LANGUAGE MATTERS
A glossary of terms

The OECD (2021) recommended that Scotland should be clear about the key terminology around curriculum and education reform. Curriculum and Assessment Board has asked that "a piece of focused work is carried out at pace to explore and clearly define the language associated with curriculum reform. This will include key terminology identified by the OECD (2021) including "knowledge", "skills", "attributes", "capacities", and "competencies.

As we begin a Curriculum Improvement Cycle, the following terms with **working definitions** are set out to support clarity around language through the process. They will be added to on a regular basis and over the lifetime of the cycle. Scotland's Curriculum Framework - setting out the why, the what and the how - will be the basis for the review and improvement work and the first set of terms included here directly relate to that focus. It is suggested that they are explored by key groups at the outset of this work, and revisited periodically, to ensure their use remains up-to-date and helpful in their objective of providing clarity. This first version of the glossary assumes our national commitment to inclusion as the starting point for any work on curriculum.

Where appropriate, links have been added to individual items giving sources or to relevant reading.

Key term	Working definition(s)
attribute/s	An **attribute** is a characteristic or quality that someone has. Scotland's Curriculum articulates the attributes (alongside skills) that are relevant for each of the Four Capacities. Examples include: • respect for others • openness to new thinking and ideas • secure values and beliefs • resilience
Big idea/s	A **Big Idea** captures the core understanding children and young people will develop in a particular area of the curriculum from early years onwards. It will set out overarching ideas and concepts and have relevance and meaning for learners. It will support progression and guide the selection of content.
capacity/ies	A **capacity** is the ability to know, do or be something in particular. The purposes (the 'why') for Scotland's Curriculum are set out in four fundamental capacities. The curriculum should enable all children and young people to be: Confident Individuals, Responsible Citizens,

	Effective Contributors and Successful Learners. Each of the capacities articulate related attributes and capabilities. There is significant overlap between the terms 'capacity' and 'competency' and how they are used in practice in curriculum design.
concept	A **concept** is a main idea or sequence of ideas that help to shape understanding. It clarifies meaning and is underpinned by knowledge. Concepts can be grouped or sequenced to develop schema that, for example, allow for the building of relationships in an area such as science.
curriculum	**Curriculum** in Scotland is defined as the totality of all that is planned and enacted for children and young people from early learning and childcare, through school and beyond. That totality is shaped by the purpose (the 'why') set out in the four capacities and a set of entitlements and can be planned for and experienced by learners across four contexts (the 'what'): opportunities for personal achievement; the ethos and life of the school/setting as a community (and with its community); curriculum areas and subjects and interdisciplinary learning.
curriculum making	**Curriculum making** – the development of practices, processes and policies – happens across different parts of the education system. Place based curriculum making which happens, for example, in early learning and community learning settings and schools involves work such as curriculum design and the development of pedagogical practices.
Inclusion	**Inclusion** means taking positive action and intervening in order to enable achievement for all by building and fulfilling the potential of every child, young person and adult. *Inclusion, Wellbeing and Equalities Professional Learning Framework*
inter-disciplinary learning (IDL)	**Interdisciplinary Learning** is a planned experience that brings two or more disciplines together in one coherent programme or project. These disciplines might fall within one curricular area or between several curricular areas. IDL enables children and young people to ● learn new knowledge or skills, and develop new understanding of concepts; ● draw on prior knowledge, understanding and skills; ● transfer and apply that collective knowledge to new problems or other areas of learning. *Interdisciplinary Learning: ambitious learning for an increasingly complex world*
knowledge	**Knowledge** refers to things that an individual can know. In curriculum it includes substantive knowledge (knowing that) and procedural knowledge (knowing how). Substantive knowledge refers to the understanding of concepts that explain the world (eg. democracy) and

	also to individual facts. Procedural knowledge is the knowledge of how to do something (eg. balance an equation).
learner profile	A **learner profile** is an artefact – usually digital – that showcases a child / young person's learning, achievements and evolving strengths, and supports them to articulate their story of who they are and what they can do across all four capacities.
pedagogy	**Pedagogy** is curriculum enacted and manifested in and through the interactions, experiences and spaces and times of teaching, learning and assessment.
profiling	**Profiling** describes the actions taken by a child or young person with the support of adults to understand and be able to articulate their evolving strengths. This includes the capturing of evidence, memories of achievements and meaningful learning, as well as opportunities to talk about and reflect on the knowledge, skills and attributes they are developing.
Scotland's Curriculum Framework	The narrative for **Scotland's Curriculum Framework** was refreshed in 2019 and hosted on a dedicated microsite. It re-states the purpose ('why?') in the four capacities and the relevance of the four contexts to enable the 'what'. The key elements for curriculum making were identified in a new section to support the 'how'. www.scotlandscurriculum.scot
service design	**Service design** supports curriculum design**.** It offers a way to explore a problem or challenge openly, collaboratively and with users, before a solution or service is decided. Increasingly, schools and educational settings are using the Scottish Approach to Service Design to strengthen curriculum design and to co-create their curriculum offer with the communities they serve.
skill(s)	**Skills** is an overarching term used to describe a wide variety of behaviours and practices that can be acquired, developed and improved with guidance, reflection and practice. A variety of skills frameworks are used across Scotland to develop children and young people's understanding of their skills.
technical framework	The **technical framework** for a curriculum is the set of guidance documents which educators use in order to plan learning for children, young people and adult learners.