Study' are reviewed every ten

years or so. In Finland, reviews tend to take place on a ten-year cycle although this is not legislated for. The curriculum planning and review process in Singapore was also previously based on an eight- to ten-year cycle. This has recently been reduced to six years, with a mid-term review at the end of the third year. The aim is to ensure that the curriculum is forward looking, remains relevant in the context of the Singaporean economy, and meets the needs, abilities and interests of students.

The regular curriculum reviews in place in the Canadian states of British Columbia and Ontario are slightly different to those mentioned above. In Ontario, in 2003, the Ministry of Education began a curriculum review process in which the curriculum policy document for each individual subject is reviewed and revised on a seven-year cycle. This means that, each year, a number of subject areas enter the review process. The intention is to ensure that the curriculum remains current, relevant and age-appropriate. This does not, of course, preclude reviews of the curriculum for various stages or phases of education in Ontario. In late 2008, for example, the Ontario Government's Curriculum Council began a review of the elementary phase of the Ontario Curriculum (Grades 1 to 8, ages six to 14). This ongoing review is the first major overhaul of the whole elementary phase of the curriculum since its design and implementation in 2000.

In British Columbia also, the formal review process is ongoing by subject area (known as 'Integrated Resource Packages', IRPs), and draft materials are reviewed both internally (within the Ministry of Education) and externally, involving feedback from the general public and other interested parties. Recently under review in British Columbia have been the IRPs for international languages; arts education (dance, drama, music, visual arts) (Kindergarten to Grade 7); French language; healthy living; and literacy in the English, maths, science, social studies and ICT curriculum.

In all other countries and states included in the desk study, curriculum review appears to take place on an ad hoc basis, driven by external factors and emerging issues. These may be political, social, economic, relate to developments in system structure, or be subject-related. In France, for example, the decision to review the curriculum is taken by the Minister of Education in line with other reforms in education or a need to review and update curriculum content. In Korea, prior to 2000, the curriculum was revised regularly in accordance with a five- to-ten-year-cycle and the usual practice was to review all curriculum documents across all phases at the same time. In recent years, partial curriculum revisions have become increasingly common and the school curriculum has been revised on demand. For example, there was a 2008 revision of the Seventh National Curriculum for the newly adopted subject of health education and, also in 2008, the English curriculum was revised to increase the number of hours of instruction. In 2009, the social studies curriculum was revised to expand its content to include economic education and there was a more general revision to encourage increased autonomy for schools in curriculum formulation and implementation. In Ireland, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)

undertakes review of the junior cycle of education (12- to 15-year-olds) on a continuous basis. The current phase of this review involves consideration of the curriculum in response to concerns of overload and overlap.

Recent reviews: coverage and motivators

Review coverage – ages and phases

In the majority of the countries and states included in the desk study (including Australia, British Columbia and Ontario in Canada, Finland, France, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Scotland, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, the USA – Kentucky and Maryland, and Wales) recent reviews of the curriculum have tended to consider all phases of compulsory education simultaneously or in some form of ‘joined-up’ way. For example in France, the most recent review integrated the *socle commun* – the common foundation of knowledge and skills - into all levels of schooling. Although introduced initially in primary phase education only, the *socle commun* now provides – and was always intended to provide - the reference for the drafting of national education programmes (curricula) at pre-school, primary and lower secondary level. It provides the set of values, knowledge, languages and practices to be mastered for individual pupils to successfully complete their schooling, continue their education, enter a profession and contribute to society.

Scotland's review, resulting in the introduction of the Curriculum for Excellence, extended from pre-school children from age three to 18-year-olds. Similarly, in Wales, the revised School Curriculum for Wales, which began to be introduced in 2008, applies to all students aged from three to 18/19. There remain particular concerns, however, about the effectiveness of this revised curriculum for the eight to 14 age range in Wales (see below).

Only in a small number of countries or states (including Finland, Germany, Ireland, Ontario (Canada) and Singapore) have recent reviews focussed on specific phases of education. In Germany, for example, reviews have focused predominantly on lower secondary phase education in response to considerable numbers of changes at this level (including the introduction of national educational standards for lower secondary education; the combination/integration of several school programmes and paths; and the introduction of more full-day and comprehensive schools). In Ontario (Canada), alongside the regular cyclical reviews of specific subject curricula, there is a current review of elementary phase education (eight- to 14-year-olds) and, in Ireland, the review focus is on junior cycle education for 12- to 15-year-olds. Curriculum review (specifically curriculum overload and overlap) is only part of this latter current review of the junior cycle, which is also examining assessment for learning during this phase and includes research into students' experiences in post-primary school. Earlier reviews in Ireland, which focused on the primary phase curriculum and reported in 2005 and 2008, identified key challenges relating to assessment, the Gaeilge curriculum and curriculum overload in this phase. These challenges are currently

being examined through the work of the Primary School Network. Again, in Finland too, alongside the regularly scheduled reviews (see above) Finland, the most recent review of the curriculum to take places focuses not only on a specific age group but, also, on a specific group, that is, immigrant children. The review was of the so-called 'preparation' curriculum for children six to 10-years of age. These stand-alone, phase-specific reviews do not of course mean that consideration is not given – during the process of review - to coherence across the 'curriculum piece' (see 'consistency, continuity and coherence' below).

Review motivators

Where the driver for review is not a regular or cyclical review programme (see above), curriculum review in the countries covered by this thematic probe seems to have four main driving factors – political change, curriculum overload, contributing to an excellent and equitable education system and curriculum modernisation to focus on the skills required for the demands of life and work in the 21st century.

In both Italy and Spain, recent curriculum review has been influenced by changes in government. In Italy, for example, the frequency of governmental change in recent years has presented some challenges, although the current Government (elected in 2008) seems keen to build on previous curriculum development work rather than change this completely.

Attempts to 'rebalance' or 'thin down' the curriculum to combat curriculum overload are a driving factor in curriculum review in several states and countries including Ontario (Canada), Germany - which talks about 'decluttering' the curriculum, Ireland, the Netherlands (at upper secondary level), Northern Ireland, South Africa and Sweden. In Ontario, the current review of the elementary phase curriculum aims to reduce what is regarded as an overcrowded curriculum and consequently enable students to have more time to practise what they have learned and gain a deeper understanding. In Ireland, the review of the junior cycle curriculum is seeking to tackle the issue of curriculum overload by 'rebalancing' junior cycle subjects, that is by reducing overload within, and overlap between, subjects, and by providing more space and time in the curriculum to ensure the quality of learning engagement with students that teachers would like. In the Netherlands, recent changes to syllabus requirements in the final years of some upper secondary examination courses are intended to ensure that teaching is better organised and less fragmented, and that the burden on students is reduced.

A third important driver for curriculum change and review is a desire for curriculum change to contribute to improved equity and excellence in education (Australia, Hungary, Scotland, Singapore and Spain). In the context of issues of underachievement of indigenous Australians and of students from low socio-economic backgrounds, the new Australian National Curriculum, for example, is designed to be accessible to all young Australians, regardless of their social or economic background or the school they attend, and to provide

differentiated levels of support to ensure that all students have a fair chance to achieve those expectations.

Excellence and standards is also a key motivator for the most recent (2008/09) curriculum revisions proposed in Japan. These revisions mark a turnaround from the country's recent 'education-with-latitude' policy in the wake of reported declines in students' academic ability. They follow a report published by the advisory Central Council for Education, which called for increased teaching of basic knowledge and skills, and recent results in domestic and international surveys of student attainment which suggest that there is room for improvement in student academic ability.

The most cited reason for curriculum review (Australia, British Columbia and Ontario (Canada), France, Germany, Hungary, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Singapore, Spain, Kentucky and Maryland in the USA, and Wales) is to 'modernise' the curriculum. That is, to revise the curriculum to ensure it remains current and relevant; reflects changes in society and ensures that students are equipped to deal with these; and adequately prepares students for their future.

The new Australian National Curriculum, for example, is intended to 'equip all young Australians with the essential skills, knowledge and capabilities to thrive and compete in a globalised world and the information rich workplaces of the current century.' The impetus for the revised (2007) New Zealand Curriculum was a recognition, following curriculum 'stocktakes' in 2000 and 2002, that continued social change necessitated an update to ensure that the revised curriculum provides a clear statement of what is deemed to be important in education for today's society and to prepare students for the future. Similarly, when the review of the Northern Ireland Curriculum began in 1999, the aim was to provide a curriculum and assessment framework capable of 'meeting the changing needs of pupils, society and the economy; which had the confidence of teachers, pupils, parents, employers and the wider public; and which widens educational opportunity and improves learner motivation and achievements'. Employability was a key focus.

The current review of primary education in Singapore further seeks to ensure that, in addition to 'content knowledge', the curriculum equips young children with the skills and values to thrive in a fast-changing and globalised future. Similarly, changes introduced to the curriculum in Spain since the introduction of the 2006 Organic Act on Education have aimed to ensure a broader approach to learning and a closer link with the realities of everyday life and society, whilst the Curriculum for Excellence reforms in Scotland recognise a need to offer more engaging and relevant experiences to ensure that Scotland's children and young people are equipped for life and work in a globalised society.

Recent reviews: consistency, continuity and coherence

In few of the countries and states examined in this desk study do consistency and coherence across the curriculum appear to present a particular challenge to curriculum review. That said, the majority of countries do appear to consider the curriculum in its holistic whole when undertaking review and, to a greater or lesser extent, to consider linkages, coherence, continuity and consistency as important and key.

A primary objective of the Curriculum for Excellence review in Scotland, for example, was to ensure that the new curriculum is 'coherent and inclusive', and the Northern Ireland Curriculum review aimed to provide improved balance, coherence and flexibility at each key stage. In the Hungarian system, curriculum coherence, competences and equity are key issues in education which are factored in to the design and development of the National Core Curriculum (NCC). In addition, the NCC covers all phases of compulsory education (from age six to age 18/19) and is closely linked to the Kindergarten Core Programme for three- to six-year-olds. Similarly, in South Africa, curriculum documentation aims to emphasise the 'logical progression between grades', whilst in France, ensuring the consistency of the curriculum framework across phases was a major influence in the *socle commun* reforms.

Indeed, in those countries where the curriculum is influenced by national core aims for education, such as the 'Melbourne Goals for Young People' in Australia or the *socle commun* in France, these goals/core aims are regarded as factors which promote and underlie coherence. Cross-curricular subjects or skills, and key competences, which link across phases, are also considered key in promoting coherence across the curriculum (for example in Australia, Hungary, Italy, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Singapore, Spain and Wales).

The desk study does identify some particular concerns to ensure connection and continuity between pre-compulsory pre-school or early years curriculum guidance and the compulsory level curriculum. The design guidelines for the Australian National Curriculum, which is currently in development, state for example that the curriculum for the five to 16 phase should connect with and build on the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) for the under fives. The Australian National Curriculum is being developed with input and feedback from early childhood educators, some of whom also participated in the development of the EYLF.

There was also concern at the time of the *socle commun* reforms in France to ensure that links were established between the requirements of this new 'common foundation of knowledge and skills' and the pre-school curriculum framework. In Ireland also, 'Aistear', the new early years curriculum framework aims to align itself with the objectives of the primary curriculum, making both implicit and explicit links with the Primary School Curriculum so as to support continuity and progression in children's learning. In Finland too,

the principle of coherence between the pre-primary education curriculum and the national core curriculum for basic education is considered.

Although consideration of curriculum continuity and coherence seems to feature in curriculum review across the countries of this desk study, there remain, at the same time, some issues linked to a lack of coherence between phases at some points of transfer. Recent reviews in Germany, Ireland and Wales in particular have identified problems in these areas.

In Wales, for example, although the recent curriculum review has aimed to cover the full range of educational stages and phases from age three to age 18, a review of education for students aged eight to 14, which began in 2009, has uncovered issues relating to coherence in teaching and learning for this age group. The review found that transition from primary to secondary education – at around age 11 - remains problematic because of the different curricula followed in primary and secondary school education. This problem is compounded by 11-year-olds entering secondary education with unsatisfactory levels of basic skills. The current concern is that the objectives of the Foundation Phase for three- to seven-year-olds and the expanded 14-19 learning pathways will not be fully achieved unless the student experience during the intervening period, from age eight to age 14, is improved.

In Germany, the recent focus on review in the lower secondary phase of education has meant that, for reasons of time and practicality – that is in an attempt to avoid any further delay in the modernisation of lower secondary level curricula - a temporary ‘disassociation’ of the lower and upper secondary curricula was accepted. There are now concerns that these curricula need to be ‘re-associated’ to ensure future improvements. In Ireland also, current work on reviewing and rebalancing the junior cycle (lower secondary) curriculum syllabuses is taking into consideration the Primary School Curriculum and leaving certificate (upper secondary) requirements. This consideration of the phases above and below junior cycle is with a view to successfully tackling some of the issues around transition identified by recent research on the student experience in junior cycle education.

Conclusions

This probe has examined the review and development of the curriculum, with particular regard to ensuring coherence between ages and stages in Australia, British Columbia (Canada), Ontario (Canada), Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the USA, Kentucky (USA), Maryland (USA) and Wales.

Unsurprisingly the probe does not reveal one single approach to curriculum review. Seven countries (or states) have regular reviews which take place on average every five years or so. In two of the seven (both Canadian states), there is a regular process in which individual

curriculum subjects are reviewed according to a rolling programme. In the remaining countries included in the probe, curriculum reviews appear to take place on an ad hoc basis.

The key drivers for these ad hoc reviews seem to be political changes (changes of government), a desire to address issues of curriculum overload or curriculum rebalancing, improving excellence and equality in the education system and/or modernisation of the curriculum. This final reason, that is, to ensure that the curriculum remains current and relevant; reflects changes in society and ensures that students are equipped to deal with these; and adequately prepares students for their future is the most cited motivator for curriculum review.

The probe does identify some consistency in the coverage of curriculum review; in the majority of the countries and states included, recent reviews have tended to consider all phases of compulsory education simultaneously or in some joined up way. Only in a small number of countries have reviews focused on a particular phase of education. Such reviews tend to have specific drivers such as the introduction of national educational standards in lower secondary education in Germany.

Only in a few of the countries and states examined in the desk study do consistency and coherence across the curriculum appear to present a particular challenge to curriculum review. In most of the countries/states, linkage, coherence, continuity and consistency are, to a greater or less extent, regarded as important and key in reviewing the curriculum and/or features of the curriculum. Factors which may underlie coherence can include national core aims for education, cross-curricular subjects/skills, or key competences. The study did, however, identify a lack of coherence between phases of education at some points of transfer in some countries/states.

Australia

Is there a national curriculum or equivalent and what is it called?	The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is in the process of developing an Australia-wide curriculum from Kindergarten Year to Year 10 (ages five to 16). Development of the Australian National Curriculum is beginning with the 'learning areas' of English, maths, science and history which are being developed during 2010. Implementation will commence in 2011.
URL:	http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/
What does the national curriculum cover at what ages and stages?	<p>The Australian National Curriculum will cover Kindergarten Year (the year preceding Year 1 of compulsory education for five- to six-year-olds) through to year 10 (age 16) and the 'learning areas' will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• maths;• sciences;• humanities and social sciences (history, geography and economics, business, civics and citizenship);• the arts (performing and visual);• languages (particularly Asian languages);• health and physical education;• information and communication technology (ICT) and design technology. <p>The learning areas will not carry equal weight /not be of equal importance at all year levels. English and maths will be of fundamental importance throughout, and will be the primary focus of learning in the early years. Humanities and social sciences will take on greater scope and increasing specialisation as students move through the years of schooling. Each learning area has a specific discipline base and application across the curriculum. In addition, a focus on environmental sustainability will be integrated across the curriculum and all students will have the opportunity to access indigenous content where relevant.</p> <p>'General capabilities', which should be addressed across the curriculum, are also included in the new Australian National Curriculum. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• literacy;• numeracy;• ICT;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • thinking skills; • creativity; • self-management; • teamwork; • intercultural understanding; • ethical behaviour; • social competence. <p>In addition, the curriculum will include the ‘cross-curriculum perspectives’ of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous perspectives: these will be written into the Australian National Curriculum to ensure that all young Australians have the opportunity to learn about, acknowledge and respect the culture of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders. • A commitment to sustainable patterns of living. • Skills, knowledge and understandings related to Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia. <p>General capabilities and cross-curriculum perspectives will be represented in learning areas in ways appropriate to that area. The curriculum documents will indicate how connections can be made between discipline areas, and how particular general capabilities and cross-curriculum perspectives will be explicitly dealt with in each learning area.</p>
<p>When was the curriculum last reviewed and is there a review cycle?</p>	<p>A review cycle has not yet been established for the new curriculum.</p>
<p>What was reviewed in the most recent curriculum review and what changes were implemented (ages/phases; content)?</p>	<p>The first Australian National Curriculum is in the process of development. Development is being shaped by the following principles and guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The curriculum should make clear to teachers what is to be taught, and to students what they should learn and what achievement standards are expected of them. This means that curriculum documents will be explicit about knowledge, understanding and skills, and that they will provide a clear foundation for the development of a teaching programme.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The curriculum should be based on the assumptions that all students can learn and that every student matters. It should set high standards and ensure that they apply to all young Australians while acknowledging the different rates at which students develop. • The curriculum should connect with, and build on, the Early Years Learning Framework being developed for the pre-Kindergarten (under five) phase. • The curriculum should help prepare all young Australians to become fulfilled and competent citizens and workers. It should build firm and meaningful foundational skills as well as provide the basis for developing expertise for those who move on to specialised advanced studies in academic disciplines, professions and technical trades. It should anticipate an increase in both the proportion of students who remain in education and training to complete Year 12 or equivalent vocational education and training, and the proportion who continue to further study. • The curriculum should provide students with an understanding of the past that has shaped the society, culture and environment in which they are growing and developing, and with knowledge, understandings and skills that will help them in their futures. • The curriculum should be feasible, taking account of the time and resources available to teachers and students, and the time it typically takes to learn complex concepts and ideas. In particular, the National Curriculum should recognise and appreciate that, in the primary years, teachers are responsible for several learning areas. • The primary audience for National Curriculum documents should be classroom teachers. Documents should be concise and expressed in plain language, which nevertheless preserves a complexity in ideas appropriate for professional practitioners. Documents should be recognisably similar across learning areas in language, structure and length. • Time demands on students must leave room for learning beyond the scope of the National Curriculum. • The curriculum should allow jurisdictions, systems and schools to implement it in a way that values teachers' professional knowledge and that reflects the needs and interests evident in local contexts, as it will be teachers who decide how best to organise learning for students. Organisation of learning should take account of individual family, cultural and community backgrounds; acknowledge and build on prior learning experiences; and fill gaps in those experiences. • The curriculum should be established on a strong evidence base related to learning, pedagogy and what works in professional practice, and it should encourage teachers to analyse and evaluate their practices systematically.
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<p>What was the impetus for curriculum change (political change, emerging issues)?</p>	<p>ACARA’s work in developing the Australian National Curriculum is guided by the 2008 <i>Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians</i>. This commits to ‘supporting all young Australians to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens’. It also commits to promoting equity and excellence in education.</p> <p>The Australian National Curriculum is intended to ‘equip all young Australians with the essential skills, knowledge and capabilities to thrive and compete in a globalised world and the information rich workplaces of the current century.’ It will be accessible to all young Australians, regardless of their social or economic background or the school they attend.</p>
<p>Has curriculum coherence - the consistency of the curriculum framework across phases, influenced recent curriculum developments?</p>	<p>The design guidelines for the Australian National Curriculum state that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The curriculum should connect with, and build on, the Early Years Learning Framework being developed for the pre-Kindergarten (under five) phase. • The curriculum should allow jurisdictions, systems and schools to implement it in a way that values teachers’ professional knowledge and that reflects the needs and interests evident in local contexts, as it will be teachers who decide how best to organise learning for students. Organisation of learning should take account of individual family, cultural and community backgrounds; acknowledge and build on prior learning experiences; and fill gaps in those experiences. • The National Curriculum should connect with the curriculum developed by the individual States and Territories. <p>Both the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and the draft Australian National Curriculum support the goal of the <i>Melbourne Declaration on Education Goals for Young People</i>, ‘that all young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens’. The Australian National Curriculum is being developed with input and feedback from ACARA writing teams and advisory panels. These include early childhood educators in states and territories, some of whom have also participated in the development of the EYLF.</p> <p>A key principle in the development of the National Curriculum has been the importance of depth of learning over breadth of learning, with a view to avoiding an overcrowded curriculum. The curriculum also aims to offer teachers the flexibility to apply the key principles and practices of early childhood teaching articulated in the EYLF, that is:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ongoing learning and reflective practice; • holistic approaches; • responsiveness to children; • learning through play; and • intentional teaching. <p>The Australian National Curriculum focus on general capabilities and cross-curriculum perspectives also reflects the integrated and complex nature of learning as described in the EYLF’s key learning outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have a strong sense of identity (history and English). • Children are connected with and contribute to their world (science, mathematics and history). • Children are effective communicators (English, science, history, mathematics).
<p>What challenges have arisen and how have these been addressed?</p>	<p>Challenges in the development of the Australian National Curriculum highlighted by the <i>Melbourne Declaration</i> include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The growing influence of India and China on the world and the need to become Asia-literate. As a result, there is a focus on Asian languages in the Australian National Curriculum; Australia’s engagement with Asia is one of the cross-curriculum perspectives to be covered across the areas of learning; and intercultural understanding is included among the general capabilities in the new curriculum. • The need to be able to problem solve in the context of growing environmental, social and economic pressures. Consequently, environmental sustainability will be integrated across the curriculum, along with ethical behaviour and social competence. • Issues relating to the underachievement of indigenous Australians and those from low socio-economic backgrounds. The new Australian National Curriculum is based on learning from past attempts to overcome inequity, which have shown that an alternative curriculum for students who are regarded as disadvantaged does not treat them equitably. The National Curriculum is based on the premise that it is better to set the same high expectations for all students and to provide differentiated levels of support to ensure that all students have a fair chance to achieve those expectations.

Canada: British Columbia

<p>Is there a national curriculum or equivalent and what is it called?</p>	<p>There is no national curriculum in Canada. The country consists of ten provinces and three territories, each of which has exclusive authority for education in the individual province or territory, controlling all aspects of the education system. The Ministers of Education from each province (or territory) have, however, established a National Secretariat - the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), to ensure communication on issues such as funding, curricula and student assessment. In addition, there is a Western Canadian Protocol (WNCP). Under this agreement, the four Western Canadian provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and the three northern territories of Nunavut, Western Arctic and Yukon Territory, have established networks and opportunities for the development of curriculum in key subject areas. To date, only a Common Core Curriculum for Mathematics, K to 12, has been co-developed; several jurisdictions outside the WNCP have adopted this mathematics curriculum. One of the WNCP's goals is to provide continuity of educational provision across the age range and across jurisdictions.</p> <p>In British Columbia, the Ministry of Education sets the standards of learning for Kindergarten to Grade 12 (from age four to around age 18) and these standards of learning are outlined in the Integrated Resource Packages (IRPs) which constitute the provincial curriculum.</p> <p>The province is also currently considering the development of learning standards for pre-kindergarten. These deliberations are in the early stages.</p>
<p>URL:</p>	<p>http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/</p>
<p>What does the national curriculum cover at what ages and stages?</p>	<p>IRPs contain standards-based learning outcomes and achievement indicators for each subject area from Kindergarten to Grade 12.</p> <p>Each level of the education programme has particular emphases, which reflect the range of knowledge, skills and attitudes that students develop during these years. All levels of the programme are, however, developed around a common core of learning to ensure that students learn to read, write and do basic maths, solve problems and use computer-based technology. These basic skills are emphasised through studies in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English; • maths; • science; • social studies;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fine arts; and • applied skills (such as technology education, home economics, business education). <p>This common core of learning, known as 'Foundation Studies' – the provincially prescribed curriculum, aims to ensure that all students, not just those planning to go to university, gain the knowledge, problem-solving skills and communication skills they need to continue learning throughout their lives.</p>
When was the curriculum last reviewed and is there a review cycle?	There is an ongoing process of curriculum review in British Columbia. This webpage provides access to those IRPs currently under review and development: http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/drafts/
What was reviewed in the most recent curriculum review and what changes were implemented (ages/phases; content)?	<p>The Ministry of Education's formal process for the development of provincially prescribed curricula includes an internal and an external review of draft material during the curriculum development process.</p> <p>The internal review involves soliciting feedback from individuals and groups within the Ministry of Education, whilst the external review involves feedback from members of the general public and from other government ministries in which there is expertise relevant to a particular curriculum area under development/revision.</p> <p>All comments and suggestions for improvement are taken into consideration as curriculum is developed, revised and finalised.</p>
What was the impetus for curriculum change (political change, emerging issues)?	<p>Curriculum under revision or development is available through the Ministry website. The curriculum implementation schedule partially serves to notify stakeholders that a curriculum is going to be developed or changed.</p> <p>When curriculum is developed or revised, typically the entire grade and grade grouping is reviewed to ensure continuity (as noted below) but also to ensure that current pedagogical approaches are incorporated across all grades of a particular subject.</p>
Has curriculum coherence - the consistency of the curriculum framework across phases, influenced recent curriculum developments?	The changes vary from year to year; in 2009/10 some of the curricula which were revised included Application of Physics Grade 11-12, Home Economics: Family Studies Grades 10-12, and Physical Education K to 7 and 8-10. In addition, some of the grades of the new WNCP maths curriculum were also implemented.
What challenges have arisen and how have these been addressed?	No information located.

Canada: Ontario

<p>Is there a national curriculum or equivalent and what is it called?</p>	<p>There is no national curriculum in Canada. The country consists of ten provinces and three territories, each of which has exclusive authority for education in the individual province or territory, controlling all aspects of the education system. The Ministers of Education from each province (or territory) have, however, established a National Secretariat - the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), to ensure communication on issues such as funding, curricula and student assessment. In addition, there is a Western Canadian Protocol. Under this agreement, the four Western Canadian provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and the three northern territories of Nunavut, Western Arctic and Yukon Territory, have established parallel curricula in key subject areas. This is with the aim of providing continuity of educational provision across the age range and across the territories.</p> <p>In Ontario, the Ministry of Education sets the curriculum for Ontario's schools, which is known as the Ontario Curriculum.</p>
<p>URL:</p>	<p>The Elementary Curriculum (from ages five/six to 14): http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/index.html</p> <p>The Secondary Curriculum (ages 14 to 18): http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/index.html</p>
<p>What does the national curriculum cover at what ages and stages?</p>	<p>Ontario Curriculum documents define what students are taught in Ontario public schools. They detail the knowledge and skills that students are expected to develop in each subject at each grade level. By developing and publishing curriculum documents for use by all Ontario teachers, the Ministry of Education sets standards for the entire province.</p>
<p>When was the curriculum last reviewed and is there a review cycle?</p>	<p>The Ontario Curriculum in its current form was introduced in 2000 and, in 2003, the Ministry of Education began a curriculum review process in which the curriculum policy document for every subject is reviewed and revised on a seven-year cycle. This process is intended to ensure that the curriculum remains current, relevant and age-appropriate.</p> <p>In addition, in late 2008, the Ontario Government's Curriculum Council (a group of community leaders and education experts which provides strategic policy advice to the Minister of Education) began a review of the</p>

	<p>elementary phase of the Ontario Curriculum (Grades 1 to 8, ages six to 14). The Council’s final report is expected in 2010, and the implementation of any changes is expected to take place by autumn 2011. This is the first major overhaul of the whole elementary phase of the curriculum since its design and implementation in 2000: http://www.parentcentral.ca/parent/education/schoolsandresources/article/732895--schools-plan-lcurriculum-overhaul</p>
<p>What was reviewed in the most recent curriculum review and what changes were implemented (ages/phases; content)?</p>	<p>Ongoing reviews since 2003: Some of the changes introduced as a result of cyclical, subject area curriculum reviews have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reduction in the amount of content in each subject. • The addition of examples and other features to assist teachers in lesson preparation and planning. • The provision of more information to assist teachers in supporting English language learners, planning programmes for students with special educational needs, using technology, and other important aspects of programme planning and classroom instruction. • The embedding of expectations that allow students to develop literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking skills in all subjects. • The alignment of curriculum expectations with policy initiatives, such as those in the areas of environmental education, Aboriginal education, equity and inclusive education, and French-language education. <p>Elementary phase curriculum review: The main consideration of the Curriculum Council’s current review of the elementary phase curriculum (Grades 1 to 8, ages six to 14) is the ‘overcrowded’ curriculum.</p> <p>In spring 2009, the Working Group on the Elementary Curriculum was also established to examine the elementary curriculum and consult with the public to gather information and provide recommendations on how to improve it. This working group has held regular meetings, reviewed research from other jurisdictions and developed a preliminary public survey. A discussion paper, <i>Supporting Learning and Teaching in Ontario’s Elementary Schools</i> (http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/paperconsult/index.html) was developed based on the discussions and responses to the preliminary survey. The information gathered through research, consultations with stakeholders and the preliminary report is being considered by the working group in preparing its final report to the Curriculum Council expected in late 2010. Proposed changes to the elementary phase of the Ontario Curriculum include ‘leaner’ guidelines, fewer ‘checklists’ of facts to learn, and more time for ‘deeper’ learning. In essence, the curriculum is being ‘thinned out’.</p>

<p>What was the impetus for curriculum change (political change, emerging issues)?</p>	<p>The regular cycle of ongoing, individual subject area curriculum review is intended to ensure that the curriculum remains current, relevant and age-appropriate.</p> <p>The current review of the elementary phase curriculum aims to reduce what is regarded as an overcrowded curriculum and consequently enable students to have more time to practise what they have learned and gain a deeper understanding.</p>
<p>Has curriculum coherence - the consistency of the curriculum framework across phases, influenced recent curriculum developments?</p>	<p>Curriculum coherence would appear not to have been a major driver of the current review.</p>
<p>What challenges have arisen and how have these been addressed?</p>	<p>No information located.</p>

Finland

<p>Is there a national curriculum or equivalent and what is it called?</p>	<p>There are three National Core Curriculum in Finland; one for pre-primary education (children aged six to seven years) ; one for basic compulsory education (children aged seven to 16 years); and one for upper secondary education (young people aged 16 to 19 years). The details of all three curricula are determined by the Finnish National Board of Education, and include, the objectives and core content of different subject, time allocations, as principles of assessment, special needs education, pupil welfare and educational guidance.</p> <p>The education providers, usually the local education authorities and the schools themselves draw up their own curricula for each phase of education within the framework of the National Core Curriculum.</p> <p>The present National Core Curriculum for basic education was confirmed in January 2004 and introduced in schools in August 2006. The present National Core Curriculum for upper secondary education was reformed in 2003 and the local curricula based on this framework came into effect in schools in August 2005.</p> <p>The National Core Curriculum for pre-primary education was established in 2000. It was developed through extensive collaboration between all relevant stakeholders, including local authorities and their day-care centres and schools. Each education provider is obliged to draft a local curriculum based on the National Core Curriculum.</p>
<p>URL:</p>	<p>National Core Curriculum: http://www.oph.fi/english/publications/2009/national_core_curricula_for_basic_education</p> <p>National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Education:</p> <p>http://www.oph.fi/english/publications/2003/National_Core_Curriculum_for_Upper_Secondary_Schools_2003</p> <p>Pre-primary curriculum is not available to download in English.</p>
<p>What does the national curriculum cover at what ages and stages?</p>	<p>Pre-primary education is voluntary and intended for six-year-olds who will start their compulsory education in the following year. It is provided in day care centres falling under the administration of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (majority), and in comprehensive schools, providing basic compulsory education, either in separate pre-primary classes or in combined classes.</p>

	Compulsory core subjects in during basic education are the mother tongue (i.e. Finnish or Swedish) language and literature, second national language, foreign languages, environmental studies, health education, religion or ethics, history, social studies, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, geography, physical education, music, visual arts, craft, home economics and pupil counselling.
When was the curriculum last reviewed and is there a review cycle?	National Core Curricula Are revised approximately every ten years. However this is not legislated for. The core curriculum for basic education was revised in 2004; that for general upper secondary education in 2003. The local curricula based on the upper secondary core curriculum framework came into effect in schools in August 2005. The pre-primary core curriculum came into force in August 2002.
What was reviewed in the most recent curriculum review and what changes were implemented (ages/phases; content)?	The most recent curriculum review was a review of the so-called 'preparation' curriculum for immigrant children aged six to 10 years.
What was the impetus for curriculum change (political change, emerging issues)?	The 'preparation' curriculum was reviewed due to the demands of societal change.
Has curriculum coherence - the consistency of the curriculum framework across phases, influenced recent curriculum developments?	Reviews of curricula cover each phase in its entirety. In formulating the curriculum for compulsory basic education, attention is paid to the pre-primary curriculum with a view to ensuring coherence, not only in terms of curriculum, but also in relations to all decisions made by the local authority in respect of children, young people and schooling.
What challenges have arisen and how have these been addressed?	No information located.

France

<p>Is there a national curriculum or equivalent and what is it called?</p>	<p>There is central, state control of the curriculum in France and a statutory national curriculum. This is delivered through 'national programmes' (see below), which set out the knowledge students should acquire and provide the framework around which institutions organise their teaching.</p> <p>In addition, in July 2006, the decree instituting the provisions of the 'Act on the Future of School's was published. This laid the foundations for the introduction of the socle commun de connaissances et de compétences which determines the skills and competences to be acquired by all students by the end of compulsory education.</p>
<p>URL:</p>	<p>The national programmes can be downloaded by phase from the <i>Eduscol</i> website:</p> <p><i>Ecole maternelle</i> (pre-compulsory school which caters for children from age two or three to six years): http://eduscol.education.fr/cid48644/ecole-maternelle.html</p> <p><i>Programme du cycle des apprentissages fondamentaux</i> (basic learning cycle in the primary phase, six- to eight-year-olds) - http://eduscol.education.fr/cid48645/cycle-des-apprentissages-fondamentaux.html</p> <p><i>Programme du cycle des approfondissements</i> (primary consolidation cycle for eight- to 11-year-olds) - http://eduscol.education.fr/cid48646/cycle-des-approfondissements.html</p> <p><i>Programmes de collège</i> (lower secondary schools for 11- to 15-year-olds) - http://eduscol.education.fr/pid23391/programmes-ecole-college.html?pid=23391&page=0&formSubmitted=1&niveau=3&classe=0&Submit.x=29&Submit.y=8</p> <p>The <i>socle commun</i> is also available online: http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid2770/le-socle-commun-de-connaissances-et-de-competences.html</p>
<p>What does the national curriculum cover at what ages and stages?</p>	<p>The <i>socle commun</i> defines fundamental knowledge; it is not intended to be a minimum core curriculum but to be the starting point from which the curriculum is built. It aims to give an overall meaning to all compulsory education, defining its main themes, purposes, objectives and essential content. In addition to knowledge and skills, the <i>socle commun</i> also emphasises attitudes. It is based on seven pillars, each divided into knowledge, abilities and attributes/attitudes. These pillars are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mastering the French language;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speaking a modern foreign language; • acquiring basic knowledge in maths and science; • developing a humanist culture; • mastering information and communication technology; • acquiring social and civic skills; • developing autonomy and initiative.
<p>When was the curriculum last reviewed and is there a review cycle?</p>	<p>The most recent review of the curriculum took place in 2006 and came into force in 2008 (the <i>socle commun</i> reforms).</p> <p>Reviews of the curriculum are ad hoc in response to emerging issues. The decision to review the curriculum is taken by the Minister of Education in line with other current reforms in education or a need to review and update curriculum content.</p>
<p>What was reviewed in the most recent curriculum review and what changes were implemented (ages/phases; content)?</p>	<p>The 2006 review covered pre-school, primary and lower secondary education.</p> <p>As a result of the review, the <i>socle commun</i> – the 'common base of knowledge and skills' - now provides the reference for the drafting of the national education programmes (curricula) at pre-school, primary and lower secondary level. The <i>socle commun</i> provides the set of values, knowledge, languages and practices that need to be mastered in order to allow each pupil to successfully complete his or her schooling, continue his/her education and professional future and contribute to society.</p> <p>Key changes introduced under the <i>socle commun</i> reforms include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A simplified timetable with a focus on French and maths, and an increase in the amount of sport in the timetable. • The introduction of other types of knowledge to the curriculum, for example, introducing history of art from the first year of primary education (aged six to seven). • The replacement of civics education with civic and moral education. • A strong link between pre-school and primary programmes. <p>Although the focus of the <i>socle commun</i> reform was the compulsory phase curriculum, pre-school education was included as, although this phase is not compulsory, the structure of provision and the curriculum in pre-school education link closely to primary phase education.</p>

	<p>A further key change introduced under the reforms is a reduction in the number of compulsory weekly teaching hours in compulsory phase education from 26 to 24. These two hours are intended to be used to provide personalised support for struggling students, or for work in small groups.</p>
<p>What was the impetus for curriculum change (political change, emerging issues)?</p>	<p>The <i>socle commun</i> reforms aimed to reduce the number of children leaving primary education with serious difficulties.</p>
<p>Has curriculum coherence - the consistency of the curriculum framework across phases, influenced recent curriculum developments?</p>	<p>Colleagues in the French Eurydice Unit confirm that the consistency of the curriculum framework across phases was a major concern and influence in the <i>socle commun</i> reforms. The <i>socle commun</i> aims to give an overall meaning to all compulsory education, defining its main themes, purposes, objectives and essential content. Gilles de Robien, the Minister of Education, Higher Education and Research who presented the reform in 2006, commented that the publication of the <i>socle commun</i> was fundamental for French schools, constituting a milestone in school history, unequalled since the Jules Ferry laws which established, free, secular and compulsory education and specified its content.</p> <p>The press pack released at the time of announcement of the <i>socle commun</i> also made specific reference to the links between the pre-school and primary curricula.</p>
<p>What challenges have arisen and how have these been addressed?</p>	<p>Introduction of the reforms is ongoing, but one challenge appears to be emerging for schools linked to providing teaching for the two hours of teaching time which are now intended to be used to provide personalised support to students or for small group work.</p>

Germany

<p>Is there a national curriculum or equivalent and what is it called?</p>	<p>There is no national curriculum in Germany; responsibility for education lies with the individual regions (<i>Länder</i>) rather than with national government.</p>
<p>What does the national curriculum cover at what ages and stages?</p>	<p>Although there is no national curriculum, in most of the <i>Länder</i> in Germany, the statutory school curriculum includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • German; • maths; • social studies (usually taught as <i>Sachunterricht</i> in primary level education); • history (usually taught as <i>Sachunterricht</i> in primary level education); • geography (usually taught as <i>Sachunterricht</i> in primary level education); • biology (aspects of biology are taught within science, which is usually taught as <i>Sachunterricht</i> in primary level education); • physics (aspects of physics are taught within science, which is usually taught as <i>Sachunterricht</i> in primary level education); • chemistry (aspects of chemistry are taught within science, which is usually taught as <i>Sachunterricht</i> in primary level education); • art; • music; • sport; • religion; and • modern foreign languages. <p><i>Sachunterricht</i> is taught as a specific interdisciplinary subject at primary level. It provides an introduction to subjects such as economics, social studies, history, geography, science (biology, physics, chemistry etc.), and technology, which students will encounter as separate subjects later in their school life.</p> <p>In addition, nationally agreed, common educational standards are gradually being introduced to the education system in Germany. The standards relate, in the first instance, to German, maths and the first modern foreign language (either English or French). They set out the basic principles for each of the subjects; describe the specific competences which students are expected to achieve; promote systematic and integrated learning;</p>

	<p>and outline expected levels of achievement.</p> <p>The Education Ministers of the 16 German <i>Länder</i> also agree that primary education should provide children with the knowledge, ability and capabilities for future life. As a result, in the primary phase, particular emphasis is placed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • factual learning to prepare children for everyday life; • the mastery of the German language (literacy); • maths (numeracy); • developing children's creative ability; • developing children's capacity for independent learning, critical thinking, and learning by their own experience; • an introduction to a foreign language; • beginning to provide children with an understanding of their own culture, the European dimension and a knowledge of the world.
<p>When was the curriculum last reviewed and is there a review cycle?</p>	<p>Reviews of the curriculum are the responsibility of each Ministry of Education of each federal state in Germany. They are not scheduled at regular intervals, but are planned in response to new structural or subject-related developments.</p>
<p>What was reviewed in the most recent curriculum review and what changes were implemented (ages/phases; content)?</p>	<p>Curriculum reviews in Germany do not generally include pre-school education because, in the majority of federal states (<i>Länder</i>), pre-school education is the responsibility of the local Ministry of Youth and/or of Social Affairs.</p> <p>Most recent curriculum reviews have covered the lower secondary phase predominantly, as there have been considerable numbers of changes at this level over the last few years, including the combination/integration of several school programmes and paths and the introduction of more full-day and comprehensive schools. In addition, the introduction of the common educational standards (see above) began in the lower secondary phase.</p>
<p>What was the impetus for curriculum change (political change, emerging issues)?</p>	<p>Reasons for some of the most recent curriculum reviews have included:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reduction in the length of secondary education in the <i>Gymnasium</i> (the grammar school equivalent, offering general academic education) from nine to eight years. • The combination/integration of several school programmes/paths in lower secondary level education. • The emergence of new professional fields which has impacted on the curricula offered in vocational schools. • The introduction of common educational standards. • The growing importance of ICT for teaching and learning. <p>Curriculum reviews have also aimed to 'declutter' and modernise the curriculum and adapt it to modern forms of teacher training.</p>
<p>Has curriculum coherence - the consistency of the curriculum framework across phases, influenced recent curriculum developments?</p>	<p>Curriculum coherence across the lower and upper secondary education has previously been a key issue in curriculum review and reform. However, recently, the need for fairly rapid changes to the lower secondary curriculum - in light of the introduction of the common educational standards for the end of the lower secondary phase - meant that the lower secondary level curriculum was reviewed first and separately; the curricula for upper secondary level have not yet been reviewed.</p>
<p>What challenges have arisen and how have these been addressed?</p>	<p>For reasons of time and practicality, a temporary 'disassociation' of the lower and upper secondary curricula was accepted, to avoid any further delay in the modernisation of lower secondary level curricula.</p>

Hungary

Is there a national curriculum or equivalent and what is it called?	In Hungary, the National Core Curriculum covers the age range six to 18/19, and the Kindergarten Core Programme is for children aged between three and six years.
URL:	http://www.okm.gov.hu/english/hungarian-national-core
What does the national curriculum cover at what ages and stages?	<p>The National Core Curriculum (NCC) was first adopted in 1995. It covers 10 fields of learning and cross-curricular skills. The fields of learning are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hungarian language and literature; • modern foreign language; • maths; • man and society; • man and nature; • our earth and our environment; • arts; • information technology; • everyday life and practical knowledge/skills; • physical exercise and sport.
When was the curriculum last reviewed and is there a review cycle?	<p>The NCC was last revised in 2007, with minor amendments made in 2008. The pre-school education and care curriculum (Kindergarten Core Programme) was revised in 2009.</p> <p>The Act on Public Education stipulates that the NCC and the Kindergarten Core Programme must be assessed and evaluated regularly, and at least every five years. Following this evaluation, curricula must be revised if this is judged necessary.</p>
What was reviewed in the most recent curriculum review and what changes were implemented (ages/phases;	In 2003, following a review of the NCC, the broad fields of learning were retained but there was a shift from content to the development of tasks and competences. Cross-curricular skills became more important and detailed curriculum specifications were replaced by general development tasks. The focus of the 2007 review – the further development of cross-curricular skills and key competences, and equity in education - was fairly

content)?	<p>similar to the previous (2003) review. Following this review, a definition of competence-based curricula was added to the NCC documents, and the provision of equal access to extra lessons in various subjects in primary school became statutory.</p> <p>The objectives of the 2009 review of the pre-school curriculum (Kindergarten Core Programme) were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cater for migrant children; • enhance equity; • support gender equity and avoid gender stereotyping; • focus on developing health-conscious and environmentally conscious behaviour; • retain and confirm a focus on the central role of play in early childhood education. <p>The Kindergarten Core Programme continues to be based on a socio-pedagogic approach; it is still active and child-centred, but now includes the latest developments in pedagogy and an increased emphasis on developing creativity, communication and cognitive skills in young children.</p>
What was the impetus for curriculum change (political change, emerging issues)?	<p>The aims of the 2007 review of the NCC were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A renewed focus on the general development tasks, cross-curricular themes, and key competences introduced as a result of the 2003 review, and the inclusion of the key competences recommended by the EU. • Enhanced equity for pupils. • Increased emphasis on skills and competences and an adaptation of the curriculum in line with amendments to the Public Education Act.
Has curriculum coherence - the consistency of the curriculum framework across phases, influenced recent curriculum developments?	<p>Curriculum coherence, competences and equity are key issues in education in Hungary and are factored in to the design and development of the curriculum. The NCC covers all phases of compulsory education (from age six to age 18/19) and is closely linked to the Kindergarten Core Programme for three- to six-year-olds.</p>
What challenges have arisen and how have these been addressed?	<p>No information located.</p>

Ireland

<p>Is there a national curriculum or equivalent and what is it called?</p>	<p>In Ireland, there are national curriculum programmes for each phase of compulsory education – primary (the Primary School Curriculum, to age 12) and junior cycle (the Junior Cycle/Post-Primary Curriculum, ages 12 to 15). On completion of junior cycle education (age 15), the curriculum is determined by examination syllabuses.</p> <p>There is also a new early years’ curriculum framework – Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. Although not compulsory, this framework is intended for all children receiving pre-school education and care from birth to six years of age. It can be used in the range of early childhood settings including children's own homes, childminding settings, full and part-time daycare settings, sessional services and infant classes in primary schools.</p>
<p>URL:</p>	<p>Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework http://www.ncca.ie/en/Curriculum_and_Assessment/Early_Childhood_and_Primary_Education/Early_Childhood_Education/</p> <p>The Primary School Curriculum: http://www.curriculumonline.ie/en/Primary_School_Curriculum/ The Junior Cycle/Post-Primary Curriculum: http://www.curriculumonline.ie/en/Post-Primary_Curriculum/Junior_Cycle_Curriculum/</p>
<p>What does the national curriculum cover at what ages and stages?</p>	<p>Aistear: This framework for children from birth to six years of age receiving pre-school education and care uses four interconnected themes to describe the content of children's learning and development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • well-being; • identity and belonging; • communicating; • exploring and thinking. <p>Each of these themes is divided into four aims, and each aim has six learning goals.</p>

The **Primary School Curriculum** covers children aged six to 12 in compulsory primary education. It also covers the two years before the beginning of compulsory education for those four- to six-year-olds who are in infant classes in primary school settings. It identifies the three principal aims of primary education as being to:

- Enable children to live a full life as a child and to realise their potential as a unique individual.
- Enable children to develop as social beings by living and co-operating with others and so contributing to the good of society.
- Prepare children for further education and lifelong learning.

The Primary School Curriculum is learner-centred and emphasises the importance of literacy, numeracy, and language, while at the same time responding to changing needs in science and technology, social personal and health education, and citizenship. It is presented in six subject areas comprising 11 subjects:

- language – English, Gaeilge;
- maths;
- social, environmental and scientific education (SESE) – history, geography, science;
- arts education – visual arts, drama, music;
- physical education;
- social, personal and health education (SPHE).

Junior cycle lasts three years (for 12- to 15-year-olds) and almost all junior cycle students take courses leading to the Junior Certificate, the State examination taken at the end of the third year of junior cycle, when students are 15 years of age. Subjects are normally studied at either Ordinary or Higher Level, although three subjects, Irish, English and Mathematics, can also be studied at Foundation Level. The eight ‘areas of experience’ identified as the framework for the curriculum in the junior cycle are:

- language and literature;
- mathematical studies;
- science and technology;
- social, political and environmental education;
- arts education;
- physical education (PE);

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • religious and moral education; • guidance, counselling and pastoral care. <p>These eight areas further develop and refine the six areas, plus religious education (RE), which underpin the primary curriculum. More information on subjects studied in junior cycle is available from: http://www.curriculumonline.ie/en/Post-Primary_Curriculum/Junior_Cycle_Curriculum/Junior_Certificate_Subjects/</p>
<p>When was the curriculum last reviewed and is there a review cycle?</p>	<p>The current Primary School Curriculum was launched in 1999, following a period of review lasting 20 years. Following the 1999 launch, all primary teachers participated in a national programme of in-service training. This supported teachers in working with the curriculum for each of the 11 subjects. The programme, completed in the 2006/2007 school year, was provided by the Primary Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP) and School Development Planning Support, Primary (SDPS). Established in 2008, the Primary Professional Development Service (PPDS) subsumes and develops the work of the former PCSP and SDPS. The overarching aim of the service is the development of schools as professional learning communities in which teacher learning is closely linked with school improvement and development and pupil progress.</p> <p>In September 2003, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) initiated a programme of curriculum review at primary level. Phase one of the review focused on the first three subjects for which teachers received in-service support, namely English, visual arts and maths. The NCCA published a report on this phase of review in May 2005: http://www.ncca.ie/uploadedfiles/Publications/PrimaryCurriculumReview.pdf</p> <p>Phase two focused on a further three subjects - Gaeilge, science, and social, personal and health education (SPHE). The NCCA published a report on this phase in June 2008. Each phase of review asked to what extent and to what effects the curriculum in the relevant subjects enabled teachers to provide quality learning experiences for children in primary schools. http://www.ncca.ie/en/Curriculum_and_Assessment/Early_Childhood_and_Primary_Education/Primary_School_Curriculum/Primary_Curriculum_Review_PCR_Phase_2_Gaeilge_Science_and_SPHE/PCR2_finalreport.pdf</p> <p>There is not a formal review cycle for primary level education; geography, history, PE, music and drama have yet to be reviewed.</p>

	<p>The NCCA undertakes review of junior cycle on a continuous basis. Currently there are several parts to this review, including assessment for learning, research into students' experiences in post-primary school, and curriculum overload/overlap. This latter review of the junior cycle curriculum began in June 2009 and examines the entire cycle for 12- to 15-year-olds.</p>
<p>What was reviewed in the most recent curriculum review and what changes were implemented (ages/phases; content)?</p>	<p>Primary School Curriculum: The most recent review of the primary curriculum focused on the subjects Gaeilge, science, and social, personal and health education (SPHE). This review and the earlier, 2003, review of English, visual arts, and maths had identified the following findings/action points for the NCCA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A need for more information for parents. • A need for support with assessment (assessment guidelines and report card templates). • A need for more guidelines on teaching and learning methods. • Perceived curriculum overload. • Insufficient time to support the learning needs of all children, particularly in large classes and multi-year situations. • Reported challenges concerning integration and differentiation and the development of higher order thinking skills. • An identified need for additional resources, in particular ICT support. • An identified need for support in giving feedback to pupils about their learning. <p>The NCCA is currently responding to the challenges reported in the first two phases of review through its work in the Primary School Network.</p> <p>Junior Cycle The current review of the junior cycle curriculum is seeking to tackle the issue of curriculum overload by 'rebalancing' junior cycle subjects, that is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduce overload within, and overlap between, subjects; • provide more space and time in the curriculum to ensure the quality of learning engagement with students that teachers would like. <p>This rebalancing has involved:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rewriting each syllabus to a common template; • rewriting each syllabus and removing unnecessary overlap; • aligning each syllabus rewrite with changes in the primary school curriculum and with any changes at leaving certificate (upper secondary) stage; • making minor changes to assessment. <p>The rebalanced syllabuses are currently in draft format for consultation and remain to be implemented. The first rewritten syllabuses include: art, craft and design; English; history; home economics; and music.</p> <p>There are five sections to the review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 1 – review of both teacher and student perspectives on the achievement of intended outcomes of the junior cycle. • Section 2 – raises awareness of the challenges a school faces in providing students with experiences of a broad and balanced curriculum. • Section 3 – examines the current junior cycle in a school using the framework of the area of experience of junior cycle as one model of curriculum design. • Section 4 – identifies strengths and challenges in existing provision and explores a school’s junior cycle curriculum for breadth and balance. • Section 5 – facilitates schools to prioritise the issue to be addressed in the future development of the junior cycle and to commence planning for development. <p>Further details are available in the publication <i>Innovation and Identity: Ideas for a Junior Cycle</i> (NCCA, 2010) http://www.ncca.ie/en/Curriculum_and_Assessment/Post-primary_education/Junior_Cycle/Junior_Cycle_developments/Innovation_and_identity_ideas_for_a_new_junior_cycle1.pdf and in the NCCA February newsletter: http://www.ncca.ie/en/News_Press/Newsletter/Newsletter_Issue_14_February_2010_.pdf</p>
<p>What was the impetus for curriculum change (political change, emerging issues)?</p>	<p>Review of junior cycle education in Ireland follows from research on the experiences of junior cycle students which was completed by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) for the NCCA. This set out to examine how students progress from primary school to their first year in post-primary and beyond.</p> <p>Findings identified that transition from primary to the first year of post-primary (secondary) education remains very difficult for some students, with a minority of students disengaging from learning in the second year of</p>

	<p>junior cycle.</p> <p>The research further identified that students experience an overcrowded curriculum and that the junior certificate exams exert too great an influence on teaching and learning in the junior cycle. There is also a lack of emphasis on skills for lifelong learning.</p> <p>Following publication of this report, the Ministry of Education asked NCCA to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review international practice in lower secondary education. • Examine which areas of the curriculum should be prioritised within the totality of the junior cycle experience. • Assess the nature and form of assessment which would be most suitable for students at this stage of their development. • Address the issue of overload, breadth and balance in the curriculum and make time for active learning.
<p>Has curriculum coherence - the consistency of the curriculum framework across phases, influenced recent curriculum developments?</p>	<p>Aistear, the new early years' curriculum framework aims to align itself with the objectives of the primary curriculum. It makes both implicit and explicit links with the Primary School Curriculum and aims to support continuity and progression in children's learning.</p> <p>Part of the focus of the current review of the junior cycle links with issues around transition. In reviewing and rebalancing the junior cycle curriculum syllabuses, consideration is also being given to the primary school curriculum and to leaving certificate requirements – that is, to the curriculum requirements in the phases above and below the junior cycle.</p>
<p>What challenges have arisen and how have these been addressed?</p>	<p>The challenges identified by the reviews of the 1999 Primary School Curriculum (reports on three subject areas published in 2005 and 2008 respectively, see above) relate particularly to assessment, Gaeilge/language and curriculum overload. NCCA is working directly with schools and teachers in each of these three areas via the Primary School Network (see above).</p>

Italy

<p>Is there a national curriculum or equivalent and what is it called?</p>	<p>In Italy, the <i>Indicazioni per il curricolo</i> (Guidelines for the Curriculum, 2007) determine the curriculum for the pre-school phase and the first cycle of compulsory education – ages four to 14. Upper secondary reforms (14+) are currently in a state of flux.</p>
<p>URL:</p>	<p>http://www.indire.it/indicazioni/</p>
<p>What does the national curriculum cover at what ages and stages?</p>	<p>The <i>Indicazioni per il curricolo</i> cover pre-school, primary and lower secondary phase education (ages four to 14). Separate, draft guidelines for upper secondary are currently being drawn up and tie in with general reform of this phase.</p> <p>The pre-school curriculum is organised around ‘fields of experience’. It is not prescriptive, as teacher autonomy is an important value in Italian education. It does, however, contain goals for skills development which teachers are expected to meet by the end of the phase (four- to six-year-olds). There are a set of goals for each field of experience. These include, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self and others: The child develops a sense of personal identity, an idea of his/her own needs and feelings and expresses these appropriately and with self-control. • Physical well-being:- The child has achieved independence in feeding and dressing him/herself. He/she can recognise some body language, knows his/her own body and is aware of differences between boys and girls. • Creativity and expression: The child can follow and enjoy performances such as films, plays and music and likes listening to music and appreciates art. • Language and communication: The child can use language appropriately to describe different learning experiences. • Knowledge of the world: The child is curious, asks questions, discusses things, and recognises and solves problems. <p>The overall objectives of the pre-school curriculum are to reinforce a child’s personal identity and develop his/her independence and skills.</p>

	<p>For primary and lower secondary phase education (six to 11 years and 11-14 respectively and known as <i>primo ciclo</i>), the curriculum is organised by broad discipline, within which sit individual subjects. Teachers are encouraged to make links across the curriculum and collaborate with colleagues in other subjects. As with the pre-school curriculum, there are goals for skills development and learning objectives which teachers are expected to work towards by age 11 and 14.</p> <p>The disciplines are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Languages and the expressive arts: Italian, modern foreign languages, music, art, sport. • Geography-history. • Maths-science-technology: maths, natural and experimental sciences, ICT. <p>The curriculum also has a broader focus on child-centredness (valuing the individual experiences which children bring to their learning); literacy; citizenship (schools are preparing to introduce this new subject from autumn 2010); and learning how to learn (conducting investigations, team work etc).</p>
<p>When was the curriculum last reviewed and is there a review cycle? What was reviewed in the most recent curriculum review and what changes were implemented (ages/phases; content)?</p>	<p>There is no regular review cycle in Italy. Legislation passed in 2003 resulted - in 2004 – in the former curricula for pre-primary and first cycle (<i>primo ciclo</i> - primary and lower secondary) education being temporarily replaced by 'National Guidelines' (<i>Indicazioni nazionali</i>). The guidelines prepared at this time for the upper secondary phase were never implemented.</p> <p>The 2006 elections resulted in a new Parliamentary majority and a new government and, in 2007, the National Guidelines were replaced by the 'Guidelines for the Curriculum' (<i>Indicazioni per il curriculum</i>). These guidelines, which update those introduced in 2004, have been piloted in schools since 2007. At the same time, key competences to be acquired by the end of the <i>primo ciclo</i> (age 14) have also been introduced and the Education Minister has established a debate on general reforms in upper secondary education. Further elections in 2008 resulted in a different parliamentary majority, a new government and the current Minister for Education. Under this Minister, schools are required to continue to apply the 2007 Guidelines for the Curriculum (<i>Indicazioni per il curriculum</i>) on a trial basis until 2011, whilst continuing to bear in mind some aspects of the 2004 guidelines. In this way, the Minister aims to consult with schools to ensure that any curriculum in place is the best combination of both the 2004 and the 2007 guidance (the 2007 guidelines are still not compulsory).</p>

	<p>Reform of the upper secondary curriculum is now also imminent and looks set to be implemented from the 2010/2011 school year. The Ministry is in the process of preparing draft guidelines to replace the current programmes of study.</p> <p>The 2007 guidelines for the curriculum for the <i>primo ciclo</i> aimed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be more child-centred - taking account of the individual experiences which pupils bring to their learning; • focus on skills and active learning; • include cross-curricular cooperation; and • include a stronger emphasis on citizenship, with the introduction of citizenship and constitutional studies.
<p>What was the impetus for curriculum change (political change, emerging issues)?</p>	<p>Although political change would appear to be an impetus for recent curriculum change, the 2003 legislation was introduced to enable the 2004 changes to the primary and lower secondary curriculum as the curriculum for this phase (six- to 14-year-olds) had not been reviewed since 1980. The impetus for the current review of upper secondary phase curricula is similar; they were last reviewed in 1945.</p>
<p>Has curriculum coherence - the consistency of the curriculum framework across phases, influenced recent curriculum developments?</p>	<p>There have been attempts, since the original 2003 reforms to the curriculum, to ensure that consistency of the curriculum framework across all phases is taken into account in any review and reform.</p> <p>The curriculum guidelines for each phase have broadly the same objectives: valuing the child's experiences and individuality; developing independence; citizenship etc. There is also consistency in each phase in the emphasis on working towards the development of skills and competences.</p>
<p>What challenges have arisen and how have these been addressed?</p>	<p>In recent years, the frequency of governmental change has presented some challenges – see above. But the current Government seems keen to develop previous curriculum development work rather than change it completely.</p>

Japan

<p>Is there a national curriculum or equivalent and what is it called?</p>	<p>The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) lays down national guidelines for school curricula at each level of education. The broad guidelines for the objectives and standard content of each school subject are specified in 'Courses of Study'.</p>
<p>URL:</p>	<p>http://www.mext.go.jp/ (in Japanese) National Curriculum Standards for Kindergartens (2000) in English: http://www.mext.go.jp/english/news/2001/04/010401.htm</p>
<p>What does the national curriculum cover at what ages and stages?</p>	<p>The broad guidelines for the objectives and standard content of each school subject are specified in a Course of Study set out for each of four school levels: pre-compulsory <i>kindergarten</i>, compulsory <i>elementary school</i>, compulsory (lower secondary) <i>junior high school</i> and post-compulsory upper secondary school.</p> <p>The revised National Curriculum Standards for Kindergartens (three- to six-year-olds), which were introduced in April 2000, focus on five inter-related aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • health; • human relationships; • the environment; • language; • expression. <p>The revised <i>elementary school curriculum</i> (for six- to 12-year-olds), introduced in April 2002, reduced curriculum content by around 30 per cent, in line with a new, reduced Course of Study and the introduction of the five-day school week (previously Saturday school had been the norm). The revised Course of Study also introduced a new subject known as 'Integrated Studies' from Year 3 (age 8+). This integrated subject area aimed to allow student-centred project-type work focusing on non-traditional topics such as society, media studies, information technology or the environment to take place. The compulsory subjects for this phase are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Japanese language (primarily instruction in reading and writing the language in the first four years, with Japanese literature being introduced in the final two years of compulsory elementary school education); • arithmetic (primarily addition and subtraction in the first two years and multiplication, division, fractions

	<p>and decimals in the remaining four years);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social studies (Years 3-6) - in Years 1 and 2 social studies is taught as part of 'life environment studies'; • science (Years 3 to 6) - in Years 1 and 2 science is taught as part of life environment studies; • moral education (includes moral character education and social relationships); • music; • art and handicrafts; • physical education (health education is an important element); • in Years 5 and 6, homemaking (home economics and family life); • integrated studies (Years 3-6). <p>Junior high schools (lower secondary phase education for 12- to 15-year-olds) follow a similar statutory national curriculum to that in elementary schools, comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Japanese (modern Japanese language and literature, Japanese and Chinese classics); • social studies; • maths; • science; • music; • fine art; • health and physical education; • industrial arts and homemaking (which includes domestic science - cooking, sewing and nutrition); • foreign languages; • moral education (or religious education in certain private schools); • special activities; • elective/optional subjects. <p>The statutory curriculum for all students in post-compulsory upper secondary education (aged 15-18) includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Japanese language; • foreign language (English); • geography and history; • civics (contemporary society, politics and economics and ethics);
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maths; • science (a selected combination of science subjects); • information technology; • health and physical education; • art (one subject selected from art or music options); • home economics (or living skills).
<p>When was the curriculum last reviewed and is there a review cycle?</p>	<p>The Courses of Study were first prescribed in 1947. Since then, they have been revised every ten years or so.</p> <p>The current curriculum guidelines were last revised in 1998 and came into effect in 2000 (Kindergartens), 2002 (elementary schools and junior high schools) and 2003 (high schools).</p> <p>The Education Ministry unveiled revised draft curriculum guidelines in 2008/09 and there are plans to fully implement these new guidelines as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • elementary schools - 2011 school year (begins April 2011); • junior high schools - 2012 school year; • high schools - 2013 school year.
<p>What was reviewed in the most recent curriculum review and what changes were implemented (ages/phases; content)?</p>	<p>Typically, Courses of Study are revised at the same time for all school levels (Kindergarten, elementary, junior high school and high school).</p> <p>The 2002 revised Courses of Study specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduced the number of class hours and curriculum content • established a period of 'integrated studies' • expanded elective courses • enhanced instruction to meet individual requirements throughout the entire school curriculum • emphasised experiential problem-solving learning activity throughout the school curriculum. <p>The draft 2008/09 guidelines propose increasing class hours for key school subjects by 10%, particularly maths and science (the first increase in class hours and learning content in about 30 years). They also call for strengthening language, tradition and culture education in all school subjects, and for making foreign-language</p>

	<p>activities compulsory in elementary school, and propose reinforcing moral education.</p> <p>The 2008 revised Courses of Study for elementary and lower secondary schools increase the number of school units to 35¹ school hours for each grade. They increase especially arithmetic (and mathematics), science and cut the period for integrated study. They also emphasise language activities, science and maths education, learning of our tradition and culture and moral education. Foreign-language activities were created in the elementary standards.</p> <p>The guidelines for high schools propose that the current mandatory electives in Japanese, mathematics and English are abolished and required courses established instead.</p> <p>The 2009 revised Course of Study for upper secondary schools makes Japanese, mathematics and foreign language as compulsory subjects. It also emphasises language activities, science & maths education, learning of our traditions and cultures and moral education.</p>
<p>What was the impetus for curriculum change (political change, emerging issues)?</p>	<p>The curriculum revisions proposed in 2008/09 mark a turnaround from Japan's recent 'education-with-latitude' policy in the wake of reported declines in students' academic ability. They follow a report published by the advisory Central Council for Education, which called for increased teaching of basic knowledge and skills, and recent results in domestic and international surveys of student attainment which suggest that there is room for improvement in student academic ability.</p> <p>Our Japanese country contact provides the following bullet points in response to this question.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2008 and 2009 revisions of the Courses of Study are based on the newly-revised Fundamental Law of Education (2006), as well as on the results of international surveys such as OECD-PISA and domestic achievement surveys. • The Central Council for Education of 2008 has advised that nurturing basic knowledge and skills, the ability to think and judge, and self-expression in the right balance is important to foster zest for living.

¹ A unit school hour is 45 minutes for elementary schools and 50 minutes for lower secondary schools.

<p>Has curriculum coherence - the consistency of the curriculum framework across phases, influenced recent curriculum developments?</p>	<p>The courses of study are intended to ensure consistency and integration through the different school levels. Individual schools organise their own curriculum with special consideration to improving progress from one level to the other.</p>
<p>What challenges have arisen and how have these been addressed?</p>	<p>The National Assessment of Academic Ability was introduced in 2007 to improve opportunities for students and standards in compulsory education. It also aims to assist in monitoring education policies and issues.</p>

Korea

<p>Is there a national curriculum or equivalent and what is it called?</p>	<p>The national curriculum is determined by the Minister of Education, Science and Technology and consists of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the National Common Core Curriculum(from Grade 1 to Grade 10, six- to 16-year-olds); • the elective curriculum (Grades 11 and 12, 16-18). <p>The National Common Core Curriculum covers the 10 years from the first year of primary school through to the first year of high school. In Grades 11 and 12 in high school (ages 16-18), students have the opportunity to chose the courses they wish to take.</p>
<p>URL:</p>	<p>http://www.kice.re.kr/en/resources/curriculum01.jsp</p>
<p>What does the national curriculum cover at what ages and stages?</p>	<p>The national curriculum documents determine the general standards for the local community- and school-level curriculum. The documents are divided into a general introduction, which includes the direction of curriculum design; educational goals by school level; organisation of the curriculum and time allocation; standards and guidelines for formulation and implementation of the curriculum; and an explanatory section which describes the curriculum in detail by subject.</p> <p>The pre-school/Kindergarten curriculum (three- to six-year-olds) covers five life areas: health, society, expression, language, and enquiry/exploration in daily life.</p> <p>The elementary level curriculum (six- to 12-year-olds) covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ethics/moral education (combined with social studies and taught as 'disciplined life' in Years 1 and 2); • Korean language; • maths; • social studies (social studies and moral education/ethics are combined in Years 1 and 2 to form a 'disciplined life' course); • science (in Years 1 and 2 taught as an 'intelligent life' course); • physical education (PE) (PE, music and arts are combined in Years 1 and 2 to form a 'pleasant life' course); • music (music, PE and arts are combined in Years 1 and 2 to form a 'pleasant life' course); • arts (arts, PE and music are combined in Years 1 and 2 to form a 'pleasant life' course).

	<p>The compulsory subjects (National Common Courses) of the <i>junior high school</i> curriculum (12- to 15-year-olds are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • moral education; • Korean language; • maths; • social studies; • science; • physical education; • music; • fine arts; • practical arts (technology and home economics); • foreign language (English). <p>All students must also study extra-curricular activities and take some optional courses (school discretionary time).</p> <p>In upper secondary education, students in Grades 11 and 12 (aged 16-18) select the subjects to make up their curriculum (from specified compulsory subject groups), whilst students in Grade 10 of high school, aged 15-16, study the same compulsory subjects (National Common Courses) as those students in junior high school.</p>
<p>When was the curriculum last reviewed and is there a review cycle? What was reviewed in the most recent curriculum review and what changes were implemented (ages/phases; content)?</p>	<p>The Seventh Curriculum, which was launched on 30 December 30 1997, was introduced gradually by phase during the period 2000 to 2004. The Seventh Curriculum is currently under review (see below).</p> <p>Prior to the introduction of the Seventh Curriculum in 2000, the curriculum was revised regularly on a five- to ten-year cycle since the first revision in 1954/55. The usual practice was to review all curriculum phases at the same time.</p> <p>In recent years, partial curriculum revisions have become increasingly common and the school curriculum has been revised on demand, with different sections being revised at different times (such as the general introduction only or the subject curriculum part only). For example, there was a 2008 revision of the Seventh Curriculum for the newly adopted subject of health education and, also in 2008, the English curriculum was revised to increase the number of hours of instruction. In 2009, the social studies curriculum was also revised</p>

	to expand its content to include economic education. Also in 2009, there was a more general revision which encourages increased autonomy for schools in curriculum formulation and implementation. This 2009 revision, and others, are expected to be implemented in 2010.
What was the impetus for curriculum change (political change, emerging issues)?	No information located.
Has curriculum coherence - the consistency of the curriculum framework across phases, influenced recent curriculum developments?	No information located.
What challenges have arisen and how have these been addressed?	No information located.

Netherlands

<p>Is there a national curriculum or equivalent and what is it called?</p>	<p>There is a national curriculum for primary level education (children aged four to 12 years) and for the first cycle of basic secondary education (12- to 15-year-olds). Thereafter, examination syllabuses govern the requirements of courses leading to the VMBO, HAVO and VWO qualifications examined at the end of the second cycle of upper secondary education (students aged 16, 17 or 18 respectively).</p> <p>The Ministry of Education determines the overall curriculum and details of compulsory subjects and these are set out in attainment targets for primary and secondary education. Schools devise their curricular plan and teaching methods based on these national guidelines and targets. The content of teaching and the teaching methods to be used are not prescribed.</p>
<p>What does the national curriculum cover at what ages and stages?</p>	<p>Schools are expected to organise their teaching in such a way that all subject matter identified in the attainment targets for primary and lower secondary education has been covered by the end of primary and lower secondary education (ages 12 and 15 respectively). The attainment targets define in broad terms, the core curriculum for primary and lower secondary education.</p> <p>Since August 1993, this set of core objectives (attainment targets) has determined the formal content of education at primary and lower secondary level. 58 new attainment targets for primary level education were introduced in the 2005/06 school year and schools had until August 2009 to implement these. These revised attainment targets aim to offer schools the freedom to cater for differences between students and consequently do not contain the same level of detail in all areas of learning. In practice this means, for example, that attainment targets for Dutch or arithmetic are more detailed than those for factual or creative subjects. The new attainment targets also cover citizenship, technology and cultural education and cover six broad curriculum areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dutch language; • English; • Frisian language; • maths and arithmetic; • exploratory social studies; • art education; • physical education.

	<p>The 58 attainment targets for lower secondary education specify the standards of knowledge, understanding and skills pupils are required to attain in the lower years of secondary school. Schools are responsible for translating these targets into subjects, projects, or areas of learning (or combinations of all three), or into competence-based teaching, for example. The core objectives are presented under the following seven headings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dutch; • English; • maths and arithmetic; • man and nature; • man and society; • art and culture; • physical education and sport.
<p>When was the curriculum last reviewed and is there a review cycle? What was reviewed in the most recent curriculum review and what changes were implemented (ages/phases; content)?</p>	<p>Primary education (ages four to 12 years): the terms of the revised Primary Education Act were revised on 1 August 2006. Schools must provide teaching in six curriculum areas and 58 new attainment targets were introduced to primary education from the 2005/2006 school year. Schools had until August 2009 to implement the new attainment targets.</p> <p>The attainment targets introduced to primary education as of the 2005/2006 school year were intended to give schools more freedom to cater for the differences between pupils. As a result, the revised attainment targets do not contain the same level of detail in all areas of learning. In practice, this means that the attainment targets for, say, Dutch or arithmetic are more detailed than those for factual or creative subjects. The new attainment targets now also cover citizenship, technology and cultural education.</p> <p>Upper Secondary Education (age 15+). With the amendment to the Secondary Education Act on 1 August 2007, more optional elements were introduced in the upper years of HAVO (five-year general secondary education ending at age 17) and VWO (six-year general academic secondary education ending at age 18). The previous system is running alongside the revised curriculum until 2011.</p> <p>These changes differ from the previous system, mainly with regard to subject combinations, the examination syllabus and the pass/fail criteria. In addition, schools have greater control over the curriculum at this level. There are now fewer compulsory elements, with schools being permitted to offer optional specialised subjects as part of the four fixed subject combinations. Students also have greater freedom to choose subjects, and there is</p>

	<p>more scope to deepen or broaden knowledge and develop skills.</p> <p>Attainment targets are reviewed in accordance with a five-year cycle.</p>
What was the impetus for curriculum change (political change, emerging issues)?	The changes introduced in the upper years of HAVO and VWO are intended to make teaching in the upper secondary years better organised and less fragmented, and to reduce the burden on students.
Has curriculum coherence - the consistency of the curriculum framework across phases, influenced recent curriculum developments?	No information located.
What challenges have arisen and how have these been addressed?	No information located.

New Zealand

<p>Is there a national curriculum or equivalent and what is it called?</p>	<p>In New Zealand, the following curriculum documents are provided by the Ministry of Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the New Zealand Curriculum for English-medium teaching and learning (compulsory phase education); • <i>Te Marautanga o Aotearoa</i> for Maori-medium teaching and learning (compulsory phase education); • <i>Te Whariki</i> - the national early childhood curriculum (which became a requirement for early childhood education services in August 1998).
<p>URL:</p>	<p>http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/ for the two partner documents, the New Zealand Curriculum for English-medium teaching and learning and <i>Te Marautanga o Aotearoa</i> for Maori-medium teaching and learning.</p> <p><i>Te Whariki</i>: http://www.educate.ece.govt.nz/learning/curriculumAndLearning/TeWhariki.aspx</p>
<p>What does the national curriculum cover at what ages and stages?</p>	<p>The New Zealand Curriculum for compulsory phase education includes and explains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A vision for young people who are confident, connected, and actively involved lifelong learners. • The principles that guided the curriculum's development: high expectations, the Treaty of Waitangi (New Zealand's founding document: http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/politics/treaty/read-the-treaty/english-text), cultural diversity, inclusion, learning to learn, community engagement, coherence and future focus. • The values that will be developed and modelled through teaching and learning: excellence; innovation, enquiry, and curiosity; diversity; equity; community and participation; ecological sustainability; integrity and respect. • The key competences – the capabilities people need in order to live, learn, work and contribute as active members of their communities. They are: managing self; relating to others; participating and contributing; thinking; and using language, symbols and texts. • The eight learning areas: social sciences; arts; technology; science; mathematics and statistics; health and physical education; English; and learning languages. The new curriculum (see below) explains the rationale and structure of each of these learning areas. <p><i>Te Whariki</i>, the pre-compulsory Early Childhood Curriculum, is expressed in terms of principles, strands and goals.</p>

<p>When was the curriculum last reviewed and is there a review cycle?</p>	<p>Following a 'stocktake' of the New Zealand curriculum, a revised New Zealand Curriculum for English-medium teaching and learning for compulsory phase education was released at the beginning of November 2007. This new curriculum is being introduced between 2007 and 2010.</p> <p>There is no formal review cycle.</p>
<p>What was reviewed in the most recent curriculum review and what changes were implemented (ages/phases; content)?</p>	<p>The revised New Zealand Curriculum aims to contribute to all students having a strong foundation for learning, high levels of achievement, and a lifelong engagement in learning. It encourages schools to put personalised learning into practice and supports the aims of the Government for students to stay at school longer and attain higher levels of achievement.</p> <p>The revised curriculum aims to support students to learn in a way which will prepare them for the world of tomorrow. It is different from the curriculum it replaces in that it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • includes a set of common values; • places more emphasis on themes relevant to today's society; • contains five key competences for students; • raises the profile and status of learning a second language; • raises the profile and status of statistics within maths; • makes the Treaty of Waitangi explicit in the overview, purpose, principles and values; • recognises the need for schools to work closely with communities to design relevant learning programmes. <p>The revised curriculum also provides greater clarity for teachers, students and trustees by providing clear and simple statements about priorities, expectations and outcomes for each learning area. It also details the type of teaching which brings out the best in students.</p>
<p>What was the impetus for curriculum change (political change, emerging issues)?</p>	<p>The previous New Zealand Curriculum, implemented from 1992 onwards, was New Zealand's first 'outcomes based' curriculum. It was developed to take New Zealand education into the future and provided guidelines covering teaching, learning and assessment for all students in all New Zealand schools.</p> <p>Since this first outcomes based curriculum was launched, there has been continued social change in New Zealand and, following curriculum reviews ('stocktakes') undertaken between 2000 and 2002, it was decided that a new, updated curriculum was needed. The revised New Zealand Curriculum is a clear statement of what is deemed to be important in education for today's society and to prepare students for the future.</p>

Has curriculum coherence - the consistency of the curriculum framework across phases, influenced recent curriculum developments?	We could find no direct evidence of curriculum coherence as a driver for the recent curriculum review, which focused on preparing students for life today and into the future.
What challenges have arisen and how have these been addressed?	No information located.

Northern Ireland

Is there a national curriculum or equivalent and what is it called?	The Northern Ireland Curriculum covers compulsory phase education for children from the age of four to around 16.
URL:	http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/
What does the national curriculum cover at what ages and stages?	<p>In primary education (the foundation stage for four- to six-year-olds; key stage 1 for six- to eight-year-olds; and key stage 2 - children aged eight to 11 years), there are six areas of learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the arts (including art and design, and music and drama); • language and literacy (including speaking, listening, reading and writing); • maths and numeracy (including numbers, measure and shape); • personal development and mutual understanding (including personal understanding and health); • physical education; • the world around us (including history, geography, science and technology). <p>Although set out separately, teachers are expected to integrate learning across the six areas of learning and to encourage children to make relevant connections between topics they are studying. Religious education (RE) remains a statutory requirement at all key stages.</p> <p>In addition, cross-curricular skills underpin the curriculum at this level. These are: communication, using maths, and using ICT. 'Thinking skills and personal capabilities' is also a component of the curriculum and aims to encourage children to think critically and creatively, and to develop personal and interpersonal skills. Schools are free, in addition, to develop their own elements of the curriculum in order to express their particular ethos, and to meet pupils' individual needs and circumstances.</p> <p>At key stages 3 and 4 (secondary level education for students aged 11 to 14 and 14 to 16 respectively), the Northern Ireland Curriculum includes eight general areas of learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the arts (including music, art and design, and drama); • language and literacy (including English and media education); • environment and society (including geography and history);

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • modern languages; • maths and numeracy (including financial capability); • physical education; • science and technology; • religious education. <p>Students must also study 'learning for life and work' which comprises education for employability, local and global citizenship, personal development and home economics. 'Developing skills and capabilities' is also a component of the curriculum and includes the development of skills in areas such as problem-solving and working with others. In addition, the cross-curricular skills (as included in the primary level curriculum): communication, using maths, and using ICT are expected to be covered across the areas of learning.</p> <p>All of the above areas of learning and skills are statutory at key stage 3. At key stage 4, schools are required to provide access to all areas of the curriculum, but the compulsory elements are limited to learning for life and work (education for employability, local and global citizenship, and personal development, but excluding home economics); physical education; developing skills and capabilities; and religious education.</p> <p>To ensure that students in key stage 4 have choice and flexibility when deciding what to study, the Department of Education in Northern Ireland has begun to introduce an 'Entitlement Framework'. This aims to offer students between the ages of 14 and 19 a guaranteed minimum number and range of applied (vocational) and general (academic) courses. The framework is a counter-balance to the reduced core curriculum at key stage 4 and aims to ensure that students have equity of access to a broad range of courses, including general (academic) and applied courses. From 2013, schools will be required to provide students in key stage 4 (aged 14-16) with access to a minimum of 24 courses. For students in post-16 education, they will be required to provide access to a minimum of 27 courses. At least one third of these courses will be general and a further third will be applied/vocational.</p>
<p>When was the curriculum last reviewed and is there a review cycle?</p>	<p>The most recent review of the Northern Ireland Curriculum began in 1999 and is currently nearing completion. Recommendations for the revised Northern Ireland Curriculum were originally accepted by the Department of Education (DE) in 2004 and legislation was passed in 2006. Implementation has been ongoing since that time and completion is expected during 2010 (although the final changes to the key stage 4 and post-16 curriculum (see above) will take place from 2013).</p>

	There is no formal review cycle.
What was reviewed in the most recent curriculum review and what changes were implemented (ages/phases; content)?	<p>The main review and consultation phase for the revised Northern Ireland Curriculum took place during the period 1999 and 2004, with legislation being passed in 2006. Since that time, the review has been in implementation phase.</p> <p>The review covered the whole of compulsory phase education (ages four to 16). There were also changes to the pre-school curriculum guidelines to ensure continuity with the compulsory phase curriculum.</p> <p>Phase 1 consultation (April to June 2000) covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the curriculum framework (aims, objectives, skills, values); • the structure of the primary curriculum; • proposed new aspects of the post-primary curriculum such as personal development, citizenship and employability. <p>Phase 2 consultation (April to October 2002) covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • details of the revised primary level curriculum (which received strong support); • detailed proposals for key stage 4 (which received general approval); • a discussion paper on key stage 3 reforms (this lacked detail and was not strongly supported). <p>Phase 3 consultation, which focused on revised proposals for key stages 3 and 4 (secondary level education) and covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing flexibility through the concept of a minimum statutory curriculum; • replacing key stage 3 testing with ongoing assessment and a 'pupil profile'; • the introduction of a new curriculum area known as 'learning for life and work' to include education for employability, local and global citizenship and personal development. <p>The changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • replaced detailed programmes of study with reduced lists of statutory requirements; • introduced a more pupil-centred approach; • increased the emphasis on the development of skills and capabilities; • introduced 'learning for life and work';

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introduced general learning areas over discrete subjects; and • introduced some changes to assessment. <p>In sum, the revised Northern Ireland Curriculum is less prescriptive than the previous curriculum and places an increased emphasis on skills and personal and social development. It sets out minimum content for each area of learning rather than specifying in detail topics which should be covered.</p>
<p>What was the impetus for curriculum change (political change, emerging issues)?</p>	<p>When the review of the Northern Ireland Curriculum began in 1999, the aim was to provide a curriculum and assessment framework capable of ‘meeting the changing needs of pupils, society and the economy; which had the confidence of teachers, pupils, parents, employers and the wider public; and which widens educational opportunity and improves learner motivation and achievements’.</p> <p>The reviews stated objectives were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clarify the aims and values of the school curriculum; • improve progression in skills development; • improve curriculum relevance and enjoyment for all learners; • provide greater balance, coherence and flexibility at each key stage; • develop assessment mechanisms which better serve curriculum aims; • develop strategies for managing future change. <p>In his October 1999 letter of remit requesting the review, the Minister of Education asked that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In clarifying the aims and values of the curriculum, the rationale should be fully explained. • Proposals for increased flexibility at key stage 4 should be set in the context of the pupil’s entitlement to a wide range of experiences. • Appropriate attention should be given to the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and so contribute to the implementation of the Department of Education’s ICT strategy. • Appropriate attention should also be paid to the need to maximise young people’s employability.
<p>Has curriculum coherence - the consistency of the curriculum</p>	<p>The review of the Northern Ireland Curriculum covered all phases of compulsory education and, in light of this review, the Curricular Guidance for Pre-School Education was also revised to ensure progression to the</p>

<p>framework across phases, influenced recent curriculum developments?</p>	<p>foundation stage (age four in primary school) and the start of compulsory education.</p> <p>The revised pre-school curricular guidance states that all children should have the opportunity to follow a pre-school curriculum that enables them to make appropriate progress in learning and to achieve their full potential in learning. It is expected that children should experience the pre-school curriculum in a holistic and engaging way, with opportunities for play and to use a range of <i>ICT</i> resources to motivate them and enhance their learning across the following six areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the arts; • language development; • early mathematical experiences; • personal, social and emotional development; • physical development and movement; • the world around us. <p>In addition, in the review of the compulsory phase curriculum, the development of the cross-curricular skills of communication, using maths, and using ICT is consistent across all phases (from the foundation phase aged four to six to key stage 4 aged 14-16), as is the development of thinking skills and personal capabilities. The development of skills now underpins the entire school curriculum.</p>
<p>What challenges have arisen and how have these been addressed?</p>	<p>No information located.</p>

Scotland

<p>Is there a national curriculum or equivalent and what is it called?</p>	<p>The new national curriculum in Scotland, which is currently being introduced in primary level education and is expected to begin to be introduced at secondary level in the 2010-11 school year. Is known as 'Curriculum for Excellence'. It covers the three to 18 age range.</p> <p>Prior to the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence, there were three sets of curricular guidelines which covered the three to five age range; the five to 14 curriculum; and curricular modes for 14-to 16-year-olds. These curricular guidelines were designed to ensure continuity as far as possible between the different phases of education.</p> <p>It should be noted that the curriculum in Scotland is not described by statute or regulation but by advice from the Scottish Government in non-statutory guidelines.</p>
<p>URL:</p>	<p>http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/curriculumforexcellence/index.asp</p>
<p>What does the national curriculum cover at what ages and stages?</p>	<p>The Curriculum for Excellence covers the complete three to 18 age range in Scotland.</p> <p>In the Curriculum for Excellence, 'experiences and outcomes' describe the expectations for learning and progression in all areas of the curriculum, and these experiences and outcomes for learning are organised in eight curriculum areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expressive arts (art and design, dance, drama, music); • health and well-being (mental, emotional, social and physical well-being; physical education (PE); 'planning for choices and changes'; food and health; substance misuse; relationships, sexual health and parenthood); • languages (literacy, English, a foreign language); • maths (including numeracy); • religious and moral education; • sciences; • social studies (people, past events and societies; people, place and environment; people in society, economy and business); • technologies.

	<p>The Curriculum for Excellence guidance recommends that the curriculum should include space for learning beyond subject boundaries so that children and young people can make connections between different areas of learning. These recommended 'interdisciplinary studies' are based upon groupings of experiences and outcomes from within and across curriculum areas. That is, experiences and outcomes can be packaged in different ways, so that, for example, outcomes relating to people, place and environment can be experienced in the context of the sciences.</p> <p>It is also the responsibility of teachers to reinforce and extend the following skills across the curriculum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • health and well-being across learning (includes skills for life and work); • literacy across learning; • numeracy across learning. <p>The purpose of Curriculum for Excellence is encapsulated in four capacities - to enable each child or young person to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a successful learner; • a confident individual; • a responsible citizen; and • an effective contributor. <p>The experiences and outcomes in the range of curriculum areas build in the attributes and capabilities which support the development of the four capacities. This means that, taken together across curriculum areas, the experiences and outcomes contribute to the attributes and capabilities leading to the four capacities.</p>
<p>When was the curriculum last reviewed and is there a review cycle?</p>	<p>The review process for the Curriculum for Excellence began in 2002, when there was a general 'National Debate on Education'. The aim was to determine what was working well in education and the curriculum and what needed to change. Following this, in 2003, a Curriculum Review Group was established by Scottish Executive Ministers to identify the key principles to be applied in any curriculum redesign for ages three to 18. This Group looked at evidence of practice, research, international comparisons and global, local economic and social changes. The initial Curriculum for Excellence documents were then published in November 2004, outlining aims for education in Scotland and principles for curriculum redesign. This led to a period of research, review and refinement culminating in the publication of new curriculum guidelines in 2009.</p>

	<p>In the 2009-10 school year, primary schools are beginning to introduce Curriculum for Excellence; implementation is expected to begin in secondary level education in 2010-11.</p> <p>There appears to be no regular cycle of curriculum review.</p>
<p>What was reviewed in the most recent curriculum review and what changes were implemented (ages/phases; content)?</p>	<p>The Curriculum for Excellence review affects the whole of the system from age three to age 18. It introduces a new curriculum framework which is less detailed and prescriptive than previous curriculum advice. It aims to provide 'space' for teachers and other staff to meet the varied needs of all children and young people, and to ensure a focus on developing the four capacities at every stage of education (enabling every child to become a successful learner, a confident individual, a responsible citizen and an effective contributor).</p> <p>Changes introduced by the Curriculum for Excellence framework include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A coherent and inclusive curriculum framework from age three to age 18, appropriate to whatever environment in which learning is taking place, whether in schools, colleges or other settings. • A focus on outcomes and on a broad general education. • Time to take qualifications in ways best suited to individual young people. • More opportunities to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work for all young people at every stage. • A focus on literacy, numeracy and health and well-being at every stage. • Appropriate pace and challenge for every child and young person. • Ensuring connections between all aspects of learning and support for learning.
<p>What was the impetus for curriculum change (political change, emerging issues)?</p>	<p>The 2002 National Debate on Education was the original impetus for change. This aimed to determine what was working well and what needed to change in school education in Scotland. As a result, teachers and educationists recognised that there was a need to offer more engaging and relevant experiences to ensure that Scotland's children and young people were equipped for life and work in a globalised society.</p> <p>In addition, during the process of curriculum re-design, two reports were published which further influenced the development of Curriculum for Excellence.</p> <p>The Scottish Government commissioned an OECD report: <i>Quality and Equity of Schooling in Scotland</i> which was published in 2007: http://www.oecd.org/document/59/0,3343,en_2649_39263231_39744402_1_1_1_37455,00.html. This report</p>

	<p>found that Scotland performed well in comparative international tests, but there were still too many inequalities with children from poorer backgrounds underachieving. There were also concerns with regard to ‘staying-on rates’ in education and a concern that too many young people were leaving secondary education with minimal or no qualifications. The report further suggested that the Scottish qualifications system contains complexities which have accumulated over time, and that young people have an ‘uneven quality of learning experience in compulsory secondary education’. It also recommended a bolder and broader approach to vocational studies in schools.</p> <p>The second report was published by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education in 2009. <i>Improving Scottish Education</i> (http://www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/ise09.pdf) was the result of a review carried out between 2005 and 2008; it set out the following priorities for improvement in taking forward Curriculum for Excellence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring challenge and progression in learning through imaginative, well-judged teaching, leading to the achievement of high levels of understanding and skill. • Devising curriculum structures which reflect the design principles of Curriculum for Excellence and enable all learners to benefit from the experiences and achieve the outcomes described in guidance on the curriculum. • Planning to ensure that all young people achieve the outcomes which comprise a broad general education and that they have suitable opportunities for choice and specialisation. • Working collectively to ensure that children, young people and adult learners make successful transitions between stages or establishments and from education to the world of work, building upon their prior learning. • Enabling all learners to apply learning in active and creative ways. • Putting in place arrangements to support teachers in their assessment of learning, so that they and society can have confidence in their judgements and that assessment plays a central role in tracking and facilitating progress in learning.
<p>Has curriculum coherence - the consistency of the curriculum framework across phases, influenced recent curriculum developments?</p>	<p>A primary objective of the Curriculum for Excellence review was that the new curriculum should be ‘coherent and inclusive’.</p> <p>The Curriculum for Excellence framework focuses at all phases on helping learners develop the four capacities and in developing literacy and numeracy skills, as well as the soft skills needed for life and work.</p>

<p>What challenges have arisen and how have these been addressed?</p>	<p>In addition, learning is expressed throughout the phases through experiences and outcomes, which are grouped into five levels – early (in which most children will undertake learning to the end of Primary 1, P1, age six); first (in which most children will undertake learning by the end of Primary 4, P4, age nine); second (to the end of P7, age 12); third (during Secondary 1, S1 to S3, ages 12-15); and fourth (to the end of Secondary 3, S3, age 15).</p> <p>For all young people, learning, at whatever level, will be managed in a manner that paves the way for work towards qualifications in the senior phase at the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level which is most appropriate to the needs and achievements of the individual young person.</p>
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Singapore

<p>Is there a national curriculum or equivalent and what is it called?</p>	<p>There is a statutory national curriculum in Singapore which is determined by the national Ministry of Education.</p>
<p>URLs:</p>	<p>Diagrammatic overviews of the curriculum are available at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary School Curriculum: http://www.moe.gov.sg/education/primary/curriculum/ • Secondary School Curriculum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Normal: http://www.moe.gov.sg/education/secondary/normal/ ○ Special/Express: http://www.moe.gov.sg/education/secondary/express/ • Pre-University Curriculum: http://www.moe.gov.sg/education/pre-u/curriculum/ <p>Pre-school education curriculum framework document: <i>Nurturing Early Learners: a Framework for a Kindergarten Curriculum In Singapore:</i> http://www.moe.gov.sg/education/preschool/files/kindergarten-curriculum-framework.pdf</p> <p>Desired Outcomes of Education – a table of desired outcomes at each stage of education from primary education onwards is also available online at: http://www.moe.gov.sg/education/desired-outcomes/</p> <p>In addition, subject syllabuses are available as downloadable pdfs from: http://www.moe.gov.sg/education/syllabuses/</p>
<p>What does the national curriculum cover at what ages and stages?</p>	<p>The curriculum sets out the goals of educational policy in terms of the range of core and optional (elective) subjects that are taught across schools. For each subject, the subject syllabus outlines in detail the rationale and specific objectives for teaching the subject at the primary, secondary or post-secondary levels. These are accompanied by the curriculum framework in which the lists of content topics are integrated across each Grade/Year level. In addition, guidelines and suggestions on the methods of teaching are highlighted, together with a clear statement of the intended standards of achievement. The syllabus then concludes with a suggested list of texts and available instructional resources.</p> <p>The curriculum framework for pre-school education (ages three to six) identifies six key areas of learning experience:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aesthetics and creative expression; • environmental awareness; • language and literacy; • motor skills development; • numeracy; • self and social awareness. <p>Primary education in Singapore consists of a four-year foundation stage from Primary 1 to Primary 4 (ages six/seven to 10) and a two-year orientation stage from Primary 5 to 6 (ages 10 to 12). The overall aim of primary education is to give students a good grasp of their mother tongue, the English language and mathematics.</p> <p>The primary curriculum is organised in three concentric circles. The inner circle focuses on life skills, ensuring that students acquire sound values and skills to take them through life as responsible adults and active citizens. It includes non-academic curriculum elements such as co-curricular activities (<i>CCAs</i>); civics and moral education (<i>CME</i>); pastoral care and career guidance; national education; physical education (<i>PE</i>); and project work. The central circle seeks to develop students' thinking, process and communication skills, to enable them to analyse and use information and to be able to express their thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively. It comprises skills-based subjects. The outermost circle covers content-based subject disciplines, that is languages (English and mother tongue), humanities and the arts (social studies, arts and crafts, music), mathematics and science (science is taught from Primary 3, age eight/nine onwards). It aims to ensure that students have a good grounding in content across different areas of study.</p> <p>Although students in secondary level education are on differentiated courses ('special', 'express' or 'normal'), the core curriculum is essentially the same and includes English; Chinese/Malay/Tamil; maths; science; literature; history; geography; art; design and technology and home economics; civic and moral education; PE; and music. From the age of 14, curriculum subjects are closely linked with the examinations the individual student is taking. In all courses however, English, maths, Chinese/Malay/Tamil, civic and moral education, PE and music remain compulsory.</p>
<p>When was the curriculum last reviewed and is there a review cycle?</p>	<p>The Ministry of Education undertakes systematic curriculum review as part of a long-term process to ensure that the curriculum is forward-looking, remains relevant in the context of Singapore's economy, and meets the needs, abilities and interests of students.</p>

	<p>The curriculum planning and review process has been reduced from an eight- to 10-year cycle to a six-year cycle incorporating a mid-term review at the end of the third year. It involves a detailed study of the subject syllabuses, teaching approaches and the modes of assessment to align these with national policies and emerging trends.</p> <p>Curriculum development is undertaken by the Curriculum Planning and Development Division (CPDD) in the Ministry of Education (MOE). Its mission is to develop a curriculum to meet the needs of the nation, the community and the individual. It is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • designing and reviewing syllabuses and monitoring their implementation; • promoting teaching and learning approaches that are in line with curriculum intent; • designing assessment modes that support the desired learning outcomes; • producing and approving instructional materials; • designing special curriculum programmes; • providing support by training school personnel in syllabus implementation; • providing specialist advice to other divisions, ministries and private publishers on matters related to the curriculum.
<p>What was reviewed in the most recent curriculum review and what changes were implemented (ages/phases; content)?</p>	<p>The most recent curriculum review in Singapore has focused on primary level education. In April 2009, the Ministry of Education (MOE) accepted the recommendations of the Primary Education Review and Implementation (PERI) Committee, which proposed a wide range of changes to ensure that young people are equipped not only with content knowledge, but also with the necessary skills and values to thrive in a fast-changing and globalised future.</p> <p>The desired outcomes for every primary student are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A confident person who has a strong sense of right and wrong, is adaptable and resilient, knows himself, is discerning in judgment, thinks independently and critically, and communicates effectively. • A self-directed learner who takes responsibility for his own learning, who questions, reflects and perseveres in the pursuit of learning. • An active contributor who is able to work effectively in teams, exercises initiative, takes calculated risks, is innovative and strives for excellence. • A concerned citizen who is rooted to Singapore, has a strong civic consciousness, is informed, and takes

an active role in bettering the lives of others around him.

The recommended curriculum changes include:

- Balancing knowledge with skills and values by using engaging pedagogy to teach skills and values.
- Emphasising non-academic programmes within the curriculum by, for example, implementing a Programme for Active Learning (PAL) for all Primary 1 and 2 pupils (aged six/seven to eight/nine) in sports and outdoor education and performing and visual arts, and encouraging all Primary 3 to 6 pupils (ages eight to 12) to continue with PAL and/or similar activities.
- Offering more holistic assessment to support learning by, for example, encouraging schools to move away from an overly strong emphasis on examinations in Primary 1 and 2 and to explore the use of bite-sized forms of assessment to help build pupils' confidence and desire to learn.

Other recent changes to the primary level curriculum have included:

- The introduction of subject-based 'banding', which offers children in Primary 5 (aged 10+) a mixture of standard or foundation level subjects depending on their aptitude in each subject. For example, a student who struggles in English and maths can choose to take these subjects at foundation level, while taking other subjects such as mother tongue language or science at standard level.
- The introduction of a more engaging mother tongue language curriculum (Chinese, Malay and Tamil languages).
- The introduction of enriched learning experiences for high ability students.

The primary level changes are being implemented gradually as many of the recommendations require systematic implementation over the longer term. Further information is available at:

<http://www.moe.gov.sg/initiatives/peri/>

There have also been some recent changes to the curriculum in secondary level education which have been linked to the examination syllabuses offered at that level (see below).

<p>What was the impetus for curriculum change (political change, emerging issues)?</p>	<p>Primary level</p> <p>The Primary Education Review and Implementation (PERI) Committee was established by the Ministry of Education (MOE) to review primary education in Singapore with a view to ensuring that young people are equipped not just with content knowledge, but also with the necessary skills and values to thrive in a fast-changing and globalised future.</p> <p>The impetus for subject-based banding in primary school was to ensure that students are provided with customised and differentiated learning experiences, so as to realise their potential.</p> <p>The introduction of a more engaging mother tongue language curriculum aimed to make mother tongue languages ‘living’ languages and to develop in students a lifelong interest in their mother tongue language and culture, whilst customising the curriculum to meet the needs of students of different language abilities and interests.</p> <p>The impetus for the introduction of enriched learning experiences for higher ability students was to maximise the opportunity for these pupils to achieve to their highest level of potential.</p> <p>Secondary level</p> <p>In 2006, the Ministry of Education (MOE) in Singapore began to assume more control and responsibility over the examination syllabuses and formats offered to students completing lower secondary education. Previously the MOE and the Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board (SEAB) had simply used syllabuses provided by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES) (now the Cambridge International Examinations Group). The MOE continues to work with Cambridge for the Singapore lower secondary examinations, but has an increased level of control over the design of examination syllabuses, outsourcing to UCLES the setting of question papers and marking of examination scripts. This change took place to ensure that the examinations offered to lower secondary students in Singapore are in line with the curriculum.</p> <p>Other recent changes at this level have been introduced to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offer students more choice and flexibility in the range of subjects they can study, according to their interests and abilities;
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enable students to move across and between courses and to take part in broader learning experiences; • offer more practice-oriented learning; • over time, enable schools to develop new examination subjects in curriculum 'niche' areas; • offer students a more engaging mother tongue language curriculum which meets the needs of students of different language abilities and interests, and sustains their interest in their mother tongue language and culture.
<p>Has curriculum coherence - the consistency of the curriculum framework across phases, influenced recent curriculum developments? What challenges have arisen and how have these been addressed?</p>	<p>No evidence of curriculum coherence influencing recent developments has been found, although the recent changes which aim to make the mother tongue language curriculum more engaging and alive for students seem to apply to both primary and secondary level education.</p>

South Africa

<p>Is there a national curriculum or equivalent and what is it called?</p>	<p>The South African National Curriculum (NC) consists of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and the National Policy on Assessment and Qualifications for Schools in the General Education and Training Band.</p> <p>In Further Education and Training (FET) the National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (Schools) consists of an overview document and 35 subject statements.</p>
<p>URL:</p>	<p>Curriculum policy documents are available to download: http://www.thutong.doe.gov.za/Home/PolicyDocuments/tabid/1952/Default.aspx?PolicyTypeId=1</p>
<p>What does the national curriculum cover at what ages and stages?</p>	<p>Schooling in South Africa runs from Grade 0 or Grade R (reception) through to Grade 12 (ages five to 18).</p> <p>Grades 1 to 9 (for children aged six to 15) are compulsory and make up the General Education and Training (GET) band of the education system. Grades 10 to 12 (ages 15 to 18) constitute the Further Education and Training (FET) band. There are separate curricula for the GET and FET bands.</p> <p>The GET curriculum consists of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and the National Policy on Assessment and Qualifications for Schools. In the <i>foundation phase</i> of compulsory primary education (<i>Grade R – Grade 3</i>, children aged five to nine), there are three compulsory learning areas: literacy, numeracy and life skills. In the <i>intermediate phase</i> of compulsory primary education (Grades 4 - 6, children aged nine to 12), languages and maths are the distinct learning areas. Schools may decide on the number and order of other learning programmes/areas, based on the organisational imperatives of the school, and provided that national priorities and the developmental needs of learners are taken into account. The other learning areas which may be included are: languages, maths, natural sciences, technology, social sciences, arts and culture, life orientation, and economic and management sciences. In compulsory secondary education (known as the <i>senior phase</i>), Grades 7-9 (ages 12 – 15), there are eight learning areas in the South African National Curriculum. A learning area is a field of knowledge, skills and values which has unique features as well as connections with other fields of knowledge and learning. In the National Curriculum Statement (<i>NCS</i>) for this phase, the learning areas are: languages, maths, natural sciences, technology, social sciences, arts and culture, life orientation, and economic and management sciences. Learners must also study at least two official languages during this phase of education</p>

	<p>The National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (15- to 18-year-olds) represents a policy statement for learning and teaching in schools in the further education and training phase of education. The National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (Schools) consists of an overview document and 35 subject statements. The 35 subjects (24 subjects and 11 languages) are aligned to the eight fields in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) organising framework. A subject represents the packaging of the learning outcomes and assessment standards that are based on unique knowledge, skills and values. Subjects taken during this phase are generally determined by learners' choices for the Further Education and Training Certificate (FETC). However, within the programmes for the FETC, all learners must study: two languages, maths or mathematical literacy, life orientation, and a core learning component comprising three subjects.</p>
<p>When was the curriculum last reviewed and is there a review cycle?</p>	<p>The South African National Curriculum Statement and linked assessment policy for Grades R-9 were originally introduced into schools in 1998. Known as Curriculum 2005 (C2005), the Statement was grounded in outcomes based education (OBE). Subjects were replaced with learning areas, each of which had range statements that, in turn, aimed at outcomes achieved by students. The learning areas reframed traditional subject disciplines into an integrated knowledge system. The content of lessons was not prescribed and the new teaching strategies that accompanied the curriculum were 'learner-centred'.</p> <p>Almost immediately after its introduction, C2005 met with criticism, and was reviewed by Ministerial Committee in 2000. As a consequence of the review, a Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) for Grades R – 9 (now known simply at the National Curriculum Statement – NCS) was released in May 2002. The revised NCS builds on the basic principles and vision of Curriculum 2005, whilst at the same streamlining and simplifying terminology and curriculum design. It is written in plain English, gives more emphasis to basic skills, content knowledge and a logical progression from one Grade to the next. Along with the values enshrined in the curriculum, it emphasises communication, participation, human rights, multilingualism, history, cultural diversity, the need for educators to act as role models, and that every South African is able to read, write, count and think. It combines a learner-centred curriculum requiring thought and democratic practice, with an appreciation of the importance of content and support for education.</p> <p>As part of general reforms to the GET Band, further changes to the curriculum were announced at the end of 2009. These included strengthening literacy and numeracy by implementing the 'Foundations for Learning Programme' for students in Grade R to Grade 6 (ages five to 12). The changes focus on reading, writing and mental maths; on regular, standardised assessment; and develop a set of simple coherent curriculum documents for each subject in each phase. Most importantly, the changes announce the 'discontinuation' of</p>

	outcomes based education and new curriculum and assessment documents are currently under development. There appears to be no regular review cycle; rather review is ad hoc.
What was reviewed in the most recent curriculum review and what changes were implemented (ages/phases; content)?	See above
What was the impetus for curriculum change (political change, emerging issues)?	The reviews outlined above were based on a desire to ensure that the curriculum became more manageable and achievable.
Has curriculum coherence - the consistency of the curriculum framework across phases, influenced recent curriculum developments? What challenges have arisen and how have these been addressed?	Although there is no explicit discussion in the curriculum documents of a desire to ensure the consistency of the curriculum framework across phases, the review of C2005 does include a requirement to ensure that there is a logical progression between Grades.

Spain

<p>Is there a national curriculum or equivalent and what is it called?</p>	<p>The central Government, through the Ministry of Education, establishes core curricula, which must be respected throughout Spain. These contain the basic curriculum content and objectives, skills to be acquired, and assessment criteria and form the basis on which the 17 Autonomous Communities in Spain establish their own curriculum. Core curricula are established for all phases of education from pre-compulsory early years/pre-school education (birth to six years of age) through to upper secondary level education (aged 16-18). At upper secondary level, the core curriculum requirements are determined by the examination syllabus followed.</p> <p>Essentially, the core curricula account for 55 per cent of the timetable in those Autonomous Communities with a co-official language, and 65 per cent of the timetable in those without a co-official language.</p>
<p>URLs:</p>	<p>Pre- primary level curriculum framework (<i>educación infantil</i>) - http://www.educacion.es/educacion/que-estudiar/educacion-infantil/contenidos.html (Spanish)</p> <p>Primary level curriculum framework (<i>educación primaria</i>) - http://www.educacion.es/educacion/que-estudiar/educacion-primaria.html (Spanish)</p> <p>Compulsory secondary level curriculum framework (<i>educación secundaria obligatoria</i>) - http://www.educacion.es/educacion/que-estudiar/educacion-secundaria-obligatoria.html (Spanish)</p>
<p>What does the national curriculum cover at what ages and stages?</p>	<p>The core curriculum guidance/national curriculum covers all phases of education from pre-school to upper secondary level.</p> <p>Early years education for children from birth to six years of age is organised around 'areas of experience' relating to children's experience and development. It is not divided into specific areas of knowledge or subjects, but stresses the global and integrated nature of a child's experience. The three main areas of experience around which the teaching experience at infant level is arranged are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal identity and independence (body and self image, play and movement, activity and daily life, self care); • physical and social environment (first social contacts, social development, man-made and natural objects, animals and plants);

- communication and expression (oral language, approach to written language, artistic expression, musical expression, body language, spatial representation).

At **primary** level (children aged six to 12), teaching is organised around the minimum core curriculum requirements of the official curriculum (*enseñanzas mínimas*), which specify that the following areas of knowledge must be studied:

- (Castilian) Spanish (and, in cases where this exists, the co-official language of the Autonomous Community): language and literature;
- maths;
- knowledge of the natural, social and cultural environment;
- artistic education (art, music, dance, drama);
- physical education;
- foreign languages (which is not the study of the language per se but is concerned with communication, other cultural experiences and tolerance);
- religious education.

Following the passing of the 2006 Organic Act on Education (*LOE*), the Ministry of Education and the *Autonomous Communities* agreed a new core curriculum for compulsory **secondary** education (ages 12 to 16). The new curriculum consists of eight competences which each student is expected to have acquired by the end of the phase. These are:

- oral communication and literacy;
- numeracy;
- geographical knowledge;
- *ICT*;
- citizenship;
- cultural and artistic knowledge;
- ability to learn;
- independence and initiative.

	<p>In addition, vocational education programmes at this level are being regulated to enable students who follow these courses to gain qualifications; and parents are allowed to choose whether their children study religious education (<i>RE</i>), and/or the type of <i>RE</i> classes they take.</p>
<p>When was the curriculum last reviewed and is there a review cycle?</p>	<p>The curriculum was last reviewed following the passing into law of the 2006 Organic Act on Education (LOE).</p> <p>In general, reviews of the curriculum and/or the development of new curricula do not take place at regular intervals in Spain, but rather they follow from social, political, economic or educational change and a requirement to develop in line with these changes. As a result, there emerges the need for educational reform, which normally begins with the passing of a new organic law on education which introduces new statutory curricular requirements.</p>
<p>What was reviewed in the most recent curriculum review and what changes were implemented (ages/phases; content)?</p>	<p>Following the passing of the 2006 Organic Act on Education, a range of decrees have been published which have either introduced new core curricula for the educational phases regulated by the LOE – pre-primary, primary, lower and upper secondary education – or have introduced changes to the curricula previously in existence.</p> <p>The LOE introduced eight basic competences to the core curriculum. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communication in mother tongue and foreign languages; • mathematical competence; • technological and scientific competence; • digital competence; • social and citizenship competence; • artistic and cultural competence; • learning to learn; • entrepreneurship. <p>The introduction of these eight basic competences has subsequently led to a reform of the curricula at the various levels. This has not involved an increase in the number of hours devoted to each subject, rather the introduction of a more holistic approach to learning, to enable a closer link with the realities of everyday life and society.</p>

	<p>The LOE also highlighted the importance of education for citizenship and, as a result, new content linked to citizenship education (and known by different names depending on the nature of the content and pupils' ages) is being introduced in some years of primary, lower and upper secondary education. The aim is to offer all students a space for reflection, analysis and study of the essential characteristics of a democratic system and the way it works; the principles and rights established by the Spanish Constitution; the universal declaration of human rights; and the common values which constitute democratic citizenship in a global context.</p> <p>Changes in line with the LOE are currently in the process of implementation.</p>
<p>What was the impetus for curriculum change (political change, emerging issues)?</p>	<p>The 2006 Organic on Education (LOE) aimed to raise standards in Spanish schools, and to set out clearly how central government and the Autonomous Communities should collaborate in education.</p>
<p>Has curriculum coherence - the consistency of the curriculum framework across phases, influenced recent curriculum developments? What challenges have arisen and how have these been addressed?</p>	<p>Broadly speaking, all changes to the curriculum which are implemented in Spain are designed and applied to promote coherence between all educational stages. Changes at one phase or stage always take place taking account of other phases/stages.</p>

Sweden

<p>Is there a national curriculum or equivalent and what is it called?</p>	<p>The Swedish school system is goal-based with a high degree of local responsibility. However, the Government has overall responsibility for education and sets out the comprehensive framework in terms of national goals and curricula, regulations and sometimes what is called ‘national improvement initiatives’ where extra resources are made available for a shorter period of time. The main responsibility for education rests with the municipalities and those responsible for grant-aided independent schools. It is the responsibility of school heads and teachers, in cooperation with their students, to interpret the curriculum and syllabuses</p> <p>Since 1998, when the pre-school curriculum was introduced, the education system has comprised three common national curricula:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lpfö 98: the pre-school curriculum framework • Lpo 94: the curriculum framework for the compulsory basic school (<i>grundskola</i>) for students aged seven to 16, which also covers the pre-school class for children aged six to seven where this is provided in the <i>grundskola</i>, and after-school centres • Lpf 94: the curriculum framework for the upper secondary school
<p>URLs:</p>	<p>Lpfö 98: the pre-school curriculum framework (in English) http://www.childcarecanada.org/res/papers/SwedishCurriculumPreschool.pdf</p> <p>Lpo 94: The Curriculum for the compulsory school system, the pre-school class and the leisure-time centre (pdf document in English): http://www.skolverket.se/sb/d/193/url/0068007400740070003a002f002f007700770034002e0073006b006f006c007600650072006b00650074002e00730065003a0038003000380030002f00770074007000750062002f00770073002f0073006b006f006c0062006f006b002f0077007000750062006500780074002f0074007200790063006b00730061006b002f005200650063006f00720064003f006b003d0031003000370030/target/Record%3Fk%3D1070</p> <p>Syllabuses for each individual subject are available online in English at: http://www3.skolverket.se/ki03/front.aspx?sprak=EN&ar=0809&infotyp=15&skolform=11&id=2087&extrald= Also, a pdf (revised in 2008) containing all subject syllabuses in one document (in English): http://www.skolverket.se/publikationer?id=2146</p>

<p>What does the national curriculum cover at what ages and stages?</p>	<p>The curriculum for compulsory education in the <i>grundskola</i> (seven- to 16-year-olds) is based on the core subjects of Swedish, English and maths, plus additional compulsory subjects which include practical arts (including music, art and PE); social sciences; sciences; and language options.</p> <p>In upper secondary phase education (16+), students currently select one of 17 upper secondary school programmes and this determines the curriculum followed, which consists of three groups of subjects: core subjects, subjects specific to a national programme, and individual options.</p>
<p>When was the curriculum last reviewed and is there a review cycle?</p>	<p>There is no regular cycle of whole curriculum review and the current Swedish curricula have been in place for some considerable time – since 1994 (for the curriculum for the pre-school class (six- to seven-year-olds), the compulsory phase curriculum and after-school centres; and for the upper secondary curriculum) and since 1998 for the pre-school curriculum. That being said, there is much current reform (see below) and the individual syllabuses which link to the curriculum documents were updated at the beginning of the millennium, and the syllabuses for the compulsory school and for upper secondary education are currently being revised and new syllabuses will be introduced in the 2011/12 school year.</p>
<p>What was reviewed in the most recent curriculum review and what changes were implemented (ages/phases; content)?</p>	<p>The Government has, in recent years, implemented, or is on the way to implementing, reforms in almost all phases of education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preschool (ages one to five years): The Government is seeking to strengthen the educational emphasis of preschool to better prepare children for school. This means that the objectives in the preschool curriculum are to be made clearer, particularly in relation to linguistic and mathematical development. The National Agency for Education (NAE, <i>Skolverket</i>) has been responsible for revising the curriculum for the preschool; its proposals are currently being processed within the Ministry of Education and Research. • Compulsory school (primary and lower secondary school for seven to 16-year-olds): A Commission has proposed that the goals for the compulsory school should be fewer and formulated in a more distinctive way. In addition, the Government has also recently introduced compulsory national tests in the third compulsory school year to complement those which currently take place at the end of the fifth and ninth (final) compulsory school year. This is to ensure the early identification of pupils in need of special support. In addition, the NAE is developing new syllabuses which will include clear knowledge requirements, and suggesting new grading criteria for the compulsory school, which will include a new grading scale with seven grades. New syllabuses are expected to be introduced in the 2011/12 school year.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper Secondary School (16+): At present, all upper secondary school pupils on national and specially designed programmes study on pathways leading to basic eligibility to higher education, regardless of the ambitions, interests or talents of the individual pupil. Grading results and other studies have demonstrated that pupils on some programmes are less prepared for higher education than is desirable, and that vocational education and training (VET) programmes do not provide a satisfactory level of education in vocationally-oriented subjects. As a result, the Government commissioned an enquiry to propose changes to this phase of education. The starting point for the enquiry is that upper secondary school should lead to three different types of diploma - each offering a different direction. The enquiry has proposed examination criteria for the three different directions and that the time allocated for programme specific subjects should be increased. The enquiry report was submitted in March 2008 and has since been published for consultation. Parliament confirmed the reforms in October 2009 and the new upper secondary school arrangements are expected to be introduced in autumn 2011, when the new grading system will also be introduced.
<p>What was the impetus for curriculum change (political change, emerging issues)?</p>	<p>See above.</p>
<p>Has curriculum coherence - the consistency of the curriculum framework across phases, influenced recent curriculum developments? What challenges have arisen and how have these been addressed?</p>	<p>When developing syllabuses for the different school types and phases, the National Agency for Education (NAE, <i>Skolverket</i>) examines how to ensure that transitions are smooth and function well. This applies both to the transition between compulsory and upper secondary education and to the transition between pre-school class education and compulsory phase education.</p> <p>Consistency is ensured as the curriculum documents do not go into detail but set out the aims and outcomes of education for a given phase.</p>

Switzerland

<p>Is there a national curriculum or equivalent and what is it called?</p>	<p>There is no national curriculum in Switzerland, as devising the curriculum is the legal responsibility of the individual cantons.</p> <p>However, there is ongoing work at both the federal and regional level to ‘harmonise’ some aspects of compulsory phase education, including some aspects which relate to the curriculum. The national ‘HarmoS project’, developed by the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Directors of Education (CDIP/EDK), aims to guarantee the quality of education by setting standards to be attained by pupils in languages, mathematics and science at the end of Years 4, 8 and 11 of their education. In some cantons, standards are also being established for the Kindergarten period (from age four). These standards can either be defined in terms of content or competences. Experts are currently working on the definition of the standards and their proposals will then be ratified by the cantons via the CDIP/EDK.</p> <p>In addition, there are regional educational organisations - such as the CIIP, which brings together the French-speaking cantons – which are also working on producing regional curricula. CIIP, for example, is currently working on a regional curriculum for the French-speaking cantons in Switzerland, known as PER, and this is currently the subject of consultation in the French-speaking cantons. The CIIP’s objective is for PER to come into effect by start of 2010/11 school year. A similar programme is being developed in German-speaking Switzerland, where consultation is taking place in the German-speaking cantons on a proposed <i>Lehrplan</i> (Learning Plan). Its implementation in schools is scheduled for school year 2011/2012.</p>
<p>When was the curriculum last reviewed and is there a review cycle?</p>	<p>See above also.</p> <p>Frequency of curriculum review has traditionally varied from canton to canton, but, as a general rule, tended to take place approximately every ten years. There was no formal trigger mechanism; reviews were usually initiated by changes in ideology, educational/ pedagogical practice and other educational or social change.</p>
<p>What was reviewed in the most recent curriculum review and what changes were implemented (ages/phases; content)?</p>	<p>Project HarmoS includes the proposed introduction of nationally binding educational standards and assessment within a national education monitoring system. Educational standards can specify the required levels of competence (performance standards), the content of a subject area, or terms of implementation. In the first stages, national performance standards are being developed which apply to four subjects (first language, foreign languages, mathematics and natural sciences). These constitute curriculum-independent, measurable, and</p>

	<p>verifiable skills specifications. They are based on a skills model and define the minimum skills which every pupil in compulsory education must achieve by a particular point in time (the end of school Years 4, 8 and 11). It is intended that, at a later date, additional standards will be defined for other subjects. The project HarmoS agreement also includes agreement to teaching two foreign languages from primary level education.</p> <p>Linguistic regions in Switzerland have also recently cooperated on curricula and teaching materials. The French-speaking cantons, for example, and also the German-speaking cantons, are working on curricula for their respective linguistic regions (see above). A consultation has recently been held on a draft common curriculum for all 21 German-speaking cantons. This competence-based curriculum covers two years of pre-school and nine years of compulsory education (ages four to 15). Laid out according to subject area, it outlines minimum expectations for pupils, and also specifies the amount of time to be spent teaching each subject.</p>
<p>What was the impetus for curriculum change (political change, emerging issues)?</p>	<p>No additional information available.</p>
<p>Has curriculum coherence - the consistency of the curriculum framework across phases, influenced recent curriculum developments? What challenges have arisen and how have these been addressed?</p>	<p>Curriculum coherence and consistency is one of the key drivers for project HarmoS and for the recent moves towards coherent curricula across linguistic regions in Switzerland.</p>

USA

There is no national curriculum or curriculum framework in the USA. The intended curricula are determined at the school district level in accordance with individual state guidelines.

There is, however, a current commitment on the part of the Governors and the State Commission of Education from 48 states, two territories and the District of Columbia to develop a common core of state standards in English language arts and maths for grades Kindergarten to Grade 12 (students aged five to 18 years).

This **Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI)** is a state-led effort coordinated by the National Governors Association Centre for Best Practices (NGA Centre) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO).

Standards have been drafted and these draft standards seek to provide a clear and consistent framework to prepare children for college and the workforce. They define the knowledge and skills students should have within their Kindergarten to Grade 12 education careers to enable them to graduate from high school able to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing academic college courses and in workforce training programmes. The college- and career-readiness standards were released for public comment in September 2009. The draft Kindergarten to Grade 12 standards were released for public comment in March 2010.

Further information is available from: <http://www.corestandards.org/>

USA: Kentucky*

<p>Is there a national curriculum or equivalent and what is it called?</p>	<p>Since the enactment of the Kentucky Education Reform Act 1990 (KERA), state-wide curriculum frameworks have been developed for the key curriculum areas of science, maths, social studies, language arts (reading and writing), arts and humanities, practical living, and vocational studies. The first frameworks were produced in 1994, and a complete programme of studies for Primary to Grade 12 (children aged from around six to 18 years) was finalised and published in 1998. A revised complete programme of studies was published in 2006.</p> <p>The 'Programme of Studies for Kentucky Schools Primary-Grade 12' aims to ensure that all students throughout Kentucky are provided with common content and have opportunities to learn at high levels. The document provides administrators, teachers, parents and other stakeholders in local school districts with a basis for establishing and/or revising standards based curricula and instruction for public schools.</p> <p>The Programme of Studies outlines the minimum content standards required for all students before graduating from Kentucky publicly funded high schools; it specifies the content standards for the required credits for high school graduation and the primary, intermediate and middle level content standards leading up to these requirements. The content is based on Kentucky's learning goals, academic expectations, and input from professional organisations, teachers, and administrators.</p>
<p>URL:</p>	<p>The full 2006 Programme of Studies is available to download: http://www.education.ky.gov/users/jwyatt/POS/POS.pdf</p>
<p>What does the national curriculum cover at what ages and stages?</p>	<p>The Programme of Studies covers all phases of education from primary to Grade 12, sub-divided as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Primary level programme serving children from the time they enter elementary school (age six) until they are ready to enter Grade 4 (age nine+).• Intermediate level education providing for children in Grades 4 and 5 (ages nine+ to 11).• Middle level education serving those in Grades 6-8 (aged 11+ to 14).• High school education for students in Grades 9-12 (aged 15+ to 18). <p>The 'required content areas' (subject areas) in the Programme of Studies are:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arts and humanities; • English/language arts; • health education; • maths; • physical education; • science; • social studies.
When was the curriculum last reviewed and is there a review cycle?	<p>The Programme of Studies was most last reviewed in 2006; there does not appear to be a regular cycle of review.</p> <p>The Common Core State Standards initiatives (see above) will serve as the revision to Kentucky's mathematics and English language arts standards. State contacts tell us that they are looking for similar state consortia or national content organisations to use for the revision of other content areas.</p>
What was reviewed in the most recent curriculum review and what changes were implemented (ages/phases; content)?	<p>The complete Programme of Studies was reviewed in 2006 when, on 1 February, the Kentucky Board of Education defined a detailed and more rigorous minimum high school graduation requirement, beginning with the graduating class of 2012. The Programme of Studies (POS) was revised to include instructional standards that address the more rigorous graduation requirements and the College Readiness Standards (CRS) became embedded within the Programme of Studies.</p>
What was the impetus for curriculum change (political change, emerging issues)?	<p>The 2006 changes to the Programme of Studies and College Readiness Standards were intended to ensure that all students in Kentucky are prepared for postsecondary education and the workforce.</p>
Has curriculum coherence - the consistency of the curriculum framework across phases, influenced recent curriculum developments? What challenges have arisen and how have these been addressed?	<p>In 2006, the Programme of Studies was reviewed across all phases of education and the College Readiness Standards (CRS) became embedded within the Programme of Studies.</p> <p>Schools and school districts are responsible for coordinating curricula across grade levels and among schools within districts. A coordinated curricular approach aims to ensure that all students have opportunities to achieve Kentucky's learning goals and academic expectations (http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Curriculum+Documents+and+Resources/Academic+Expectations/)</p>

USA: Maryland

<p>Is there a national curriculum or equivalent and what is it called?</p>	<p>Maryland has developed content standards and learning outcomes for reading, writing/language usage, mathematics, science, and social studies in Grades 3, 5 and 8 (ages eight/nine, 10/11 and 13/14 respectively). The Maryland Content Standards specify the essential knowledge and skills that all students are expected to learn by the end of specific Grades. These standards help to clarify for teachers, students and parents what students should master in reading, writing, mathematics and other core academic areas. Local school systems use the content standards to guide their own curricula.</p> <p>The Maryland State Curriculum is the document that aligns the Maryland content standards and the Maryland assessment programme. The curriculum documents are formatted so that each begins with content standards or broad, measurable statements about what students should know and be able to do. Indicator statements provide the next level of specificity and begin to narrow the focus for teachers. Finally, the objectives provide teachers with very clear information about what specific learning should occur.</p> <p>Core learning goals for high school students (aged 14+ - 17/18) have also been developed; these link to high school assessments, which test a student's knowledge of the core learning goals contained in certain course content areas. The tests are taken after the student completes a course containing the core learning goals.</p> <p>Each of the curriculum documents was developed by hundreds of educators from across Maryland. These educators came from Maryland's public school classrooms as well as universities and colleges. Content specialists, supervisors and administrators helped in the development and review of the documents. Working with research and existing national standard documents, teams of educators created clear statements of grade level expectations in each content area. The final review of the document involved outside content experts, hired through the state procurement process, to review the document and benchmark Maryland's curricular documents against exemplary documents from other states and countries.</p>
<p>URL:</p>	<p>State Curriculum: http://www.mdk12.org/mspp/standards/index.html</p>
<p>What does the national curriculum cover at what ages and stages?</p>	<p>The State Curriculum covers the Maryland content standards for children aged five to 14 years of age and the core learning goals for students aged 14 to 18 in reading/English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies.</p>

<p>When was the curriculum last reviewed and is there a review cycle? What was reviewed in the most recent curriculum review and what changes were implemented (ages/phases; content)?</p>	<p>The Maryland content standards were reviewed during 1998 and 1999 (the review took around 18 months), and revised content standards were approved by the Board of Education in July 1999 for introduction in the autumn of that year. Learning outcomes were revised during 2000 to reflect the review and the, then, linked Maryland School Performance Assessment Programme (MSPAP) tests were adapted to fit in with the revision. This wide-ranging review was triggered by concern that previous standards based reform, initiated in the 1970s, with the introduction of tests known as the Maryland Functional Tests (which assessed high school students' competency in reading, writing, maths, and citizenship), had set a performance floor for students. It was believed that the minimal competency students were achieving was not preparing them adequately for the competitive, information-based, technological world which awaited them outside the classroom.</p> <p>The reading/English language arts State Curriculum was developed based on the work of the National Reading Panel, existing Maryland content standards and core learning goals, as well as the National Council for Teachers of English/International Reading Association's <i>Standards for the English Language Arts</i>. Expert reviews were conducted in 2003 and 2007. In the 2003 expert review, Maryland's reading/English language arts curriculum was compared with the standards in place in California and Massachusetts and, for early literacy, Maryland's State Curriculum was compared with standards in place in North Carolina and Texas. In 2007, experts compared the high school English/language arts State Curriculum with the <i>American Diploma Project Benchmarks</i>.</p> <p>The maths State Curriculum was developed using the standards developed by National Council of the Teachers of Mathematics and the existing Maryland content standards and core learning goals. Expert reviews were conducted in 2003, 2007 and 2009. In the 2003 expert review, the Mathematics State Curriculum was compared with state standards in place in Indiana and Massachusetts, and with the Singapore National Math Standards. In 2007, the Maryland High School Mathematics Curricula were reviewed and compared with the maths standards of the <i>American Diploma Project</i>. In 2009, the <i>American Diploma Project</i>, the <i>Two-Year Middle School Backmapped Benchmarks for Mathematics</i>, the National Mathematic Advisory Panel <i>Foundations for Success</i> (NMAP), the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) Mathematics Framework 2009—Grades 4 and 8, and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) <i>Curriculum Focal Points for Prekindergarten through Grade 8 Mathematics</i> were all used as standards against which to compare the review of Maryland's <i>PreKindergarten to Grade 8 Voluntary State Curriculum (VSC) in Mathematics</i>.</p>
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	<p>The science State Curriculum is based on the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)—<i>Benchmarks for Science Literacy</i> and the <i>National Science Education Standards</i>, as well as on the Maryland science content standards and core learning goals. In the 2005 expert review of the science State Curriculum, the curriculum was compared with state documents from Delaware, Indiana and Massachusetts.</p> <p>The social studies State Curriculum was developed using the social studies content standards and core learning goals, along with the National Standards for United States History (Kindergarten to Grade 4), the National Standards for United States History (Grades 5-12), the National Standards for Civics and Government, the National Geography Standards for Life, the National Voluntary Standards in Economics and the National Council for Social Studies Standards. During the 2005 expert review, the state social studies curriculum documents from Indiana and Kansas were used as benchmarks for comparison.</p> <p>There appears to be no confirmed review cycle, although reviews of the core State Curriculum key subject areas (above) appear to take place regularly.</p>
<p>What was the impetus for curriculum change (political change, emerging issues)?</p>	<p>See above.</p>
<p>Has curriculum coherence - the consistency of the curriculum framework across phases, influenced recent curriculum developments? What challenges have arisen and how have these been addressed?</p>	<p>No information available.</p>

Wales

Is there a national curriculum or equivalent and what is it called?	The School Curriculum for Wales covers education for three- to 18/19-year-olds.
URL:	The School Curriculum for Wales: http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/curriculumassessment/arevisedcurriculumforwales/?lang=en
What does the national curriculum cover at what ages and stages?	<p>The School Curriculum for Wales establishes a curriculum for the twenty-first century, which aims to meet the needs of individual learners whilst taking account of the broader needs of Wales. It is aimed at three- to 18/19-year-olds and began to be implemented in September 2008.</p> <p>It is divided into:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The curriculum for the Foundation Stage for three- to seven-year-olds which covers the following areas of learning: personal and social development; well-being and cultural diversity; language, literacy and communication skills; mathematical development; Welsh language development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and creative development. • The National Curriculum for key stages 2, 3 and 4 (seven to 16-year-olds) which includes (depending on the key stage) English, Welsh, modern foreign languages, maths, science, ICT, design and technology, history, geography, art and design, music and PE. • A skills framework for three- to 19-year-olds which focuses on the development of the skills of thinking, communication, ICT and number across the curriculum. These four skills are those which will enable learners of any age to become successful, whether in school, the workplace, at home or elsewhere. • A personal and social education framework for seven- to 19-year-olds. • A careers and the world of work framework for 11- to 19-year-olds. • A framework of sex and relationships education for schools. • A framework of religious education.
When was the curriculum last reviewed and is there a review cycle? What was reviewed in the most	The review of the curriculum which culminated in the implementation of the revised curriculum School Curriculum for Wales (3-18/19) from 2008 began with the publication of the framework document for education in Wales – <i>The Learning Country</i> in 2001, and continued with the <i>Review of the School Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements 5-16</i> , published in 2004.

<p>recent curriculum review and what changes were implemented (ages/phases; content)?</p>	<p>A review of the revised curriculum (the School Curriculum for Wales, 2008) for the age range eight to 14 has also recently begun (see below).</p> <p>There is no specific review cycle.</p> <p>The revised (2008) curriculum is less prescriptive than previous versions, with the aim of giving control and responsibility back to schools and learners themselves. In addition, the overarching skills framework aims to focus the curriculum on skills and encourage schools to plan their provision imaginatively and with greater emphasis on thematic and topic-driven cross-curricular approaches to learning.</p> <p>The School Curriculum for Wales (2008) also aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focus on the learner; • ensure that appropriate skills development is woven throughout the curriculum; • offer reduced subject content with an increased focus on skills; • focus on continuity and progression from age three to age 19, by building on the Foundation Phase and linking effectively with the 14-19 Learning Pathways programme; • be flexible; • support government policy including: bilingualism, Curriculum Cymreig (Wales-specific aspects of the curriculum), a wider focus on Europe and the world, equal opportunities, food and fitness, sustainable development and global citizenship, and the world of work and entrepreneurship; • continue to deliver a distinctive curriculum that is appropriate for Wales.
<p>What was the impetus for curriculum change (political change, emerging issues)?</p>	<p>The impetus for the development of the School Curriculum for Wales (2008) was an overarching concern that pupils were not being given the opportunity to develop the skills which would serve them well in adult life and be useful to the economy. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>Future Skills Wales</i> 2003 generic skills survey identified employers reporting a lack of IT skills, communication skills, initiative, problem-solving skills and an ability to learn. • In its 2002 publication <i>Excellent Schools: a Vision for Schools in Wales in the 21st Century</i>, Estyn noted that schools would need to devote attention to developing attitudes to learning – affecting the disposition of learners and developing their learning skills – as well as to delivering formal instruction. • Advice in the 2004 <i>Review of the School Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements 5-16</i> recommended that

	<p>the curriculum in Wales should be revised to develop a learner-centred, skills-focused curriculum, relevant to the 21st century and inclusive of learners. It also suggested that the Welsh Assembly Government should consider, as a long-term goal, the vision of a radically revised curriculum that is more overtly learner-centred and skills-focused, and not necessarily subject-based.</p>
<p>Has curriculum coherence - the consistency of the curriculum framework across phases, influenced recent curriculum developments? What challenges have arisen and how have these been addressed?</p>	<p>One of the goals of the 2001 publication <i>The Learning Country</i> (the education strategy/blueprint for Wales) was to ensure improved transitions between primary and secondary education, with a view to improving the standards achieved by 11- to 14-year-olds and adding value to what is achieved between the ages of seven and 11. This connected with clear agreements between schools and local authorities concerning outcomes and related support.</p> <p>The School Curriculum for Wales, which began to be introduced in 2008, applies to all students aged from three to 18/19. Although the document makes reference to discrete phases of education (the Foundation Phase, key stage 2, key stage 3), the phases are intended to complement each other and TO be linked by cross-phase frameworks such as the non-statutory skills framework for three- to 19-year-olds and the personal and social education framework for seven- to 19-year-olds. However, a review of education for students aged eight to 14, which began in 2009, has uncovered issues relating to coherence of teaching and learning for this age group. The review has found that transition from primary to secondary education remains problematic because of the different curricula followed in primary and secondary school education. This problem is compounded by 11-year-olds with unsatisfactory levels of basic skills. The current concern is that the objectives of the Foundation Phase for three- to seven-year-olds and the expanded 14-19 learning pathways will not be fully achieved unless the student experience during the period from age eight to age 14 is improved.</p> <p>Recommendations from the eight-14 review include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of a discrete eight-14 phase of education which is underpinned by a distinct and coherent educational philosophy. • The development of a discrete eight-14 learning and teaching pedagogy within the teaching profession. • Offering opportunities in leadership programmes and practice to enable leaders from primary and secondary schools to work together. • A more coherent learning experience for students in Years 6 and 7 (ages 10 to 12, the final year of primary school (key stage 2) and the first year of secondary school in key stage 3). • The introduction of a discrete methodology for the inspection by Estyn of an eight-14 phase of education.