

Modern Languages K–10 Draft Syllabus Engagement Report

November 2022

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Published by:
NSW Education Standards Authority
GPO Box 5300
SYDNEY NSW 2001
AUSTRALIA

www.educationstandards.nsw.edu.au

D2022/143509

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Introduction

The NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) has redeveloped the *Modern Languages K–10 Draft Syllabus* guided by our revised [syllabus development process](#) in response to the recommendations of the NSW Curriculum Review (Masters 2020).

The purpose of this engagement report is to document the feedback received from *Modern Languages K–10 Draft Syllabus* consultation and the actions taken by NESA in response to the feedback.

The consultation process began with the release of the draft syllabus on 19 March 2022. Stakeholders were invited to participate in public and targeted consultation activities.

Consultation methodology

NESA's consultation on the *Modern Languages K–10 Draft Syllabus* commenced on 19 March 2022 and concluded on 2 May 2022. Information about the consultation process and opportunities to provide feedback were made available on the NESA website, in *NESA News*, through emails to key education stakeholders, and on NESA social media.

Specific information regarding consultation activities is provided in the appendices.

Technical Advisory Group

The role of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) is to provide expert advice and assure the quality of the outcomes and content of the draft syllabus to NESA and the Curriculum and Credentials Committee (CACC), as part of NESA's new syllabus development processes.

Each TAG member:

- received successive drafts of the syllabus and provided feedback on each revision
- provided advice about Modern Languages specific outcomes and content (suitability, relevance, accuracy, authenticity) in the *Modern Languages K–10 Draft Syllabus*
- provided advice about any controversial matters that may have arisen during consultation on the *Modern Languages K–10 Draft Syllabus*.

[Appendix 1](#) lists the TAG members for Modern Languages K–10.

Governance

The NESA Curriculum and Credentials Committee (CACC) exercises a delegated function on behalf of the Board, primarily to endorse syllabuses developed by NESA for the Minister's approval, as part of the program of Curriculum Reform.

The CACC endorses the syllabuses and provides advice to the Minister regarding the syllabus submitted for approval. It also provides advice to the Board on processes for syllabus review and development, endorses Higher School Certificate (HSC) examination specifications, and matters relating to educational measurement for the HSC.

On 5 October 2022 the *Modern Languages K–10 Syllabus* was presented to the CACC for endorsement and this Engagement Report was presented for noting.

Public consultation

Online survey

An online survey was used to collect feedback from stakeholders about the *Modern Languages K–10 Draft Syllabus*. Survey respondents had the opportunity to provide feedback collected as both quantitative and qualitative data. There were 136 survey responses received (see [Appendix 2](#) and [Appendix 3](#)).

Targeted consultation

Targeted focus groups were held with specific groups to ensure feedback was inclusive of diverse student learners and to gather additional advice (see [Appendix 4](#)).

Four targeted consultation meetings took place between 28 March 2022 and 2 May 2022 for the following groups:

- Aboriginal Education stakeholders
- Diversity stakeholders
- Subject associations
- Teacher Expert Networks (TENs).

The targeted focus group meeting agendas included a briefing from NESA officers involved in leading the syllabus development process. Following the briefing, participants were invited to provide feedback. The design of questions, meeting format and collection of data were dependent on the focus of the targeted meeting.

Feedback from sectors

Sector Reference Groups (SeRGs) were informed of the progress of syllabus development and consulted on matters relating to syllabus implementation. Nine written submissions were received from the sectors that provided constructive and valuable feedback, which was used to further refine the syllabus after the consultation period.

Reporting on consultation

The data generated during the consultation period included quantitative and qualitative data which were analysed separately. The quantitative data was analysed to identify trends. The qualitative data, including survey feedback and meeting notes, was analysed to identify recurrent themes.

The strengths and key matters presented in this report were determined based on the relevance of the feedback (Appendices 1–5) to the scope of the project, and the salience and frequency of the matters raised. Minor matters raised during consultation, such as edits, errors of fact and terminology, will be amended but may not be represented in the report.

Summary of results and actions taken

Analysis of the quantitative Likert scale data in the online survey and targeted feedback showed general support for the new syllabus with areas identified for further refinement. Key concerns were expressed about the ambiguity of the content and the lack of language-specific examples. It was suggested the syllabus name Modern Languages be changed to Languages.

Strengths

The new syllabus framework was identified as a strength, acknowledging its flexibility to meet student needs and interests and provide schools the opportunity to teach any modern language. The focus on communication, reducing the number of outcomes and the use of headings to group the content were seen as strengths. Stakeholders indicated that fewer outcomes would allow students to develop depth of knowledge. The examples with differentiation for beginner, intermediate and advanced levels were well received by all stakeholders indicating they would provide teachers with greater scope to meet the needs of students.

Access content points for students working towards Early Stage 1 outcomes were identified as a strength and the Years 7–10 Life Skills content was supported. References to Aboriginal histories and cultures and the building of identity connected to culture was identified as a strength.

It was acknowledged that the focus areas were appropriate and would provide opportunities for students to develop their communication skills and intercultural capability.

Key matters

Themes that emerged from consultation included the need for language-specific content examples, and grammar. This was particularly evident for teachers of Japanese. Concerns were raised that the syllabus content lacked clarity and there was insufficient emphasis on knowledge of the language system. The transition between Stage 3 and Stage 4 was identified as an opportunity for improvement. Advice for learner entry at different levels was requested.

Stakeholders suggested renaming the syllabus to Languages as Modern Languages was perceived to exclude ancient languages such as Arabic and Chinese. Stakeholders requested an explanation of proficiency levels and more aligned differentiated examples for beginner, intermediate and advanced learners.

Actions taken

Targeted consultation to seek advice and review actions on feedback was sought from Teacher Expert Networks (TENs), critical friends, representatives from the Languages Sector Reference Group (SeRG) and the Technical Advisory Group (TAG). Outcomes have been refined and progression across stages has been addressed. Content has been strengthened and knowledge of the language system has been made more explicit. Language-specific examples and advice on teaching grammar will be provided as support material to complement the syllabus content.

Draft syllabus feedback and NESA responses

Summary of feedback received from 19 March to 2 May 2022

The following is an overview of the feedback received during consultation.

Strengths of the draft syllabus

Feedback	Sources
Fewer outcomes that provide increased opportunity for depth of learning.	Submissions Survey TENS
The framework is flexible and consistent for all modern languages.	Submissions Survey TAG
Language proficiency levels with differentiated content examples in content, including in the Years 7–10 Life Skills content.	Diversity Submission Survey
Explicit focus on communication and intercultural capability.	Aboriginal Education Subject associations Submission Survey
The Access content points are well considered.	Diversity Survey TAG

Key matters

Key matters	Sources	Response to the key matters	NESA actions
Request that the syllabus name <i>Modern Languages</i> is changed to reflect languages that are currently used and have been in use for many centuries. Suggested name <i>Languages</i> .	Subject associations Submissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The term modern language is used to describe any language that is currently in use. Languages is the name of the Key Learning Area (KLA) encompassing 4 separate syllabuses and Modern Languages is one of the syllabuses within the KLA. It is also the term used within the languages teaching community nationally to name the professional teaching associations (eg Modern Language Teachers' Association of NSW). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain Modern Languages as title. A modern language is any language that is currently in use. This definition is included in the syllabus and glossary.
Course diagram unclear.	Subject associations Submissions	NESA officers have refined the diagram. This has been reviewed by critical friends.	A new course overview diagram is included.
Definition of proficiency levels and entry point advice required.	Subject associations Submission Survey TENs	Supported.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching advice will be provided that explains the proficiency levels. Advice on entry points will be provided in the course overview.

Key matters	Sources	Response to the key matters	NESA actions
Some terminology unclear including mediating, modelled language, simple texts, familiar and unfamiliar.	Subject associations Submissions Survey TAG TENS	NESA officers have reviewed terminology identified as being unclear.	A definition of relevant terminology will be provided in the glossary or explained in teaching advice.
Advice required for teachers on how to make adjustments for students with vision impairment, in relation to visual aspects of the syllabus, eg nonverbal communication (gestures, actions etc).	Diversity Submission	Advice will be provided as support material or teaching advice.	The development of advice relating to teaching interacting has been included in the support material scope.
Vignettes or illustrative activities about how to teach the syllabus, including the access content points, are required.	Diversity Submission	Supported.	Advice will be provided in a professional learning module.
No reference to play in Early Stage 1 interacting outcome and over emphasis of modelled language in outcomes for Early Stage 1 to Stage 3.	Submissions Survey TAG	NESA officers sought advice from critical friends.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reference to play-based learning has been added to the Early Stage 1 interacting outcome. ▪ The reference to modelled language in Stage 3 was removed.

Key matters	Sources	Response to the key matters	NESA actions
Knowledge of culture in outcome needs to be reviewed. Emphasis should be on intercultural understanding.	Submissions Survey TAG	NESA sought advice from critical friends and TAG to determine how best to represent culture in the outcomes.	Outcomes have been rewritten to clarify the intent of the application of cultural knowledge.
Concern that the progression from Stage 3 to Stage 4 was too ambitious and there was not enough content in Stage 5 to adequately prepare students for Stage 6.	Subject associations Submissions Survey TENS	NESA officers sought advice from critical friends.	Stage 3, 4 and 5 outcomes and content have been refined to provide better progression.
Some of the content is unclear and ambiguous. Knowledge of the language system including the writing system for scripted languages needs more emphasis in the content.	Subject associations Submissions Survey TAG TENS	Supported. NESA officers sought advice from critical friends to determine best approach to improving content.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Content has been strengthened and made more explicit and appropriate to the outcomes. ▪ Additional content on linguistic knowledge has been added.
Concern that there were insufficient language-specific examples and inconsistencies with the alignment of the beginner/intermediate/advanced examples.	Subject associations Submissions Survey TENS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The framework covers all languages, target language specific examples will be included in the support material. ▪ NESA officers agreed examples need better alignment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support material for all languages currently offered by NESA will be developed. ▪ Examples will be written for Stage 4 French in the first instance to provide teachers with a guide to the type of support material being developed. ▪ Differentiated content examples that indicate linguistic and/or cognitive progression are now included in the syllabus.

Appendices – Engagement participation

Appendix 1: Modern Languages K–10 Technical Advisory Group Engagement

The Technical Advisory Group (TAG) acquired ongoing feedback over a 12-month period from experienced teacher practitioners and other experts in the Modern Languages area. The TAG met 8 times to provide this ongoing feedback.

Technical Advisory Group members

Expert	Organisation
Ruth Fielding	Senior Lecturer in TESOL and Languages Education, Faculty of Education Monash University
Leanne Gennat	Leader of Pedagogy, St John Paul College, Coffs Harbour
Lesley Harbon	Head of School, International Studies and Education, University of Technology Sydney (UTS)
Phillipa Johnson	Eileen O'Connor Catholic College
Elisabeth Robertson	Educational Standards Directorate, NSW Department of Education
Tomoko Takahata	NSW School of Languages
Merryl Wahlin	Sydney Institute for Community Languages Education (SICLE) University of Sydney
Elizabeth Wang	Hurstville Public School

Appendix 2: Online survey demographic data

NESA received **136 responses** to the Modern Languages K–10 survey

Each of the **3 education sectors** were represented

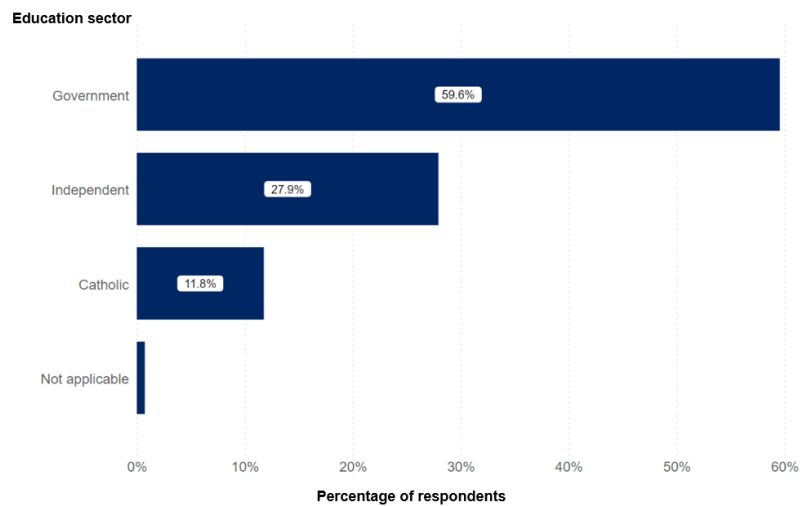


Figure 1: Educational sector of respondents to the Modern Languages K–10 'Have your say' survey

Respondents came from a range of education contexts, with a majority of **68.3% being secondary school teachers**

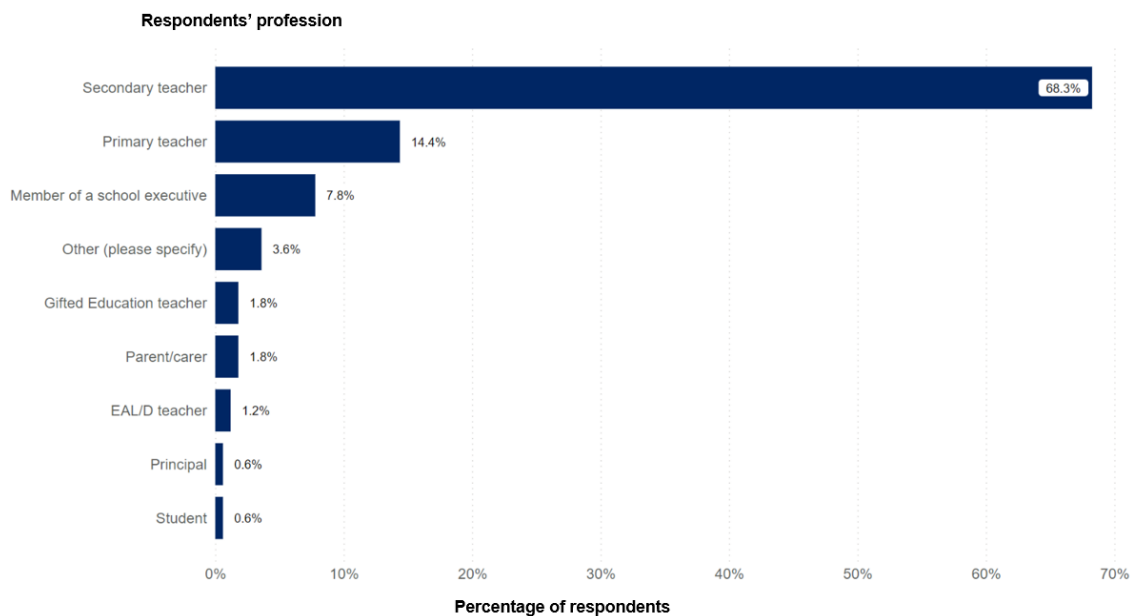


Figure 2: Profession of respondents to the Modern Languages K–10 'Have your say' survey

Of participants who are teachers, teaching experience varied, with more than **39% of respondents having taught for more than 20 years**

Number of years as a practising teacher

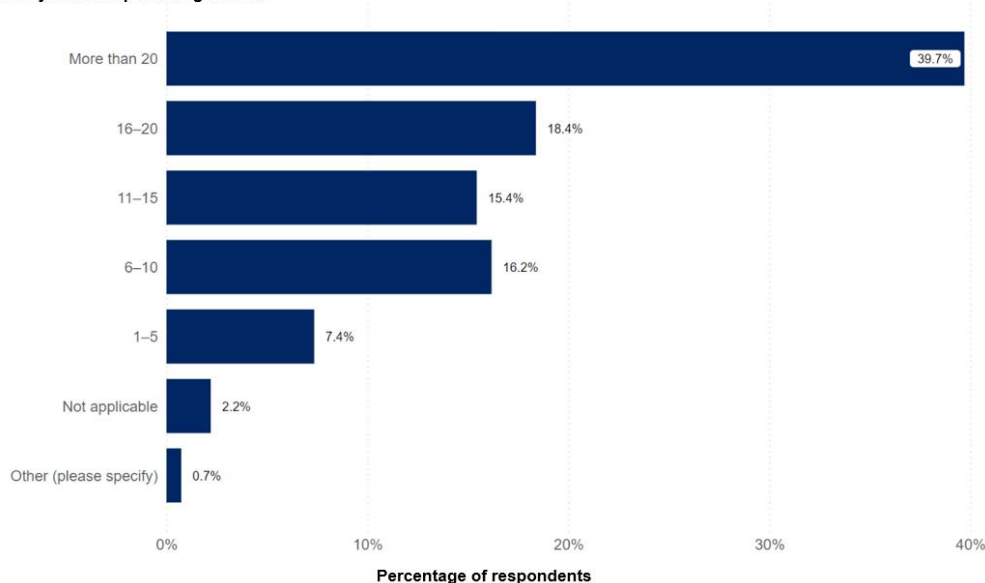


Figure 3: Number of years as a practising teacher for respondents to the Modern Languages K–10 ‘Have your say’ survey

Stakeholders across **New South Wales** participated with **59% of respondents** coming from the **Greater Sydney area**

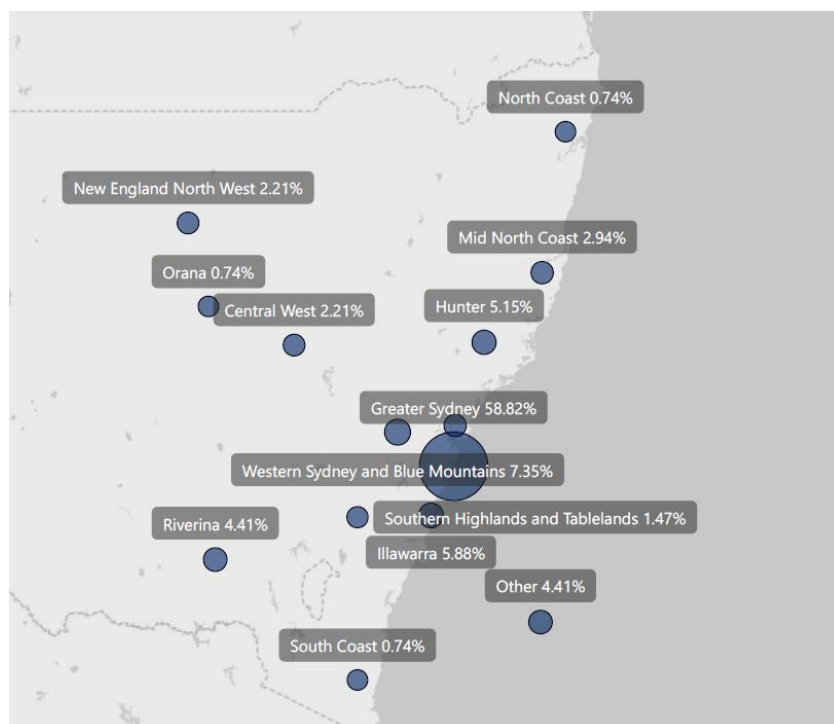


Figure 4: Map of New South Wales with the location and percentage of respondents to the Modern Languages K–10 ‘Have your say’ survey

Appendix 3: Online survey quantitative data

Figures 5, 6, 7 and 8 provide an overview of survey quantitative data gathered on the outcomes and content.

Rationale and aim

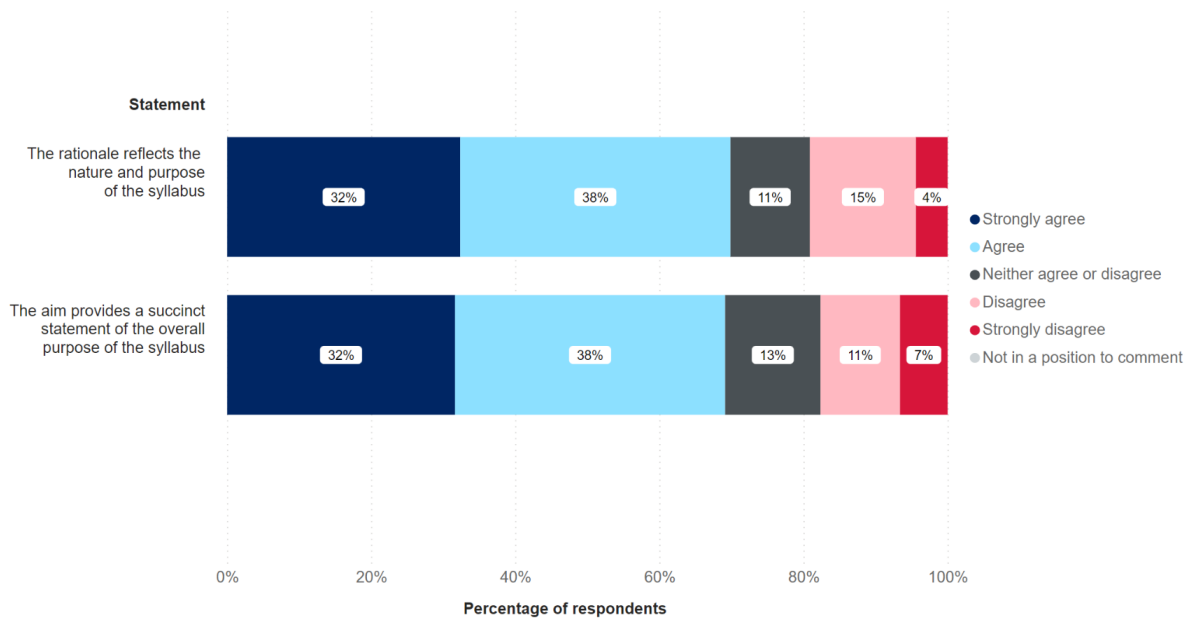


Figure 5: Percentage breakdown of responses to the question 'Do you agree with the following statements?'

Outcomes and content

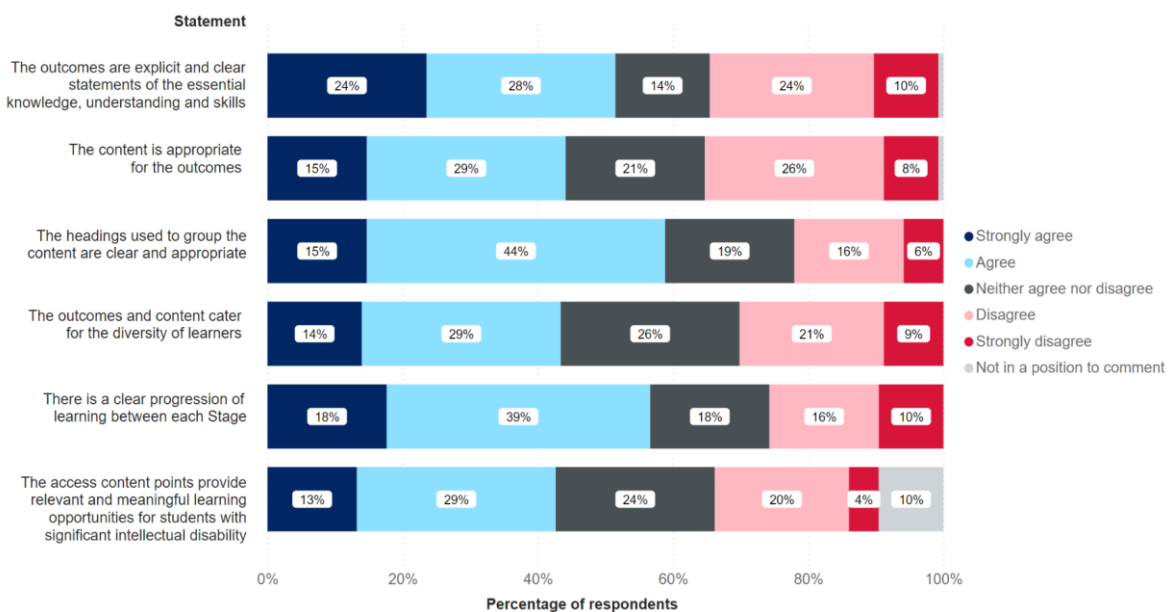


Figure 6: Percentage breakdown of responses to the question 'To what extent do you agree with the following statements for the outcomes and content?'

Life Skills outcomes and content

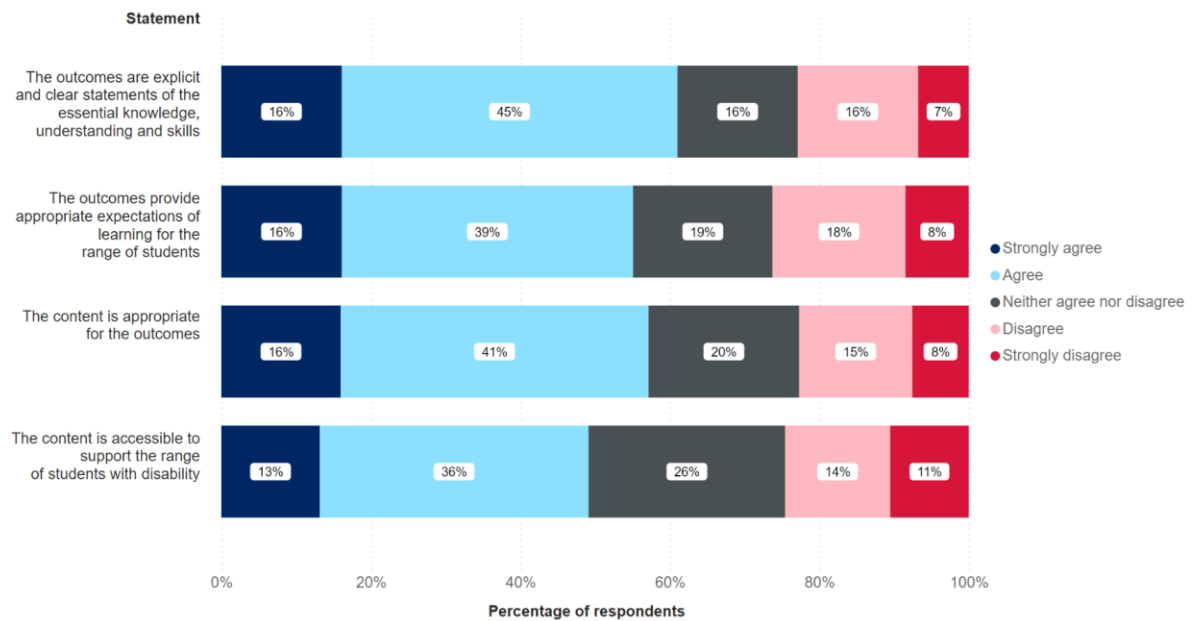


Figure 7: Percentage breakdown of responses to the question ‘To what extent do you agree with the following statements for the Life Skills outcomes and content?’

Government recommendations

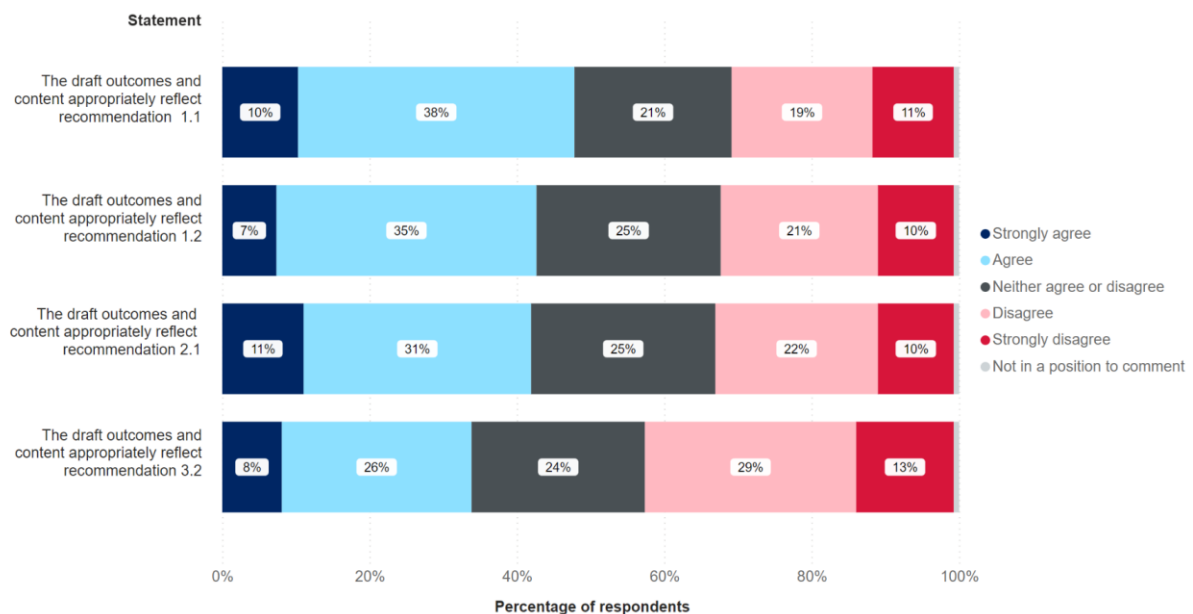


Figure 8: Percentage breakdown of responses to the question ‘To what extent do you agree with the following statements?’

Appendix 4: Targeted focus groups

A total of 4 focus groups were held during the 'Have your say' period. These targeted focus group meetings sought feedback from expert stakeholders on the *Modern Languages K–10 Syllabus*.

Group type	Code	Location	Date (2022)	Number of attendees
<p>Diversity (Disability)</p> <p>This focus group acquired feedback from stakeholders about whether the syllabus meets the needs of students with disability.</p>	Diversity	Online	29 March	5
<p>Aboriginal Education</p> <p>This focus group acquired feedback from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.</p>	Aboriginal Ed	Online	30 March	3
<p>Diversity (EAL/D and Gifted)</p> <p>This focus group was intended to acquire feedback from stakeholders on whether the syllabus meets the needs of EAL/D students and gifted and talented students.</p>	Diversity	Online	1 April	Cancelled due to low numbers
<p>Subject Associations</p> <p>This focus group acquired feedback from various subject associations for modern languages.</p>	Subject Association	Online	5 April	14
<p>Teacher Expert Networks</p> <p>The Teacher Expert Networks (TENs) and friends targeted focus group provided feedback in relation to the syllabus outcomes and content.</p>	TENs	Online	2 May	14

Appendix 5: Submissions

Organisation, groups and individuals
Association of Independent Schools of NSW (AISNSW)
Australian Association of Special Education (AASE)
NSW Department of Education (DoE)
Modern Language Teachers Association NSW (MLTANSW)
NSW Teachers Federation (NSWTF)
Secondary College of Languages (SCL)
Japanese Teachers Association NSW (JTAN)
Sydney Institute for Community Languages Education (SICLE)
Secondary Principals' Association (SPA)