

Australian Education Senior Officials Committee Terms of Reference

<p>Purpose</p>	<p>The Australian Education Senior Officials Committee (AESOC) is the primary subcommittee of senior officials supporting the Education Ministers Meeting.</p> <p>AESOC is directly responsible to the Education Ministers Meeting for the execution of its decisions. Specifically, AESOC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides policy advice to the Education Ministers Meeting • Oversees decision making for the implementation of policy decisions of Education Ministers • Supervises and coordinates Education Ministers Meeting work as outlined in the Education Ministers Meeting work plan, including across its working groups and through the national agencies • Considers Education Ministers Meeting papers prior to their progress to Ministers • Resolves operational and policy issues before progressing matters • Manages and coordinates jurisdictions’ funding contributions for nationally agreed projects and initiatives, [through the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment]. • Ongoing oversight of the following ministerial authorities and companies in the national education architecture, including approval of work plans and budgets, coordinated through the standing working groups except for items requiring Ministerial approval under legislation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) ○ the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) ○ the Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) ○ the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) ○ Education Services Australia (ESA).
<p>Work program</p>	<p>AESOC ensures the delivery of initiatives on the Education Ministers Meeting work plan, which is a living three-year program of work.</p> <p>The Education Ministers Meeting has delegated all matters to AESOC to manage that are routine and/or technical in nature and those that relate to the implementation of policy and legislation as appropriate decisions. The decision-making framework for AESOC is outlined in the <i>Operating Protocols 2021-2022: Education Ministers Meeting and Australian Education Senior Officials Committee</i>. AESOC matters should be escalated to Ministers by exception only.</p>
<p>Design and operations</p>	<p>AESOC meets formally once per quarter to align with Education Ministers Meetings, with additional meetings to consider time-critical matters, if required. AESOC Meetings will be held via video-conference or telepresence wherever possible. Further work is conducted out-of-session.</p> <p>The AESOC Chair in consultation with AESOC members sets the agenda for AESOC meetings. The Chair of AESOC will not deny reasonable requests for items to be included on the agenda.</p>

	<p>For the purpose of determining whether an AESOC meeting can proceed, a quorum will be taken to mean at least five members from different jurisdictions are present.</p> <p>Decisions should be made on a consensus basis. With the agreement of all members, some decisions may proceed with a smaller group of jurisdictions, without binding all jurisdictions to participate. AESOC members are responsible for the delegation to and operations of its standing working groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Early Childhood Policy Group (ECPG) • the Schools Policy Group (SPG) <p>AESOC may also establish time-limited sub-groups for specific purposes.</p> <p>AESOC is also responsible for the operations of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Advisory Group (ATSIEAG) and the establishment of its replacement to provide an Indigenous voice to the Education Ministers Meeting.</p>
<p>Chair</p>	<p>The Australian Government is the Chair of AESOC. This arrangement will be reviewed when Education Ministers review Education Ministers Meeting chairing arrangements at the end of 2022.</p> <p>The Chair ensures that AESOC operates effectively and collaboratively to deliver outcomes requiring joint action by the Australian, state and territory governments.</p> <p>The Chair’s responsibilities are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a thorough understanding of the meeting agenda and a focus on achieving outcomes • ensure all agenda items are discussed within the allocated time • encourage full participation of all members • ensure contentious issues are debated in a professional manner and mediate when conflict arises • facilitate decision-making by consensus where possible. • Provide quality assurance to papers for consideration by AESOC and the Education Ministers Meeting.
<p>Membership</p>	<p>AESOC consists of senior officials with responsibility for early childhood education, school education, higher education and international education from the Australian Government and each state and territory.</p> <p>The Chair may invite representatives from other agencies to participate in specific meetings or discussions, as appropriate.</p> <p>Guests and experts should only attend AESOC meetings for relevant agenda items.</p> <p>Members may nominate a proxy senior official to attend AESOC meetings on their behalf if they are unable to attend a meeting.</p>
<p>Sunset clause</p>	<p>AESOC is reviewed every two years as part of the First Secretaries Group and National Cabinet’s biennial review of the Education Ministers Meeting.</p>