

The Humanities Area of Learning and Experience is all about asking questions about the human condition.

As such, studying human experiences in the past and present, at local, national and global levels, will help learners answer those questions, encouraging them to contribute to their communities, imagine possible futures and benefit from a sense of belonging.

Humanities encompasses geography, history, religious education, business studies and social studies. These disciplines share many common themes, concepts and transferable skills, while also having their own body of knowledge and skills. Likewise, learners and teachers may reference other complementary disciplines, such as classics, economics, law, philosophy, politics, psychology and sociology, if and where appropriate.

Humanities will provide opportunities for all learners to learn about their heritage and sense of place through a study of their *cynefin* and of Wales. It will promote an understanding of how the people of Wales, its communities, culture, landscape, resources and industries interrelate with the rest of the world. Promoting an understanding of the ethnic and cultural diversity within Wales will also help learners appreciate the extent to which it is part of a wider international community. Consequently, Humanities will help learners see how their personal story is part of a wider picture of the past and present.

In the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience, learners will enquire and investigate; evaluate diverse views of the world and form their own interpretations; engage with issues including sustainability and social change; and be invited to take social action in response to their learning. This will help develop learners' resilience, build independence, and raise levels of self-confidence and self-esteem. Experiences in Humanities, both in and out of the classroom, will encourage learners to be ambitious and to solve problems confidently, while considering always the ethical implications of their choices.

A transformational curriculum

The White Paper [Our National Mission: A Transformational Curriculum](#) set out the detailed legislative proposals for Curriculum for Wales 2022.

The proposal is that funded non-maintained settings and schools will be required to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the four purposes of the curriculum, and comprises the six areas of learning and experience. There will be statutory duties to teach Welsh, English, religious education, relationships and sexuality education, and the three cross-curricular responsibilities of literacy, numeracy and digital competence. Further information on how the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience can support this is provided in the 'Developing a broad and balanced curriculum' section of this document.

Funded non-maintained settings and schools will have discretion as to how they design their school-level curriculum to meet their curriculum duties. However, in considering the exercise of that discretion, they must have regard to statutory guidance issued by Welsh Ministers. In practice, that means they should follow the statutory guidance unless they have good reason not to.

This statutory guidance for the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience, which forms part of the wider Curriculum for Wales 2022 statutory guidance, is intended to provide a national framework that funded non-maintained settings and schools can build on to develop their own curriculum. It is not intended to be a comprehensive or exhaustive syllabus, nor a guide for organising timetables. It sets out:

- what funded non-maintained settings and schools should take into account in designing their curriculum and how it could be structured
- the broad expectations for learners for the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience at each progression step.

Supporting the four purposes of the curriculum

The Humanities Area of Learning and Experience is central to learners becoming **ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world** through engaging with contemporary and historical issues, exploring human experiences on their own doorstep and across the globe, and contemplating different perspectives. They will be asked to consider the impact of their actions and the actions of others, and how these are shaped by interpretations of human rights, values, ethics, religious and non-religious views, and philosophies. Through this they will come to understand, respect and challenge a variety of world views, knowing how to exercise their democratic rights and to make informed choices, conscious of the importance of a sustainable future for all.

As they explore their locality, Wales and the wider world, past and present, learners will establish a solid base of knowledge and understanding of geographical, historical, religious, non-religious, business, and social studies concepts. During this process, they will learn different methods of enquiry, evaluate the evidence that they find, and apply and communicate their findings effectively, all of which will help them become **ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives**.

Learners will have the opportunities to become **enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work**, as well as opportunities to become responsible citizens, as they engage critically with local, national and global challenges and opportunities past and present, and seek to imagine possible futures. All the while, they will be encouraged to think about how they themselves can take positive action to improve the lives of people in their *cynefin*, in Wales and in the wider world.

Learners will have the safe space for discussion and reflection which allows time to explore their personal perspectives on religious and non-religious world views, ethical challenges and social inclusion issues. They will also be asked to explore the natural world, locally, across Wales and beyond, which will nurture a sense of place and well-being. These experiences will help support the development of **healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society** in Wales and the wider world.

Relationships between what matters statements

School curricula should promote a thorough understanding of what matters statements in Humanities. These should not be seen or taught in isolation: the content, concepts and skills outlined in them are interconnected, placing emphasis on an interdisciplinary approach and a holistic view of the humanities.

The first what matters statement champions enquiry and discovery within Humanities, while the second encourages learners to explore and consider how they and others view, interpret and represent human experiences. What matters statements three and four focus on the key aspects of understanding in Humanities, namely of people's relationship with the natural world and with each other. The final what matters statement places a new emphasis on the individual's role and action in response to the challenges and opportunities facing humanity.

Progression

The what matters statements for the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience offer a holistic and integrated approach. Each what matters statement draws on essential material and concepts from several or all the Humanities disciplines. Progression in Humanities is underpinned by the idea that subject content does not get intrinsically more complex. However, it is possible to study the same topic or content area at different ages and expect different levels of depth and complexity in learners' understanding and responses.

Achievement outcomes identify the specific disciplinary and interdisciplinary concepts in which learners can show progression. These are areas of procedural knowledge in which learners could be expected to develop their thinking and understanding, and thus show progression.

Progression in understanding in Humanities is made through a combination of:

- increased depth of knowledge, by linking new learning to existing knowledge and developing a more sophisticated understanding and resolving the conflicts that can emerge from different points of view
- increased sophistication of conceptual understanding, which helps learners see beyond a list of facts, to the conceptual ideas that underpin the disciplines that make up the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience, and how these interrelate to each other in different contexts.

In addition, progression in Humanities is demonstrated through:

- an ability to work with an increasing number and sophistication of sources of information
- more sophisticated use of relevant skills
- increasing independence and self-regulation.

Developing a broad and balanced curriculum

Literacy, numeracy and digital competence

The cross-curricular responsibilities of literacy, numeracy and digital competence support almost all learning and are essential for learners to be able to participate successfully and confidently in the modern world.

Literacy

Humanities provides a range of rich contexts where learners' literacy skills can be reinforced, extended and applied. As a vital building block for developing life skills and accessing the curriculum, learners should be provided with opportunities to communicate their ideas and viewpoints orally. For example, learners can develop their oracy through discussion, role play, questioning and presentations, and, in discussing Ultimate questions, they can adapt these skills for audience and purpose as they listen to and debate different viewpoints.

Learners' reading skills should be developed by accessing a range of materials from a variety of places and times to analyse evidence, to think critically, to infer meaning, and to evaluate interpretations and viewpoints.

Humanities provides rich contexts for developing all styles of writing. For example, describing, explaining, discussing, evaluating and creative writing combined with the use of subject-specific terminology will see learners develop their writing.

Numeracy

Humanities provides learners with a wide range of opportunities to develop their numeracy skills in real-world contexts. For example, learners can collect numerical data, through primary and secondary research methods, and represent data in a variety of ways.

Learners can give accurate directional instructions when map reading, and, after going on a walk, learners can write up the route, including paragraphs, photos, diagrams, etc.

Learners can develop their data-handling, analysis and evaluation skills. Concepts such as chronological awareness and scale can be developed and discussed, as you look at how human relationships have impacted upon the natural world. Developing simple questionnaires to analyse large data sets can all be supported and developed across Humanities as learners collect and record data.

Digital competence

Humanities give learners the context to plan and create using a range of digital skills as learners work independently or collaborate on the development materials.

Many digital sources of information could be used to examine various themes within Humanities. Learners should show an understanding of purpose and audience as they use a range of software and media to communicate their own knowledge, understanding and personal responses.

Learners should also make use of digital sources of information as a way of enabling them to think about the kinds of future that they would like to see for their locality, Wales and the wider world.

For example, the use of digital information systems as a way of illustrating human-environment relations, or the digital sources that illustrate business commitment to ideas of corporate social responsibility.

As learners increasingly use digital technology to enquire and investigate, ensuring the reliability of these sources is critical as they look to support conclusions.

Welsh dimension and international perspective

The Welsh dimension and international perspective are integral to all disciplines within the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience. An exploration of Welsh businesses, cultures, history, geography, politics, religions, societies, and world views should form a central part of a learners' entitlement and include an understanding of the links between these and wider national, European and international contexts. Through Humanities, learners develop a sense of identity and of their own *cynefin*, as well as an understanding of Wales and its place in the wider world.

The Humanities Area of Learning and Experience plays an important role in allowing learners to engage in rich learning experiences in the Welsh context. School curriculum design should provide detailed and regular coverage of examples, relevant topic areas and case studies to allow learners to explore the Welsh dimension and international perspective.

Humanities supports learners to:

- develop an understanding of Wales and their own understanding of what it means to be Welsh
- study the history, geography, cultures, values, languages and beliefs of Wales, which helps them to make sense of their identity
- examine the connections between different places, humans and the environment
- understand their own place and role as an ethical, informed citizen within Wales and the wider world
- understand what is meant by global citizenship, including their roles and responsibilities as global citizens planning for a sustainable future
- build an understanding of world events and how they have influenced human lives and societies
- understand that, in a diverse, dynamic and changing world, they can make a positive difference helping to build a fairer, safer and more secure world for everyone
- develop a commitment to social justice and social action, within Wales and the wider world.

In Humanities, learners of all ages should be able to engage in learning related to local, national and international dimensions. It should not be the case that the youngest learners should focus exclusively on local studies and only the oldest learners focus on the

international perspective. All learners should have opportunities to ground their understanding of an issue in their locality and then relate it to the international context.

Wider skills

The Humanities Area of Learning and Experience will aim to encourage learners to:

- think about themselves, and their own process of learning, in reflective and critical ways
- appreciate that an understanding of others coupled with an understanding of oneself is central to what matters statements in Humanities
- develop personal effectiveness which includes reflecting on and understanding oneself and others.

Critical thinking and problem-solving

Critical thinking is central to Humanities. Humanities develops learners' abilities to think analytically and understand the past and present as well as to imagine possible futures. Problem-solving could be developed by encouraging learners to collect, and reflect upon, sources of evidence in order to explain the characteristics of a society during a particular time period, or to examine possible solutions to inequalities among social groups.

Creativity and innovation

In Humanities, learners convey information and findings in creative and innovative ways. Learners are encouraged to be open to different ideas and ways of thinking, enabling them to express reasoned opinions about these differences.

Planning and organising, and Personal effectiveness

In Humanities, learners will work with others as they plan investigations involving gathering and utilising a range of evidence. They will develop their own personal effectiveness as important members of a team who are relied upon to contribute by organising and carrying out enquiries. They will also develop this skill as independent learners who are required to evaluate, justify and express their own considered responses in a variety of ways.

Careers and work-related experiences

Learning from careers and labour market information

It is vital for learners to access high-quality careers and labour market information and have an understanding of what this means to them, in order to make well-informed, sustainable career decisions.

The Humanities Area of Learning and Experience comprises the areas of history, geography, religious education, business studies and social studies. While there are many careers that link directly to these areas, the skills developed within Humanities, such as problem-solving, communication, critical thinking, and the ability to evaluate differing perspectives and weigh

up consequences, are valued by a wide range of employers and therefore provide a wide range of opportunities for learners.

Linking the area of learning and experience to careers and work-related experiences

Learners should be encouraged to undertake research and to explore the links between Humanities and the career paths these would open to them. Humanities equips learners with the skills and knowledge necessary to pursue careers related to these disciplines. There are many careers that directly relate to Humanities, such as museum curator, archaeologist, religious leader, diplomat, teacher, meteorologist, geologist, manager, financial adviser and business analyst. More importantly, the transferable skills which sit at the heart of Humanities contribute to the preparation of a workforce for professions and jobs that do not yet exist in order to meet the needs of new and emerging careers.

The skills developed within the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience are transferable, highly valued and sought after in the wider employment market. Humanities enables learners to become ethically informed citizens who are ready for life and work, contributes to learners' readiness for working life by developing skills and techniques, including the use of geographical information systems, using and creating maps, conducting surveys, analysing data, carrying out investigations, analysis of evidence and argument, detecting bias and prejudice, and constructing an argument or interpretation of events based on evidence.

Humanities help learners to understand diversity and to challenge stereotypes in order to raise learners' aspirations and belief in their potential future.

Learner progression relating to careers and work-related experiences is part of a continuum of learning for learners aged 3 to 16. Success for a young primary school learner could include:

- acting a variety of different jobs through role play
- belief that they can do any job – tackling gender stereotyping
- communicating with people in their community about the different jobs they do and the rewards that a job can bring.

By progressing learning, success for 16-year-old learners could include:

- demonstrating and applying the skills learned in relation to the world of work
- identifying interests, strengths and skills to make informed post-16 choices
- understanding and demonstrating the behaviours an employer looks for in a good employee
- evaluating risks when developing a business idea and exploring different methods of setting up and sustaining an enterprise.

Work-related experiences

Learners develop interests, strengths, skills and aspirations through experiences as part of the curriculum and life beyond school. A range of partners support these exciting journeys

through co-design and co-delivery and together shape children and young people's decisions about their future and the pathways they follow. Opportunities, such as visits, guest speakers and practical activities, can help enhance and contextualise learning.

Humanities helps learners foster an understanding of employment rights, ethical entrepreneurship, business ethics, money lending/borrowing, and promoting sustainable green industrial processes and practices.

Collaboration and access to individuals and employers, for example in local government, hospitality, law practitioners, banks and building societies, teaching, health and safety, can provide learners with opportunities to learn about work, employment and the skills valued in the workplace.

Learners can use the knowledge and skills gained in taking part in work-related experiences to develop successful enterprise activities. In Humanities these can provide authentic learning experiences that develop learners as creative, enterprising contributors, and enable them to form links to the world of work.

Understanding post-16 and higher education opportunities

It is essential for learners to be aware of all opportunities available to them post-16. Therefore, as well as understanding about employment, training and apprenticeships, learners should be provided with information and the opportunity to engage with a range of learning providers. Opportunities for engagement should include attending careers and skills fairs, talks from and visits to further and higher education providers, as well as presentations from students in further or higher education. Learners should be directed to online research tools that provide course and progression information to support their understanding of the range of learning opportunities available, to help raise their aspirations and form a basis on which informed decisions can be made.

Relationships and sexuality education

The Humanities Area of Learning and Experience will be a natural place to embed content relating to relationships and sexuality education. Enquiry within Humanities enables critical questioning and provides opportunities to seek and find meaning about human experiences and the world. This includes exploring personal relationships, rights, shared values, gender and sexuality. Humanities enables learners to consider issues from a variety of perspectives. It also provides a safe environment to explore equality and non-discrimination, and opportunities to discuss sensitive issues, e.g. gender-based violence and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C). In Humanities there will be opportunities to develop understanding of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and for encouraging learners to recognise their own and others' rights.

Relationships

Humanities encourages positive attitudes toward other people whereby others are treated respectfully regardless of their ethnicity; race; social, economic or immigration status; religion; disability; sexual orientation; gender identity or expression; or sex characteristics.

Values, rights, culture and sexuality

The Humanities Area of Learning and Experience explores attitudes, values and laws within societies including discussion of sexuality and sexual behaviour, gender equality, diversity and human rights. There will be opportunities to explore rights and their history and the social, psychological, spiritual, religious, political, legal, historic, ethical and cultural dimensions that influence sexuality over a lifespan. Humanities addresses discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity and offers learners opportunities to explore their own and others' cultures.

Understanding gender

Humanities enables learners to build awareness of the centrality and diversity of gender and to understand how gender norms have been shaped by society, culture and beliefs.

Violence and staying safe

Humanities provides learners with the opportunity to understand the challenges facing people in Wales and the wider world. In Humanities there is a focus upon commitment toward social action as caring, participative citizens of local, national and global communities. Learning within Humanities will examine commitment to justice and diversity, the importance of responding appropriately to violence, staying safe, and promoting peace and security for others within communities and societies. Digital humanities can focus on the positive and harmful effects of social media, and how people can portray themselves safely and securely online.

Skills for health and well-being

Humanities includes discussions about individuals, societies and the world which includes the need to become empathetic, ethical, informed citizens who contribute to safe, healthy, positive relationships. Humanities experiences, knowledge and skills promote good health and well-being. Humanities explores social and gender norms and how peer influence can affect sexual decision-making and behaviour. Enquiry in Humanities gives opportunities for understanding that there are different forms of media, which present information and interpretations which may or may not be entirely valid. This will show that media can positively or negatively influence values, attitudes and norms about sexuality and gender.

The human body and development

In Humanities there is an opportunity to explore how all cultures have different ways of understanding sex, gender, well-being, including body image, reproduction, and when it is appropriate to become sexually active.

Sexuality and sexual behaviour

Humanities could consider how sexuality is complex and includes biological, social, psychological, spiritual, ethical and cultural dimensions that evolve over the lifespan.

Sexual and reproductive health

Every society, culture and generation has its own beliefs about sexual behaviours and it is important to know the facts.

Religious education

Religious education is a mandatory part of the current basic curriculum for 5 to 16-year-olds. Community schools, foundation schools and voluntary schools without a religious character must follow the agreed syllabus. An agreed syllabus conference develops the curriculum content for religious education in each local authority area.

Foundation schools and voluntary controlled schools with a religious character must also provide religious education in accordance with the agreed syllabus unless parents/carers request that their child be provided with religious education in accordance with the trust deed for the school or, if there is no trust deed, in accordance with the tenets of the religion.

Foundation schools and voluntary aided schools with a religious character must provide religious education in accordance with the trust deed for the school or, if there is no trust deed, in accordance with the tenets of the religion. However, if the parents/carers request it, and if no other local school is able to provide it, the governing body of the school shall, as far as reasonably possible, provide religious education in accordance with the agreed syllabus.

In proposals for Curriculum for Wales 2022, religious education will continue to be compulsory. There is currently an exemption from religious education for registered learners in Nursery classes.

It is proposed that the exemption be repealed. We do not propose that funded non-maintained settings will be required to teach the agreed syllabus but they will have to have regard to guidance as to how best this could be taught.

We do not intend to make any change to the requirement for schools to deliver the agreed syllabus. Voluntary aided schools with a religious character will continue to be able to deliver their denomination syllabi and parents/carers of learners attending voluntary controlled schools can continue to request that their child studies the denominational syllabus rather than the locally agreed syllabus if they wish.

A new supporting framework is being developed to provide further detail about the relationship between religious education, the agreed syllabus, and the areas of learning and experience. This is being taken forward by a group of religious education practitioners, curriculum pioneers, academics, and representatives from Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs) and the National Advisory Panel for Religious Education (NAPFRE).

It is our intention also that religious education reflects our historical and contemporary relationship in Wales to philosophy and religious views, including non-religious beliefs.

Therefore the current legislation will be amended to ensure the agreed syllabus for religious education takes account of non-religious world views which are analogous to religions (e.g. humanism).

Enrichment and experiences

Learners should have access to a broad range of experiences and enrichment opportunities. The Humanities Area of Learning and Experience should encourage all learners to feel engaged in and have ownership of their learning.

Meaningful engagement with communities can be enjoyable and memorable. For example, experiential learning gives learners opportunities to engage in role play or to participate in activities such as celebrations or re-enactments. Learners should have opportunities to consider what influences people as they respond to ethical dilemmas, solve real and present problems or explore past events.

Learners should experience the wonder and mystery of the natural world, historical locations, and religious and cultural sites. They should experience playing and learning in and exploring rich indoor and outdoor environments. Humanities uses field trips and visits within the local community and further afield as a starting point to teach key concepts or to enhance learning through first-hand experience. Speaking to visitors and experts, using observation and participation in experiential learning, such as cultural activities, helps all children and young people to learn about human experiences.

Putting the area of learning and experience into practice

The four purposes of the curriculum are the key drivers for developing the Humanities curriculum. Therefore, teachers must consider how their teaching and programmes of learning contribute to the development of these characteristics within learners in Wales.

As a matter of principle, practitioners should be free to decide on the organisation of this area of learning and experience, and the choice of content to be covered. This autonomy allows for content to be adapted to suit the differing needs of learners. This allows for flexibility and greater opportunities to ensure that learners' input can help shape their learning. It is also worth bearing in mind that any content or topic area can be taught at any point on the continuum.

Key concepts and ideas should regularly and explicitly be revisited in order to consolidate and deepen understanding. Schools should select content to ensure there is increasing range as learners progress through school so that the key concepts can be explored more thoroughly. Revisiting concepts should not be repetitive, however, but should provide ever more complex challenges, allowing learners to access new experiences, knowledge and skills.

School curriculum design should ensure that learners' locality and Welsh contexts and experiences are seen as significant and central to planning.

Content should also be selected to ensure that learners are able to make connections within and between the what matters statements in this area of learning and experience, and to ensure progression in the skills identified in the progression steps. Schools and teachers should also ensure that they select content that:

- allows learners to gain a thorough understanding of their locality, of Wales and the wider world
- is intrinsically interesting, relevant and stimulating for learners
- meets the purposes of the curriculum and the wider purposes of education in terms of life skills and work skills, and essential social, economic, political and cultural understanding
- covers events, people and processes that have had considerable effects
- promotes higher-order thinking, conceptual development and enquiry skills
- facilitates authentic experiences that support the development of the types of knowledge and skills learners are likely to need in the future
- provides opportunities for both broad topic areas, and more detailed studies
- provides opportunities for links between what matters statements in Humanities and other areas of learning and experience.

At ages 14 to 16, this area of learning and experience will allow learners to follow their interests in more depth as they progress, so that they can specialise in one or more discipline, while also maintaining a broad humanities entitlement. Individual disciplines will naturally become more visible in Progression steps 4 and 5, and such specialisation will involve an increase in depth of disciplinary knowledge, complex skills and enriched experiences.

This will also pave the way for further specialisation during further and higher education, and in the world of work. Greater specialisation in individual disciplines should not lead to a narrowing of the curriculum, however. All what matters statements remain central to those disciplines.

The continuation of a degree of breadth at ages 14 to 16 takes the statutory nature of religious education into account.