

Educational Value Standard for Digital Resources

May 2026



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1 Introduction

The *Education Value Standard for Digital Resources* (2026) represents a significant revision of the 2012 edition, informed by more than a decade of changes in educational practice, resource design, and system expectations. Since the initial standard was published, teaching and learning environments have evolved considerably – driven by advances in digital technologies, an expanded ecosystem of resource types, shifts in curriculum and pedagogical priorities, and the development of new standards.

This updated draft also responds to a growing systemwide awareness of the importance of safety, wellbeing, and responsible use in the selection and application of learning resources. As schools interact with an increasingly complex mix of digital platforms, third party content, and data enabled tools, ensuring that resources uphold learner dignity, protect privacy, and minimise risk has become an essential dimension of educational value. These safety expectations now sit alongside traditional criteria such as pedagogical quality, alignment, and accessibility.

Importantly, the revised standard provides a set of overarching criteria that are intended to work in concert with existing system, sector, and subject specific quality assurance processes. It does not replace those processes; rather, it offers a coherent umbrella framework that supports consistency, transparency, and shared expectations across varied contexts. The standard helps educators, resource creators, selectors, and reviewers evaluate how well a resource supports the learning needs of diverse learners, is credible and accurate, aligns to curriculum intent, meets expected standards and ensures safe and appropriate use.

Developed in consultation with the Australian government and non-government school authority representatives of the National Online Services Working Group and informed by contemporary research, policy developments, and practitioner expertise, this edition aims to strengthen system-wide understanding of what “educational value” means in today’s learning environments.

1.1 Purpose

The *Educational value standard* establishes some benchmarks for evaluating the intrinsic value of digital resources developed for professional and student audiences in Australian schools.

The Standard is primarily intended to guide the practice of those who develop or procure digital curriculum resources for use within the Australian school context. It is not intended to guide the decisions students, teachers or school leaders make when they select resources for use, although it may be of value for that purpose.

2 Principles

This standard is underpinned by four principles:

1. focus
2. integrity
3. alignment
4. safety.



By their very nature, these principles are interconnected, interdependent and overlapping.

2.1 Focus

Educationally valuable digital resources focus on the learning needs of their intended audience

This principle recognises that users, be they students, teachers, school leaders or a combination of these groups, should be considered the central factor in determining whether a digital resource has educational value.

The principle acknowledges the range of contexts in which learning and development take place and the diversity of student, teacher and school leader populations and their needs. It helps ensure that users have access to educationally valuable resources that are inclusive of users' age, socioeconomic status, race, culture, disability, gender or geographic location.

The principle is founded on a recognition that the mechanisms of learning are the same for all learners. Some students experience persistent difficulties or differences in processing information that necessitate more frequent, intense and sustained scaffolding and support, but all students benefit from evidence-based practices that align with the processes of acquiring, retaining, retrieving and consolidating learning.

Digital educational resources achieve focus on the learning needs of their intended audience when they are:

- contextual – they have purpose and meaning for the intended audience and fit into a learning approach based on the audience's prior understandings and likely future development
- inclusive – when their language and other features (where applicable) are inclusive of the intended audience.

2.2 Integrity

Educationally valuable digital resources have integrity

This principle acknowledges that the integrity of the resource is a critical component of its educational value.

Integrity is achieved when:

- the content of the resource has accuracy and credibility. For example, if a text resource claims to be a timeline of Australian history, it achieves integrity only when the events selected and chronicled are currently accepted to be significant in Australian history and are accurately dated, described and placed in the right order.
- the resource is authentic. For example, a resource claiming to help teachers reach the Proficient career stage achieves integrity only when it describes and reflects standards at the proficient level in professional knowledge, practice and engagement.
- the source of a digital resource and its content is reputable, current and accurate.



2.3 Alignment

Educationally valuable digital resources are aligned to Australian or state/territory curriculum, pedagogical frameworks or professional standards.

This principle recognises that alignment is vital to ensure that digital educational resources successfully promote the learning and development of students, teachers or school leaders required within the Australian school context. A resource achieves alignment when it can be clearly identified within the resource.

It recognises that even if a resource achieves educational value in relation to focus and integrity, it is unlikely to be used unless it also achieves alignment.

2.4 Safety

Educationally valuable digital resources are aligned with current safety principles and standards.

This principle recognises that digital resources and their host platforms must be assessed for risk before they can be used within the Australian school context.

It acknowledges that beyond the content value of a resource, assessment should consider potential risks of the hosting platform including whether it contains unfiltered or inappropriate advertising or referrals and whether and where it collects and stores student data.

3 Criteria

The criteria that follow have been developed from the principles on the preceding pages. The first criterion or criteria in each set (marked in bold) represents the mandatory standard a resource must achieve for it to be considered educationally valuable.

3.1 Focus

A resource demonstrates focus when it is developmentally appropriate, inclusive, coherent, and supports meaningful learning.

A resource demonstrates focus on the needs of its intended audience when it:

- reflects their stage of development within the content of the resource or its descriptive metadata
- can be used within an evidence-based learning approach that is inclusive of its intended users
- is a coherent learning experience for the intended user
- delivers on its intended outcome (stated or implicit).

Resources with high levels of interactivity and complexity, such as interactive games, apps or online professional learning modules also demonstrate focus in the learning design when they:

- enable the audience to interact with, organise, represent, interpret, manage and reflect



upon the process of learning as appropriate to their age and developmental stage of the users/students by:

- › making choices and decisions
- › inquiring, investigating and problem solving
- › eliciting and receiving relevant, timely and informative feedback
- › interpreting, developing and presenting meaningful and useful products
- › applying knowledge, skills and/or understandings in a range of contexts
- › creating and thinking creatively (if appropriate to the task and users).
- make explicit and consolidate the process of learning and development by
 - › structuring informational content to scaffold learning and development
 - › enabling users to engage at varying levels of complexity
 - › reflecting an awareness of the varying educational environments in which the resource may be used
 - › providing opportunities to revisit learning in multiple ways
 - › facilitating assessment of how learning and development are progressing.
- contextualise learning and development by
 - › establishing connections with prior and likely future learning
 - › making explicit to the user the connections between the resource content and the learning intention
 - › supporting communication, activity and collaborative action, both online and offline
 - › allowing offline data inputs to directly influence the resource's responses, behaviour and outputs
 - › using situations that the user recognises as authentic or typical of the genre, where appropriate
 - › applying concepts of universal design for learning
 - › utilising the capacity of multimedia to support user acquisition of standard Australian English and/or professional vocabulary
 - › providing specific language support for users whose first language is not English
 - › requiring a reasonable amount of time and effort to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Where the resource is a tool, it demonstrates focus on its intended users when the users of the tool have the ability to interact with/modify the tool's content, processes, activities and outputs.

3.2 Integrity

A resource demonstrates integrity when it is accurate, verifiable, reputable, transparent about perspectives, representing disciplinary knowledge while supporting users to understand different viewpoints.

A resource demonstrates integrity when:

- it actually is what it says it is and does what it says it will do
- the information it provides can be verified
- it comes from a reputable source
- any hypotheses, theories, perspectives and points of view it presents are identified as such
- the reasons for presenting any contestable or biased issues, images or text are made clear, and warnings are added where appropriate.



At the end of the continuum where the resource has a high level of interactivity and complexity, it also demonstrates integrity when its learning design:

- accurately represents the ways of knowing and conceptualising within a domain or discipline
- uses the language and symbols of the discipline or domain and its ways of representation, and supports users in developing and using them
- supports users' retention of knowledge and understanding within the discipline or domain
- assists the user with identifying and differentiating between different points of view and perspectives presented.

3.3 Alignment

A resource demonstrates alignment when it clearly fits relevant curriculum, professional standards or learning frameworks, supported by evidence-based pedagogies.

Where a resource has a high level of interactivity and complexity, it also demonstrates alignment when:

- the purpose, process and intended outcomes of the required learning or development are explicit
- the medium is designed to maximise the opportunities for the audience to achieve the required learning outcomes
- content is constructed in manageable and meaningful concept chunks to facilitate the required learning.

3.4 Safety

A resource demonstrates safety when its content, interactions, data practices and platform environment are appropriate, secure, and free from harmful or inappropriate material.

A resource is considered educationally appropriate for school use when:

- content is age and developmentally appropriate for the intended audience
- potentially sensitive topics are addressed in an appropriate and respectful way
- it is free from harmful content e.g., offensive, discriminatory or unethical material including referred links
- it excludes advertising that is unmoderated, exploitative or inappropriate for a school audience
- interactive elements such as forums or chats are appropriately moderated
- it is published on certified and secure web domains free from unsolicited downloads
- it ensures that any personal data collected is protected and used responsibly, adhering to current privacy laws, standards and guidelines.



4 Educational Value Standard graphic

EDUCATIONAL VALUE A resource's capacity to successfully promote learning and development by students, teachers or school leaders within the Australian school context.			
FOCUS	INTEGRITY	ALIGNMENT	SAFETY
Educationally valuable digital resources focus on the learning needs of their intended audience Mandatory Criteria: A resource demonstrates focus when it is developmentally appropriate, inclusive, coherent, and supports meaningful learning.	Educationally valuable digital resources have integrity Mandatory Criteria: A resource demonstrates integrity when it is accurate, verifiable, reputable, transparent about perspectives, representing disciplinary knowledge while supporting users to understand different viewpoints.	Educationally valuable digital resources are aligned to Australian or state/territory curriculum, pedagogical frameworks or professional standards. Mandatory Criteria: A resource demonstrates alignment when it clearly fits relevant curriculum, professional standards or learning frameworks, supported by evidence-based pedagogies.	Educationally valuable digital resources are aligned with current safety principles and standards. Mandatory Criteria: A resource demonstrates safety when its content, interactions, data practices and platform environment are appropriate, secure, and free from harmful or inappropriate material.

Figure 1 Graphic description of the Educational Value Standard (2026)