



## **Ancient History**

### **Stage 6 Draft Writing Brief**

**Consultation Report  
February 2016**

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Phone: (02) 9367 8289

Fax: (02) 9279 1482

Email: [mila.buraga@bostes.nsw.edu.au](mailto:mila.buraga@bostes.nsw.edu.au)

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## **1. Background information**

The preparation of the *Ancient History Stage 6 Draft Writing Brief* took into account the broad directions for the learning area, which were developed following public consultation and endorsed by BOSTES in December 2014.

BOSTES conducted consultation in Term 4, 2015 to engage stakeholders in the syllabus development process and to seek their feedback on options and proposals in the draft writing brief.

The consultation program included:

- a meeting of the Years 11–12 Board Curriculum Committee for History on 25 November 2015
- afternoon consultation meetings at:
  - North Ryde on 26 October 2015
  - Bathurst on 27 October 2015
  - Campbelltown on 28 October 2015
  - Newcastle on 29 October 2015
  - Broken Hill on 2 November 2015
  - Manly on 4 November 2015
  - Sydney on 26 November 2015
- an online survey on the BOSTES website from 19 October to 29 November 2015
- written submissions from:
  - NSW Department of Education
  - Catholic Education Office Sydney
  - Communities of Catholic Schools – Diocese of Broken Bay
  - Association of Independent Schools of NSW
  - Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia Academic Committee
  - Australian Association of Jewish Studies
  - History Teachers Association of NSW
  - NSW Distance Education History Network
  - NSW Jewish Board of Deputies
  - NSW Teachers Federation
  - Macquarie Ancient History Association
  - 23 individuals.

Professional associations and schooling sectors conducted a range of activities during the consultation period to inform feedback to BOSTES.

Feedback from consultation was analysed and informed revisions to the draft writing brief. The final writing brief will be used to develop the draft syllabus.

## **2. Executive summary**

The *Ancient History Draft Writing Brief Consultation Report* provides a description of the consultation process and a summary and analysis of feedback received. The Consultation Report includes feedback affirming aspects of the draft writing brief, key matters raised and proposed actions for the final draft writing brief and syllabus development.

The Consultation Report presents data and findings gathered through 117 survey responses, 34 written submissions, a Board Curriculum Committee meeting and 7 teacher meetings.

The draft writing brief was welcomed by many respondents as an opportunity to consider various options for the structure, topics and content of the Stage 6 Ancient History syllabus.

### **Key matters**

The key matters to emerge from the consultation included:

- the need to focus on the development of conceptual understanding and critical historical skills
- Option 3, including the Core Study, ‘Cities of Vesuvius – Pompeii and Herculaneum’, is the preferred option with a review of specific aspects of the course structure, topics and content
- support for retention of the Core Study, with clarification of the focus and scope of content to provide opportunities for depth of study
- the need for the Ancient History course to cater for the diversity of students in the Senior Years.

### **Actions in response to key matters**

- Opportunities for development of conceptual understanding and historical skills will be investigated in the syllabus development phase.
- Option 3 will form the basis for the Ancient History course structure – specific topics and content will be determined through analysis of feedback.
- The Core Study will be retained and the scope of content will be reviewed to provide opportunities for depth of study.
- The scope and breadth of course content will be reviewed to provide greater flexibility to meet the needs of the diversity of learners.

A summary of key matters and related actions is contained in Section 4 of this report.

### 3. Summary of respondents

#### Consultation stakeholder and teacher meetings

##### 1 Board Curriculum Committee (BCC), 7 teacher meetings

BCC members	16	Government sector	49	Catholic sector	36
Independent sector	47	Other	19		

#### Online survey respondents

##### 117 online survey responses

<b>Respondent:</b>					
Academic	11	Parent	1	Pre-service teacher	3
Principal	1	School executive	9	School faculty	12
Student	5	Teacher	71	Other	4
<b>I am:</b>					
An Aboriginal person	2	A Torres Strait Islander person	0		
An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person	0	Not an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person	115		
<b>Sector:</b>					
Government	52	Catholic	14		
Independent	34	Non-school based	17		
<b>Area of NSW:</b>					
Metropolitan	78	Regional	39		
<b>Number of people contributing to this survey:</b>					
1	101	2–5	12	6 or more	4

#### **4. Key matters**

<b>Key matters</b>	<b>Actions</b>
<p>There is a need to focus on the development of conceptual understanding and critical historical skills.</p> <p>Option 3, including the Core Study, ‘Cities of Vesuvius – Pompeii and Herculaneum’, is the preferred option with a review of specific aspects of the course structure, topics and content.</p> <p>There is support for retention of the Core Study, with clarification of the focus and scope of content to provide opportunities for depth of study.</p> <p>The Ancient History course needs to cater for the diversity of students in the Senior Years.</p>	<p>Opportunities for development of conceptual understanding and historical skills will be investigated in the syllabus development phase.</p> <p>Option 3 will form the basis for the Ancient History course structure – specific topics and content will be determined through analysis of feedback.</p> <p>The Core Study will be retained and the scope of content will be reviewed to provide opportunities for depth of study.</p> <p>The scope and breadth of course content will be reviewed to provide greater flexibility to meet the needs of the diversity of learners.</p>

## 5. Analysis

### 5.1 Rationale

#### Summary

The majority of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the proposed rationale describes the nature of the course in broad terms and explains its purpose in the curriculum. There was also strong support for the proposed rationale as reflecting a contemporary view of the course.

#### Feedback affirming the rationale

Feedback	Sources
The continuity in the focus on skills and concepts aligns with the <i>History K–10 Syllabus</i> .	CEOSYD HTANSW
The rationale captures the distinctive nature of Ancient History.	AIS Submission 3

#### Key matters and actions

Key matters	Sources	Actions
The conceptual study of the ancient world requires greater explanation.	DoE HTANSW	The rationale will be reviewed for clarity and to include reference to the legacy of the ancient world for the modern world.
The contribution of the ancient world to the shaping of the modern world needs to be strengthened.	DoE Survey (x2)	



## 5.2 Aim

### Summary

The majority of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the proposed aim provides a statement of the overall purpose of the syllabus. A range of specific suggestions were made by individuals to strengthen the aim.

### Feedback affirming the aim

Feedback	Sources
The aim is clear and appropriate.	AIS CEOSYD DoE North Ryde (CM) Submissions 1, 3, 4

### Key matters raised and actions

Key matters	Sources	Actions
The aim should be strengthened, with reference to cultural protocols, repatriation, respect and reciprocity, greater emphasis on the rigour of the study of Ancient History, recognition of the contribution of Ancient History to ongoing study and work, mention of the discipline of archaeology not only history.	AIS Survey (x3)	Specific aspects of the aim will be reviewed during syllabus development.

### 5.3 Objectives

#### Summary

The majority of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the proposed objectives define in broad terms the knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes to be developed through study in this course.

#### Feedback affirming the objectives

Feedback	Sources
The objectives are clear and appropriate.	AIS CEOSYD North Ryde (CM) Submissions 1, 3, 4

#### Key matters and actions

Key matters	Sources	Actions
The objectives should be strengthened to better align with the rationale and the distinctive nature of Ancient History.	AIS DoE Submission 3 Survey (x4)	Specific aspects of the objectives will be reviewed to strengthen the alignment to the rationale and nature of Ancient History during syllabus development.

## 5.4 Outcomes

### Summary

The majority of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the sample of outcomes is appropriate for the Ancient History course. However, several respondents stated that provision of all the outcomes, rather than a sample, would have enabled them to provide more informed feedback. A small number of respondents noted that the sample of outcomes do not appear to build on the K–10 continuum of learning in History.

### Feedback affirming the outcomes

Feedback	Sources
The outcomes are relevant and appropriate.	North Ryde (CM) Submission 3

### Key matters and actions

Key matters	Sources	Actions
The complete list of outcomes needs to be provided to give a clearer sense of the progression of intended learning for students.	AIS CEOSYD Submissions 1, 3, 4 Survey (x7)	Outcomes will be developed in the writing of the draft syllabus.
The sample of outcomes needs to reflect progression from Stage 5 to HSC.	CEOSYD DoE Submission 1 Survey (x3)	The outcomes will be reviewed for progression and accessibility while ensuring the overall rigour of the course.
There is a lack of scope to accommodate the diversity of learners.	DoE HTANSW Submissions 4,8	

## 5.5 Diversity of learners

### Summary

Several respondents identified features of the Ancient History course that already meet the needs of a diversity of learners, in particular the choice of topics/content and the Historical Investigation. Respondents provided a range of suggestions on how the Ancient History course could be designed to better meet the needs of the diversity of learners.

Several respondents noted that not all learners were clearly evident in the ‘diversity of learners’ identified in the introduction to the draft writing brief, in particular the increasing number of students staying on in Stage 6 for whom Life Skills outcomes and content is not appropriate.

The majority of respondents who commented on Life Skills agreed that Life Skills outcomes and content should be developed rather than a more general historical studies course. Respondents noted that Life Skills outcomes and content, aligned with the Ancient History outcomes and content, would provide clear direction and meet the needs of the diversity of learners.

### Feedback about the diversity of learners and Life Skills outcomes and content

Feedback	Sources
The features of the Ancient History course that help cater for the diversity of students should be retained.	Survey (x10)
Life Skills outcomes and content aligned to the Ancient History course would be welcome.	AIS Survey (x10)

### Key matters and actions

Key matters	Sources	Actions
The differentiation of outcomes should be considered.	HTANSW Survey (x2)	The outcomes will be reviewed for accessibility for the diversity of learners.
A reduction in content would allow teachers to program for deep learning, including the development of conceptual understanding and the mastery of historical skills.	AIS BCC Survey (x5)	The scope of content will be reviewed during the syllabus development phase to provide opportunities for depth of learning.
The use of overviews should be extended from the approach taken in Years 7–10 History. The scope of overviews would need to be clarified.	AIS HTANSW Submission 4	Overviews will be considered during syllabus development while providing opportunities for depth of learning within topics.
The suite of courses needs to maintain rigour as well as better cater for students	HTANSW Submissions 3, 4,	The scope and breadth of course content will be

<b>Key matters</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>Actions</b>
who have a variety of post-school pathways.	Survey (x11)	considered in the development of the draft syllabus to provide flexibility to meet the diversity of learners.

## 5.6 Course structure and options

### Summary

Option 3 was the most strongly supported option. Respondents identified several strengths of the Year 11 topics in Option 3, including flexibility of choice of content, the stand-alone Historical Investigation and the thematic approach. Several respondents suggested different combinations of topics from the various options.

The majority of respondents agreed that the Core Study ‘Cities of Vesuvius’ was relevant and appropriate as the core study because of the scope it offers for working with sources and historical and contemporary problems and issues.

Many respondents noted that the amount of content in the core study needs to be reviewed; however, there were differing points of view about how this might be reduced. Several respondents suggested reducing the number of areas to be examined. Some respondents preferred a greater focus on aspects of everyday life as revealed by the evidence. A very small number of respondents suggested that a different Core Study should be considered.

A number of respondents questioned the removal of some topics, for example Ancient Israel and Ancient Assyria from the Year 12 course. There was support for the inclusion of Asian history and content; however, this was tempered by comments about comparability and access to appropriate resources. Some respondents noted that Asian topics should be optional rather than mandatory and limited to Year 11 topics rather than Year 12 topics. Several respondents requested that there be a requirement for Year 12 topics to be drawn from at least two civilisations to help ensure some breadth of understanding.

### Feedback affirming the course structure and options

Feedback	Sources
Option 3 is the most appropriate option.	Broken Hill (CM) CCSOBB CEOSYD Manly (CM) Newcastle (CM) Submissions 1, 2, 3 Survey (x37) Sydney (CM)
Strengths identified in Option 3 included the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>flexibility in choice of content</li> <li>stand-alone Historical Investigation</li> <li>added freshness of new topics and approaches</li> <li>thematic topics that provide a broader understanding of the ancient world.</li> </ul>	Newcastle (CM) North Ryde (CM) Submissions 1, 4 Survey (x15)
The current core is tried, tested and unique and should be retained. No other site offers so much scope for multiple areas of study. The problems and interpretations of the site are always evolving.	AIS BCC Submissions 2, 3, 9 Survey (x13) Sydney (CM)

<b>Feedback</b>	<b>Sources</b>
Modifications to the Year 12 course core topic are a positive step, in particular the reduction in content and the attempt to balance the social history of the sites and the scientific methods used in their preservation and conservation.	AIS HTANSW
The options will allow teachers to develop programs with a logical structure and sequence according to the topics chosen.	Broken Hill (CM) North Ryde (CM) Submission 1 Survey (x 5)
The strengthening of interpretation and representation gives Year 11 topics a contemporary edge.	HTANSW Submission 4 Survey (x2)
There is opportunity to study recent discoveries relating to Indigenous groups and a range of non-Eurocentric topics.	Submission 28 Survey (x5)
The proposed topics provide opportunity for both depth of study and breadth of understanding according to the topics chosen.	Bathurst (CM) CEOSYD HTANSW Survey (x4)
The increased range of Asian topics is appropriate for Australian students as part of this region and ensures continuity with Stage 4 and Stage 5 History and the cross-curriculum priority of Asia.	AIS CCSOBB HTANSW North Ryde (CM) Submission 7 Survey (x3)

### Key matters and actions

<b>Key matters</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>Actions</b>
<b>Core study</b> The amount of content in the core study needs to be reduced for depth of study.	Bathurst (CM) CEOSYD HTANSW Manly (CM) Submissions 1, 3 Survey (x7)	The scope of content of the core study will be reviewed during syllabus development to provide opportunities for depth of study.
Conservation issues should be retained in the Year 12 course core study because they offer opportunity for analysis and critical thinking. HSC examination questions based on these issues can help to discriminate responses.	Campbelltown (CM) HTANSW Newcastle (CM) Survey (x4)	Conservation will be retained as part of the core in the Year 12 course.

Key matters	Sources	Actions
<p><b>Topics and content</b></p> <p>The representation of personalities should be reviewed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there is a mismatch between some personalities and historical periods</li> <li>• major personalities should not be transferred into the Year 11 course.</li> </ul>	<p>AIS Newcastle (CM) NSWTF Submission 3 Survey (x2)</p>	<p>The study of historical personalities will continue to be a feature of the Year 12 course. One personality aligned to each historical period will be considered in the syllabus development phase to ensure comparability.</p>
<p>There is a lack of females among the personalities and in other topics. It was suggested that a thematic study of gender in the ancient world would be appropriate.</p>	<p>BCC North Ryde (CM) Survey (x3)</p>	<p>The representation of gender will be strengthened where appropriate in the syllabus development phase.</p>
<p>Some structures/topics require review to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strengthen comparability</li> <li>• ensure the accessibility of appropriate resources</li> <li>• include new ideas and recent archaeology</li> <li>• provide more detailed explanation</li> <li>• include the close study of a key source (written or archaeological) linked to the chosen personality or historical period.</li> </ul> <p>Schools should be allowed to develop some of their own case studies in Year 11.</p>	<p>Bathurst (CM) Campbelltown (CM) DoE HTANSW Manly (CM) Newcastle (CM) Submissions 1, 2, 3, 4, 8 Survey (x10)</p>	<p>The timeframes, range of sources and historical interpretations will be reviewed for each topic for comparability.</p> <p>Topics and content will be amended as necessary to ensure the maintenance of a contemporary, relevant and accessible curriculum.</p> <p>More specific details about the content focus for each topic will be provided in the syllabus development phase.</p> <p>The provision of case studies and the Historical Investigation will provide flexibility for schools to meet student needs and interests.</p>
<p>There is a need to ensure a diversity of civilisations can be studied. A range of suggestions were provided, for example the inclusion of Ancient Israel and Ancient Assyria in the Year 12 course.</p>	<p>AIS NSWTF North Ryde (CM) Survey (x9) Submissions 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10–27</p>	<p>The opportunities for the study of civilisations from the ancient Near East will be reviewed.</p>
<p>Topics should be interesting and engaging for a diversity of learners, based on a range of accessible written and material sources, and debatable to allow for the development of critical and analytical thinking.</p>	<p>Manly (CM) Submissions 1, 8 Survey (x3)</p>	<p>The appropriateness of topics will be considered through analysis of feedback.</p>



<b>Key matters</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Asian topics should be included, but as options rather than mandatory studies. Some Asian content needs to be reviewed.	Bathurst (CM) Broken Hill (CM) Campbelltown (CM) Newcastle (CM) North Ryde (CM) Submissions 1, 4, 5 Survey (x12)	A wider choice and more depth of topics will be considered in the development of the draft syllabus.
<b>Other structures or options</b> Retain the current structure of the Ancient History course and update the topic options.	AIS Bathurst (CM) BCC Submission 3 Survey (x8)	Option 3 provides a similar course structure to the existing Ancient History course, particularly for the Year 12 course.  The topic choices and content will be enhanced where appropriate through analysis of feedback.

## 5.7 Assessment and reporting

### Summary

A number of respondents provided feedback about the assessment and reporting requirements for Stage 6 Ancient History, including internal and external assessment.

### Feedback affirming the information on assessment and reporting

Feedback	Sources
<b>School-based assessment and reporting</b> The current guidelines of three to five tasks, with a mandated examination component weighting, work well.	AIS Survey (x15)
<b>External examination specifications, including the use of ICT</b> The current HSC examination format is clear and fair with a variety of question types that allows students to demonstrate their knowledge in different ways.	AIS Survey (x10)

### Key matters and actions

Key matters	Sources	Actions
<b>School-based assessment and reporting</b> Guidelines are needed to assist teachers to develop a wider variety of assessment tasks that do not mimic examination-style tasks.	Survey (x3)	Assessment advice and activities will be developed and included in support materials.
<b>External examination specifications, including the use of ICT</b> The HSC examination should continue to reflect the nature of the course and remain focused on historical skills such as formulating and arguing an historical thesis through essay format, source interpretation and analysis.	NSWTF Survey (x2)	The rigour of the course will be maintained and reflected in the development of outcomes, content and examination specifications.
Objective response (multiple choice) questions in the HSC exam should be reconsidered. Greater emphasis should be placed on the analysis and interpretation of sources.	AIS Submission 3 Survey (x6)	Examination specifications will be reviewed and amended as appropriate during syllabus development.

## 5.8 Other comments

### Summary

A number of survey respondents agreed that the draft writing brief provides a sound basis for developing the final writing brief, which is the blueprint for the development of the draft syllabus. Some respondents noted that further clarification is required regarding assessment and the scope of resources.

### Feedback affirming the draft writing brief

Feedback	Sources
The draft writing brief provides some guidance for developing the final writing brief.	AIS HTANSW Survey (x2)

### Key matters and actions

Key matters	Sources	Actions
Some options need further detail to give a better indication of the rigour of the course and what the course would look like.	DoE Submissions 3, 4 Survey (x6)	Further detail will be provided about the course structure, topics and the content focus in the syllabus development phase.
Information about assessment and examinations are needed to help give a more complete picture of the proposed course.	AIS CEOSYD HTANSW Survey (x6)	Assessment and examination specifications will be reviewed during syllabus development.

## 6. Quantitative analysis of survey responses

Note: Due to rounding, some percentages may not total 100%.

Survey Item	Number of responses	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Yes	No
<b>Rationale</b>							
1. The proposed rationale describes the nature of the course in broad terms and explains its purpose in the curriculum.	89	25%	70%	4%	1%		
2. The proposed rationale reflects a contemporary view of the course.	89	19%	67%	10%	3%		
<b>Aim</b>							
3. The proposed aim provides a statement of the overall purpose of the syllabus.	89	20%	73%	6%	1%		
<b>Objectives</b>							
4. The proposed objectives define in broad terms the knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes to be developed through study in this course.	84	19%	65%	12%	4%		
<b>Outcomes</b>							
5. The sample of outcomes is appropriate.	83	22%	63%	11%	5%		
<b>Course structure and options</b>							
6. Option 1 is preferred.	16					22%	
7. Option 2 is preferred.	19					26%	
8. Option 3 is preferred.	37					51%	
9. The proposed core topics across the options are relevant and appropriate.	75	20%	52%	20%	8%		
10. The structure and sequence of content and topics presented in each option is logical and appropriate.	75	12%	57%	29%	1%		
11. The content and topics are contemporary and relevant.	70	7%	64%	21%	7%		
12. The content and topics enable depth of study and a broad understanding of the ancient world.	73	16%	59%	21%	4%		

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<b>Survey Item</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
13. The inclusion of Asian history content and topics is appropriate.	72	21%	61%	11%	7%		
14. Is there another structure or option BOSTES should consider?	68					62%	38%
<b>General</b>							
15. The draft writing brief provides a sound basis for developing the final writing brief, which is the blueprint for the development of the draft syllabus.	69	10%	58%	32%	0%		

## 7. Respondents

### 7.1 Consultation meetings

#### Afternoon consultation meetings (code: CM)

Location	Date (2015)	Total
North Ryde	26 October	55
Bathurst	27 October	16
Campbelltown	28 October	28
Newcastle	29 October	15
Broken Hill	2 November	4
Manly	4 November	19
Sydney	26 November	14

#### Board Curriculum Committee consultation meeting at the BOSTES on 25 November 2015 (code: BCC)

Name	Organisation
Mr Denis Fitzgerald	Chair
Associate Professor Tim Allender	NSW/Territories Committee of Chairs of Academic Boards/Senates
Ms Carly-Jane Boreland	NSW Teachers Federation
Dr Paddy Cavanagh	Aboriginal Education Consultative Group
Mr James Gersbach	NSW/ACT Independent Education Union
Mr Alex Glasgow	NSW Department of Education
Ms Melissa Knudson	NSW Department of Industry – TAFE
Mr Dennis Lendon	Professional Teachers' Council NSW
Ms Lynn McKinnon	Council of Catholic School Parents, NSW
Mr Piers Parbury	NSW Parents' Council
Professor Penny Russell	NSW/Territories Committee of Chairs of Academic Boards/Senates
Ms Paula Stott	Catholic Education Commission NSW
Mr Terence Timms	Federation of Parents and Citizens' Associations NSW
Mr Carlo Tutto cuore	Association of Independent Schools of NSW
Ms Margaret Vos	NSW Teachers Federation
Mr Peter Wilson	NSW Department of Education

## 7.2 Written submissions

<b>Organisations, groups and individuals</b>	<b>Code</b>
Association of Independent Schools of NSW	AIS
Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia (AHISA) Academic Committee	Submission 1
Australian Association of Jewish Studies	Submission 27
Catholic Education Office Sydney	CEOSYD
Communities of Catholic Schools – Diocese of Broken Bay	CCSOBB
History Teachers' Association of NSW	HTANSW
Macquarie Ancient History Association	Submission 15
NSW Department of Education	DoE
NSW Distance Education History Network	Submission 4
NSW Jewish Board of Deputies	Submission 22
NSW Teachers Federation	NSWTF
Individual Respondent	Submission 2
Individual Respondent	Submission 3
Individual Respondent	Submission 5
Individual Respondent	Submission 6
Individual Respondent	Submission 7
Individual Respondent	Submission 8
Individual Respondent	Submission 9
Individual Respondent	Submission 10
Individual Respondent	Submission 11
Individual Respondent	Submission 12
Individual Respondent	Submission 13
Individual Respondent	Submission 14
Individual Respondent	Submission 16
Individual Respondent	Submission 17
Individual Respondent	Submission 18
Individual Respondent	Submission 19
Individual Respondent	Submission 20
Individual Respondent	Submission 21
Individual Respondent	Submission 23
Individual Respondent	Submission 24

Individual Respondent	Submission 25
Individual Respondent	Submission 26
Individual Respondent	Submission 28