

HECAT: Chapter 4

Preliminary Curriculum Considerations

Description: This chapter contains the tools to help analyze and score important general characteristics of any health education curriculum – accuracy, acceptability, feasibility, and affordability. It is useful to consider these characteristics prior to investing more extensive time in reviewing the suitability of curriculum content.

The **Accuracy Analysis** section includes guiding questions, a chart for organizing comments, and a score sheet for rating the accuracy of curriculum content. It should be completed by persons who can assess the accuracy of the health, medical, and scientific information in the curriculum. For example, the analysis team might include health experts, health curriculum specialists, or university researchers who could review the curriculum to ensure that the information is scientifically sound, medically accurate, and current.

The **Acceptability Analysis** section includes guiding questions, a chart for organizing comments, and a score sheet for rating the acceptability of curriculum content. It should be completed by persons who know the expectations of the school and community for health education materials; state and local policies, frameworks, and standards that guide health education; and the health education needs of students. The analysis team could include parents, students, school board members, school principals, district health education coordinators, physical education and health teachers, school counselors, and other persons who work with young people.

The **Feasibility Analysis** section includes an organized set of questions and score sheet for rating the feasibility of curriculum implementation. It should be completed by persons who know if the curriculum can be successfully implemented in the classroom. An analysis team could include teachers, school administrators, and the health coordinator of the school district.

The **Affordability Analysis** section includes a set of questions, tables for capturing purchase and cost information, and a scoring sheet for rating the affordability of curriculum materials and curriculum implementation. It should be completed by persons who know how to purchase, implement, and revise a curriculum; can estimate how much it will cost to change the operating procedures of the school; and can identify available resources to cover the costs of the new curriculum. The analysis team could include the curriculum coordinator, district business officer, or school administrator.

Because school curricula must meet local community needs and conform to the curriculum requirements of the state or school district, users are encouraged to review the analysis items before analyzing the curricula and to add, delete, or revise them to meet community needs and curriculum requirements.

Accuracy Analysis

Directions: Assess the accuracy of the health, medical, and scientific information in the curriculum. Consider if the information is scientifically sound, medically accurate, and current.

Some questions to consider when analyzing accuracy include

- Does the curriculum use accurate and appropriate terminology?
- Are data, information, and sources of information current?
- Are data medically accurate?
- Are data represented accurately in charts, graphs, and written text?
- Are statements of fact based on data and sound science rather than anecdotal information or subjective opinion? Is information about data sources provided so that the accuracy of data can be verified and facts can be substantiated?
- Are facts and information based on appropriate data? For example, are national trends supported with national data rather than state or local data? Are youth trends supported with youth data rather than adult data?
- Do statements of fact or conclusion accurately represent the data? Is the information distorted or exaggerated?
- Are sources of data clear and credible? Are they from a reputable public health or professional source?

If information is unsound, medically inaccurate, subjective, or out of date, complete items A–E on the Accuracy Analysis Chart on page 4–3. Use the directions below to complete the chart.

- A. In column A, list the page(s) in the curriculum where faulty information appears.
- B. In column B, briefly describe the errors.
- C. In column C, indicate how difficult or easy it would be to correct the errors by checking the appropriate circle. For example, inaccurate information in a teacher’s guide might be easy to replace with a district-developed teacher supplement. Inaccurate information in a printed textbook might be more difficult to correct, because the developer would have to revise and republish the book.
- D. In column D, briefly describe what needs to be done to correct the problem.
- E. In column E, indicate if the corrections would require substantial costs in time or money to complete by checking the appropriate “yes” or “no” circle.

Complete the *Accuracy Analysis Score* on page 4–4 based on information from the *Accuracy Analysis Chart*.

Curriculum Name _____

Accuracy Analysis Chart

A Page in the curriculum	B Describe the errors	C Indicate the degree of difficulty to correct the errors	D Describe what needs to be done to correct the errors	E Is the correction costly?
		<input type="radio"/> = Very difficult <input type="radio"/> = Difficult <input type="radio"/> = Easy <input type="radio"/> = Very easy		<input type="radio"/> = Yes <input type="radio"/> = No
		<input type="radio"/> = Very difficult <input type="radio"/> = Difficult <input type="radio"/> = Easy <input type="radio"/> = Very easy		<input type="radio"/> = Yes <input type="radio"/> = No
		<input type="radio"/> = Very difficult <input type="radio"/> = Difficult <input type="radio"/> = Easy <input type="radio"/> = Very easy		<input type="radio"/> = Yes <input type="radio"/> = No
		<input type="radio"/> = Very difficult <input type="radio"/> = Difficult <input type="radio"/> = Easy <input type="radio"/> = Very easy		<input type="radio"/> = Yes <input type="radio"/> = No
		<input type="radio"/> = Very difficult <input type="radio"/> = Difficult <input type="radio"/> = Easy <input type="radio"/> = Very easy		<input type="radio"/> = Yes <input type="radio"/> = No
		<input type="radio"/> = Very difficult <input type="radio"/> = Difficult <input type="radio"/> = Easy <input type="radio"/> = Very easy		<input type="radio"/> = Yes <input type="radio"/> = No
		<input type="radio"/> = Very difficult <input type="radio"/> = Difficult <input type="radio"/> = Easy <input type="radio"/> = Very easy		<input type="radio"/> = Yes <input type="radio"/> = No

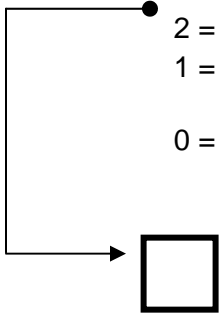
(Make additional copies of this page if necessary)
 Proceed to page 4-4 after completing the Accuracy Analysis Chart.

Name of Curriculum: _____

Name of Reviewer(s): _____ Credentials _____
 _____ Credentials _____
 _____ Credentials _____
 _____ Credentials _____
 _____ Credentials _____

Accuracy Analysis Score: Using the information from the Accuracy Analysis Chart, score the curriculum based on its accuracy and the extent to which the correction of any errors can be reasonably completed. **(Write the score in the Accuracy Analysis Score box below.)**

- 4 = No corrections are necessary.
- 3 = A few minor errors or problems are evident, but they are easy to correct.
- 2 = Many minor errors or problems are evident, but they are easy to correct.
- 1 = Major errors and problems are evident, and one would be difficult or costly to correct.
- 0 = Major errors and problems are evident, and more than one would be difficult or costly to correct.



Accuracy Analysis Score: Transfer the score from this box to the Accuracy line on the *OVERALL SUMMARY FORM* (Chapter 3). A score of “0” indicates that the curriculum should be eliminated from further consideration.

Notes:

Reminder: The HECAT is designed to guide the analysis of curricula for local use. Users are encouraged to add, delete, or revise items to reflect community needs and to meet the curriculum requirements of the school district.

Acceptability Analysis

Directions: Assess the acceptability of the curriculum based on the expectations of the school and community for health education materials; state and local policies, frameworks, and standards that guide health education; and health education needs of students.

Review the curriculum to determine if the text, pictures, graphics, and other materials

- Are appropriate for the intended audience. (Also see Note 1 on the page 4–6.)
- Are compatible with community norms.
- Avoid promoting biased or stereotypical perceptions of individuals or groups on the basis of personal characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, religion, culture, age, or sexual orientation. (Also see Note 2, on page 4–6, for information specifically related to sexual health curricula.)
- Are consistent with state statutes, state or district policy, codes, and frameworks.

Some questions to consider when analyzing acceptability include

- Does the curriculum address the health problems that affect youth, families, and the community?
- Does the curriculum address issues and experiences that are important to improving the health-promoting decisions and practices of the students?
- Does the curriculum make accurate assumptions about students and address their experiences, learning, and developmental needs?
- Does the curriculum recognize important subpopulations of students, make realistic assumptions about them, and address their unique experiences and learning needs?
- Are the curriculum language and materials relevant and appropriate for the community?
- Does the curriculum reflect cultural perspectives and beliefs found in families, the school, or the community?
- Do the curriculum information and learning experiences, such as student-family activities, reflect the diversity of cultures among students and families?
- Does the curriculum acknowledge and support the roles of parents, family, and community members in promoting healthy behaviors among youth?
- Do pictures, information, or learning experiences avoid stereotyping people based on race, ethnicity, gender, religion, culture, age, or sexual orientation?
- Does the curriculum address issues required by statute or policy, including the health requirements identified in the health education framework or course of study?
- Is the curriculum information and material consistent with health education guidelines?
- Does the curriculum information or material violate health education requirements or mandates?
- Is there anything in the curriculum sponsorship, information, or materials that reflect an inappropriate marketing message that attempts to influence teachers and students, such as

- Marketing a particular brand or product?
- Advocating a position that might conflict with the school’s mission?
- Communicating a message that conflicts with health education outcomes and objectives?

If text, pictures, graphics, and other materials are unacceptable, complete items A–E on the Acceptability Analysis Chart on page 4–7. Use the following directions to complete the chart.

- A. In column A, list the page(s) in the curriculum where unacceptable information or depictions appear.
- B. In column B, briefly describe the piece of information or depiction that is incompatible, biased, or inconsistent with policies, frameworks or standards.
- C. In column C, indicate the degree to which the information or depiction is inappropriate, incompatible, biased, or inconsistent with policies, frameworks, or standards by checking the appropriate circle.

- D. In column D, briefly describe what needs to be done to correct the problem.
- E. In column E, indicate how difficult or easy it would be to correct the information or depiction or eliminate it from the curriculum without affecting the quality of the curriculum by checking the appropriate circle. For example, an unacceptable teaching strategy described in a teacher’s guide might be easy to replace with a district-developed supplemental lesson; whereas, culturally biased information in a printed textbook might be more difficult to correct, because the developer would have to revise and republish the book.

Complete the *Acceptability Analysis Score* on page 4–8 based on information from the *Acceptability Analysis Chart*.

Note 1: Although the HECAT ensures analysis of appropriateness (developmentally appropriate, culturally appropriate, age-appropriate), it does not provide standards or criteria for determining what is and what is not appropriate. These criteria should be determined at the local school district level and should be applied consistently in the review of all curricula under review or development.

Note 2: A curriculum that addresses sexual health outcomes and promotes responsible sexual behavior solely from a heterosexual perspective might exclude young people who identify as gay or lesbian or who are involved in same-sex sexual behavior. Such curricula might lead these young people to believe they are not at risk or leave them without appropriate skills to avoid risk or adopt sexual risk reduction behaviors. A curriculum can be sensitive this challenge by incorporating gender-neutral or sexual orientation-neutral language into content and learning experiences.

Acceptability Analysis Chart _____ **Curriculum Name**

A Page in the curriculum	B Describe the unacceptable information	C Indicate the degree of unacceptability <input type="radio"/> = Serious <input type="radio"/> = Minor	D Describe what needs to be done to correct the problems	E Indicate the degree of difficulty to correct the information/depiction <input type="radio"/> = Very difficult <input type="radio"/> = Difficult <input type="radio"/> = Easy <input type="radio"/> = Very easy
		<input type="radio"/> = Serious <input type="radio"/> = Minor		<input type="radio"/> = Very difficult <input type="radio"/> = Difficult <input type="radio"/> = Easy <input type="radio"/> = Very easy
		<input type="radio"/> = Serious <input type="radio"/> = Minor		<input type="radio"/> = Very difficult <input type="radio"/> = Difficult <input type="radio"/> = Easy <input type="radio"/> = Very easy
		<input type="radio"/> = Serious <input type="radio"/> = Minor		<input type="radio"/> = Very difficult <input type="radio"/> = Difficult <input type="radio"/> = Easy <input type="radio"/> = Very easy
		<input type="radio"/> = Serious <input type="radio"/> = Minor		<input type="radio"/> = Very difficult <input type="radio"/> = Difficult <input type="radio"/> = Easy <input type="radio"/> = Very easy
		<input type="radio"/> = Serious <input type="radio"/> = Minor		<input type="radio"/> = Very difficult <input type="radio"/> = Difficult <input type="radio"/> = Easy <input type="radio"/> = Very easy
		<input type="radio"/> = Serious <input type="radio"/> = Minor		<input type="radio"/> = Very difficult <input type="radio"/> = Difficult <input type="radio"/> = Easy <input type="radio"/> = Very easy
		<input type="radio"/> = Serious <input type="radio"/> = Minor		<input type="radio"/> = Very difficult <input type="radio"/> = Difficult <input type="radio"/> = Easy <input type="radio"/> = Very easy

(Make additional copies of this page if necessary)
Proceed to page 4-8 after completing the Acceptability Analysis Chart.

Name of Curriculum: _____

Name of Reviewer(s): _____ Credentials _____
 _____ Credentials _____
 _____ Credentials _____
 _____ Credentials _____
 _____ Credentials _____

Acceptability Analysis Score: Using the information from the Acceptability Analysis Chart, score the curriculum based on its overall acceptability and the extent to which the correction of any errors can be reasonably completed. **(Write the score in the Acceptability Analysis Score box below.)**

- 4 = All information and materials are acceptable, and no corrections are necessary.
- 3 = A few minor pieces of information or material are unacceptable, but they can be easily corrected or eliminated.
- 2 = Many pieces of information and material are unacceptable, but they can be easily corrected or eliminated.
- 1 = Many pieces of information and material are unacceptable, and one is difficult or costly to correct or eliminate.
- 0 = Many pieces of information and material are unacceptable, and more than one is difficult or costly to correct or eliminate.



Acceptability Analysis Score: Transfer the score from this box to the Acceptability Analysis line on the *OVERALL SUMMARY FORM* (Chapter 3). A score of “0” indicates that the curriculum should be eliminated from further consideration.

Notes:

Reminder: The HECAT is designed to guide the analysis of curricula for local use. Users are encouraged to add, delete, or revise items to reflect community needs and to meet the curriculum requirements of the school district.

Feasibility Analysis

Directions: Assess the feasibility of the curriculum for implementation in the classroom. Complete each item below. Record notes and comments to justify scores and inform group discussions and decisions.

Name of Curriculum: _____

1. The curriculum can be reasonably implemented by most health education teachers and others who might use this curriculum.

- Yes No

Notes:

2. The curriculum can be implemented within the available classroom or instructional time.

- Yes No, but time can be adjusted to accommodate No, it is far too long

Notes:

Feasibility Analysis Score: Using the information from above, provide a score that indicates the feasibility of implementing the curriculum. **(Write the score in the box below.)**

- 4 = Feasible
- 3 = Probably feasible
- 2 = Possibly feasible
- 1 = Probably not feasible
- 0 = Not feasible

Feasibility Analysis Score: Transfer the score from this box to the Feasibility Analysis line, on the *OVERALL SUMMARY FORM* (Chapter 3). A score of “0” indicates that the curriculum should be eliminated from further consideration.

Affordability Analysis

Directions: Assess the affordability of the initial curriculum material costs, implementation costs, and the costs required to sustain the curriculum. Complete each item below. Record notes to justify scores and inform group discussions and decisions.

Name of Curriculum _____

1. What is the initial cost of curriculum materials?

Items	Unit Cost	Number of Units Needed	Total Cost (Unit cost X number of units needed)
Core curriculum (a breakdown of separate grade-specific or topic-specific materials might be necessary.)	\$		\$
Necessary instructional materials that are not included as part of the core curriculum, such as teacher’s guides, videos, CD’s, master transparencies.	\$		\$
Required consumable student materials	\$		\$
Other	\$		\$
Total Minimum Curriculum Purchase Costs	\$		\$
Optional supplemental materials, including suggested, but not required, consumable materials.	\$		\$
Total Initial Curriculum Material Costs	\$		\$

Notes:

2. What is the cost of sustaining the curriculum materials annually?

Items	Unit Cost	Number of Units Needed	Total Cost (Unit cost X number of units needed)
Core curriculum (a breakdown of separate grade-specific or topic-specific materials might be necessary.)	\$		\$
Necessary instructional materials that are not included as part of the core curriculum, such as videos, CD's, master transparencies.	\$		\$
Required consumable student materials	\$		\$
Other	\$		\$
Total Minimum Annual Curriculum Costs	\$		\$
Optional supplementary materials, including suggested, but not required, consumable materials.	\$		\$
Total Annual Curriculum Material Costs	\$		\$

Notes:

3. What are the additional financial costs related to curriculum implementation?

Additional staff	Initial Cost: \$	Annual Cost: \$
Professional development costs and training fees	Initial Cost: \$	Annual Cost: \$
Paying substitutes to cover classes	Initial Cost: \$	Annual Cost: \$
Other	Initial Cost: \$	Annual Cost: \$
Other	Initial Cost: \$	Annual Cost: \$
Total Additional Costs	Initial Cost: \$	Annual Cost: \$

Notes:

4. What funds are available for curriculum purchase and implementation?

Source	Available Immediately	Available Annually
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
Total Available	\$	\$

Notes:

5. Funding Summary

Costs of materials	Initial Cost: (Amount from #1)	Annual Cost: (Amount from #2)
Additional costs for implementation	Initial Cost: (Amount from #3)	Annual Cost: (Amount from #3)
Funds available for purchase and implementation	Immediately: (Amount from #4)	Annually: (Amount from #4)

Notes:

6. Identify the changes needed in staffing, facilities, and schedules to ensure that lessons can be implemented as written. Briefly note any that require a cost in dollars, time, or effort.

Notes:

- 7. Consider any costs that would be involved in revising the curriculum to ensure that the materials and lessons are accurate and acceptable. See notes on the Accuracy Analysis Chart (pg. 4-3) and on the Acceptability Analysis Chart (pg. 4-7).

Notes:

Affordability Analysis Score: Using the information in items 1–7, score the affordability of implementing the curriculum. **(Write the score in the box below.)**

- 4 = Definitely affordable
- 3 = Probably affordable
- 2 = Possibly affordable
- 1 = Probably *not* affordable
- 0 = Definitely *not* affordable



Affordability Analysis Score: Transfer the score from this box to the Affordability Analysis line, on the *OVERALL SUMMARY FORM* (Chapter 3). A score of “0” indicates that the curriculum should be eliminated from further consideration.