



**Modern History
Stage 6**

**Draft Writing Brief
Consultation Report**

February 2016

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1. Background information

The preparation of the *Modern 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 (BCC) 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 (AHISA) Academic Committee
 - Australian Catholic University History Group
 - History Teachers Association of NSW
 - NSW Distance Education History Network
 - NSW Teachers Federation
 - Sydney Girls High School
 - 8 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 *Modern History Stage 6 Draft Writing Brief Consultation Report* provides a description of the consultation process and a summary and analysis of feedback received. The summary analysis identifies a preferred option and key matters raised, together with proposed actions for syllabus development.

The consultation report presents data and findings gathered through 140 survey responses, 18 written submissions, a Board Curriculum Committee meeting and 7 teacher meetings.

The consultation report was welcomed by respondents as an opportunity to refresh the Modern History course, in particular to strengthen understanding of the work of the historian, review the relevance of the core study and provide choice for more contemporary topics, as outlined in the Statement of Broad Directions.

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
- the preference for Option 2, including the Core Study, 'Power and Authority 1919–1939', with a review of specific aspects of the course structure, topics and content
- the need for the course structure and topics to provide for depth of study and flexible approaches to support a range of pathways
- the need to clarify the focus and scope of topics, including the core topic in Option 2
- the need for the Modern 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 during draft syllabus development.
- Option 2 will form the basis for the Modern History course.
- The structure, topics and content will be determined through analysis of feedback to provide clarity and coherence.
- The focus and scope of the core and other topics will be reviewed and clarified.
- The scope and breadth of course content will be reviewed to provide greater flexibility to meet 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

140 online survey responses

Respondent:					
Academic	4	Parent	0	Pre-service teacher	7
Principal	0	School executive	19	School faculty	12
Student	4	Teacher	90	Other	4
I am:					
An Aboriginal person	1	A Torres Strait Islander person	0		
An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person	0	Not an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person	139		
Sector:					
Government	67	Catholic	22		
Independent	41	Non-school based	10		
Area of NSW:					
Metropolitan	87	Regional	53		
Number of people contributing to this survey:					
1	121	2–5	14	6 or more	5

4. Key matters

Key matters	Actions
<p>The need to focus on the development of conceptual understanding and critical historical skills.</p>	<p>Opportunities for development of conceptual understanding and historical skills will be investigated in the syllabus development phase.</p>
<p>The preference for Option 2, including the Core Study, 'Power and Authority 1919–1939', with a review of specific aspects of the course structure, topics and content.</p>	<p>Option 2 will form the basis for the Modern History course.</p>
<p>The need for the course structure and topics to provide for depth of study and flexible approaches to support a range of pathways.</p>	<p>The structure, topics and content will be determined through analysis of feedback to provide clarity and coherence.</p>
<p>The need to clarify the focus and scope of topics, including the core topic in Option 2.</p>	<p>The focus and scope of the core and other topics will be reviewed and clarified.</p>
<p>The need for the Modern History course to cater for the diversity of students in the Senior Years.</p>	<p>The scope and breadth of course content will be reviewed to provide greater flexibility to meet 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 similar strong support for the proposed rationale reflecting a contemporary view of the Modern History course.

Feedback affirming the rationale

Feedback	Sources
The rationale is clear and concise and captures the distinctive nature of the subject in the curriculum.	AHISA AIS CEOSYD Submission 3

Key matters and actions

Key matters	Sources	Actions
<p>The rationale should be amended to provide a clearer focus on the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> nature and purpose of studying modern history intentions of the course. 	AIS BCC Campbelltown (CM) CEOSYD DoE HTANSW Submission 1 Survey (x6)	The rationale will be reviewed to clarify the nature and purpose of modern history, and the focus of the course.

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 respondents to strengthen the aim.

Feedback affirming the aim

Feedback	Sources
The aim provides a clear and concise statement of what students will develop from studying Modern History.	DoE Submission 3

Key matters raised and actions

Key matters	Sources	Actions
The aim should be strengthened with a more explicit reference to the critical understanding of the past and its impact on the present, and the use of historical skills to analyse and evaluate sources and conduct historical inquiry.	DoE Survey (x1)	Specific aspects of the aim will be reviewed in the development of the draft syllabus.

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. A range of specific suggestions were made to strengthen the objectives.

Feedback affirming the objectives

Feedback	Sources
The objectives are clear and appropriate.	Submissions 3, 9 Survey (x2)

Key matters raised and actions

Key matters	Sources	Actions
The objectives should be strengthened to represent a higher level of understanding, and the complexity of the historical forces and events that have shaped our world.	AIS Survey (x2)	Specific aspects of the objectives will be reviewed in the development of the draft syllabus.

5.4 Outcomes

Summary

The majority of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the sample of outcomes is appropriate for the Modern History course. A number of respondents expressed the view that the sample outcomes do not adequately build on the skills continuum in K–10 History.

Feedback affirming the outcomes

Feedback	Sources
The outcomes are relevant and appropriate.	Survey (x2)

Key matters and actions

Key matters	Sources	Actions
The full range of outcomes is needed to provide an informed evaluation. The outcomes appear to regress from the current Stage 5 History syllabus.	AIS CEOSYD DoE Submission 1 Submission 3 Survey (x4)	Outcomes will be developed in the writing of the draft syllabus. The outcomes will build on and strengthen the skills continuum from K–10.

5.5 Diversity of learners

Summary

A number of respondents provided feedback on how the Modern History course could be designed to meet the needs of the diversity of learners. A range of suggestions were provided.

Several suggestions focused on assessment as a way of meeting the needs of the diversity of students.

Several respondents commented 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 the Life Skills program is not appropriate. To meet the needs of these learners, respondents suggested flexible approaches to support a range of pathways.

Respondents who commented on Life Skills outcomes and content suggested that these need to link clearly with the Modern History course rather than providing a broader HSIE or general History Life Skills course.

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

Feedback	Sources
Ensuring there is not too much prescriptive content will allow teachers the flexibility to program for deep understanding and mastery of critical skills. With appropriate space, teachers can better meet the needs of all students.	AIS Survey (x2)
Providing greater choice in content, for example the variety of case studies and personalities, would help engage a greater diversity of learners. Being able to develop a chronology to link topics would make the course more comprehensible to a greater range of students.	Survey (x4)
Assessment activities and tasks need to be varied to cater for a range of learners, for example including opportunities for group work, oral assessment and use of ICT. Differentiation of outcomes would allow the diversity of learners to be more fairly assessed.	Survey (x6)
A Life Skills Modern History course would need to align with the regular course but with a modified content and skills continuum and focus more on concrete aspects rather than the theoretical.	AIS Survey (x3)

Key matters and actions

Key matters	Sources	Actions
More consideration needs to be given to the diversity of learners, which includes students who have a variety of post-school pathways.	HTANSW North Ryde (CM) Submission 5 Survey (x4)	The scope and range of course content will be considered in the development of the final course structure to provide flexibility to meet the diversity of learners.

5.6 Course structure and options

Summary

Option 2 was the most strongly supported option. Many respondents suggested reviewing topics within the option, in particular the fourth component, 'A Century of Change'. The Core Study within Option 2, 'Power and Authority 1919–1939', was the most strongly supported of the core studies proposed and respondents supported retaining the national studies and the studies in peace and conflict.

A number of respondents agreed that the proposed core topics across the options were relevant and appropriate. Those who did not agree expressed differing points of view about why proposed core topics were not suitable as core studies, including that particular topics were too broad in scope, too heavy in content or lacking in coherence.

Several respondents expressed the view that the options would provide flexibility to sequence content and topics according to their chosen programming approach. Some respondents indicated that they could not discern a clear organising logic for the structure and sequence of topics in some of the options.

The majority of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the proposed content and topics are contemporary and relevant. There were different points of view about the value of 'contemporary' study in a history course and the appropriateness of the end dates for some proposed topics. A number of respondents welcomed more recent end dates as providing the opportunity to help explain the relevance of modern history. A similar number expressed the view that end dates that are too recent encourage a current-affairs approach.

Several respondents noted that the broader topics should be more clearly defined in terms of scope, timeframe and content. There was broad support for moving the World War I topic to the Year 11 course.

Several respondents commented that Asian and Pacific topics should be optional rather than mandatory, while others suggested that a non-European case study be mandated in Year 11. Various additional Asian topics were suggested, including those relating to China in the second half of the twentieth century.

Several respondents proposed an alternative structure or option, with wide variations in how they combined topics from the four proposed options or included new topics.

Feedback affirming the course structure and options

Feedback	Sources
<p>Preferred option Option 2 is the most appropriate option.</p>	<p>AIS Bathurst (CM) Manly (CM) Newcastle (CM) North Ryde (CM) Submissions 3, 8 Survey (x48) Sydney (CM)</p>
<p>A number of strengths were identified in Option 2, including that this option maintains the present course most closely which is important for resourcing, programming and teaching to allow a smooth transition from the current syllabus to the new; topics in the option have a natural interrelationship that is coherent, logical and engaging; the option enables a holistic understanding of the whole world and its history and allows departure from traditional Eurocentric approaches.</p>	<p>Manly (CM) Newcastle (CM) Survey (x11) Sydney (CM)</p>
<p>Topics and content Topics within an option do not necessarily have to be sequential. The options allow teachers to program and teach topics sequentially if they wish.</p>	<p>Bathurst (CM) Manly (CM) Survey (x3)</p>
<p>The general shift to more recent history is a positive move. Most of the proposed topics are more contemporary and relevant than those in the current syllabus.</p>	<p>Campbelltown (CM) Survey (x8)</p>
<p>Overall the balance between depth of study and breadth of understanding is appropriate, particularly in Options 1, 2 and 3.</p>	<p>HTANSW Manly (CM) Survey (x3)</p>
<p>Moving World War I into Year 11 allows the inclusion of more contemporary history.</p>	<p>Campbelltown (CM) HTANSW Newcastle (CM) Survey (x3)</p>
<p>Where World War I and World War II are included they are represented in appropriate ways.</p>	<p>Bathurst (CM) CCSOBB Newcastle (CM) Survey (x6)</p>
<p>In a globalised world the inclusion of Asian and Pacific history is appropriate, allowing opportunities for students to not only focus on European history.</p>	<p>Campbelltown (CM) CCSOBB CEOSYD Manly (CM) Newcastle (CM) Survey (x6)</p>

Key matters and actions

Key matters	Sources	Actions
<p>Core study</p> <p>The Option 2 Core Study 'Power and Authority' is appropriate. However, it includes two personalities and is therefore too broad in scope. The core study in Option 2 needs further development if it is to be examined through the source-based approach as is done currently.</p>	<p>Bathurst (CM) Newcastle (CM) North Ryde (CM) Submission 8 Survey (x6)</p>	<p>The scope and focus of the core study in Option 2 will be reviewed with further consideration of examination specifications during the draft syllabus development phase.</p>
<p>More information is needed about how the core will be examined in the HSC.</p>	<p>Campbelltown (CM) CEOSYD HTANSW Manly (CM) Newcastle (CM) Submission 3 Survey (x3)</p>	
<p>The requirement of two core topics as in Options 1 and 4 restricts choice and does not provide the flexibility to meet the needs of all students.</p>	<p>AIS BCC Campbelltown (CM) DoE Manly (CM) Newcastle (CM) Survey (x9) Sydney (CM)</p>	<p>One core topic only will be specified for study.</p>
<p>There is a need for greater clarification of the scope, timeframe and content of the core and other topics, to ensure they can be taught in the time available.</p>	<p>Bathurst (CM) Campbelltown (CM) Manly (CM) Newcastle (CM) North Ryde (CM) Survey (x7)</p>	<p>Option 2 and the core topic within that option will be the basis for the development of the syllabus. Opportunities for depth of learning will be reviewed in the syllabus development phase.</p>
<p>Course structure and sequence</p> <p>The interrelationship between topics within each option and the links and progression between Year 11 and Year 12 needs to be articulated more clearly.</p>	<p>Campbelltown (CM) Manly (CM) Newcastle (CM) North Ryde (CM) Survey (x6)</p>	<p>The inclusion of a statement about the overall coherence of the course will be considered. Advice about the links between topics will be provided in the development of support materials to accompany the final syllabus.</p>
<p>The Historical Investigation should be included as a stand-alone topic in Year 11 and the option of a school-developed case study should be retained.</p>	<p>Campbelltown (CM) Manly (CM) NSWTF North Ryde (CM) Submission 5 Survey (x2)</p>	<p>The Historical Investigation will be included as a stand-alone topic and the school-developed case study will be retained.</p>
<p>The overall course structure should not</p>	<p>DoE</p>	<p>The course structure will</p>

Key matters	Sources	Actions
create a militarised focus on modern history at the expense of social history.	Survey (x2)	be reviewed for balance, with representation of 18th and 19th-century topics and social history. Social history will be integrated as appropriate within topics.
Review Year 11 topics to provide opportunities for coverage of the 18 th and 19 th century foundations of Year 12 topics.	AIS BCC Submission 5 Survey (x2)	
Topics and content Some topics appear to repeat Stage 5 content, in particular, 'World War I' and 'World War II' and 'A Century of Change'.	Bathurst (CM) North Ryde (CM) Survey (x2) Sydney (CM)	Repetition and overlap will be addressed in the selection and scoping of topics.
Some important contemporary topics are missing, for example threats to world security, gender equality, women/women's history. Chinese history after 1949, including Mao, is a significant omission.	AIS BCC Campbelltown (CM) CCSOBB HTANSW Manly (CM) North Ryde (CM) Survey (x12)	The analysis of feedback will inform the selection of topics, while addressing issues of relevance, balance, comparability and scope for engaging with historical sources and interpretations.
Opportunities for topics relating to a world history framework were suggested, including non-European case studies in the Year 11 course, and topics covering Latin America, the Middle East and Africa in the Year 12 course.	AIS Bathurst (CM) Broken Hill (CM) North Ryde (CM) Survey (x2) Sydney (CM)	
Other structures or options Consideration is needed of different approaches or structures that cater for the diversity of learners. It was suggested that a separate personality-related study in the Year 12 course could help ensure the course is accessible to a diversity of learners.	CEOSYD North Ryde (CM) Submission 13 Survey (x5)	The scope and breadth of course content will be considered in the development of the final course structure for the draft syllabus to provide flexibility to meet the needs and interests of the diversity of learners.

5.7 Assessment and reporting

Summary

Respondents indicated support for the current school-based assessment and reporting requirements in Modern History. There were differing points of view about the purpose of school-based assessment. Several respondents suggested that tasks should closely resemble examination-style questions. Other respondents commented that a range of types of task should be used to allow students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in a variety of ways.

Several respondents supported the current three-hour HSC examination with a range of question types. There were differing points of view about how the examination might be improved to make it more accessible to a wider range of students. Suggestions included placing less reliance on extended responses and offering more questions that require short and mid-length answers. Several respondents agreed with retaining source-based questions for the core study, but taking different approaches to avoid questions becoming formulaic and predictable. Several respondents suggested reducing the number of objective response questions or removing them altogether.

A number of respondents identified plagiarism as an issue with school-based assessment, in particular with tasks not completed at school.

Feedback affirming the information on assessment and reporting

Feedback	Sources
The current guidelines, with three to five tasks with a set weighting on test/examination components, are appropriate	AIS Submission 5 Survey (x8)
The current examination with a range of question types is appropriate.	AHISA NSWTF Submission 5 Survey (x10)

Key matters and actions

Key matters	Sources	Actions
<p>School-based assessment</p> <p>There is a need for improved assessment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a variety of tasks to test historical skills and historical thinking, rather than tasks that replicate examination questions • the design of tasks to circumvent plagiarism • further advice about differentiated assessment for the diversity of learners. 	<p>Survey (x7)</p>	<p>Assessment advice and activities will be developed to support implementation of the syllabus.</p>
<p>External examination specifications</p> <p>The current HSC examination caters very well for students who are skilled at writing extended responses. It needs to include a greater proportion of different question types to allow the diversity of students to demonstrate what they know and can do.</p>	<p>Survey (x7)</p>	
<p>The HSC examination has become too predictable, especially in the core and personality studies. To improve examination of the core, there should be consideration of the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • core as a concrete topic rather than a generalised one • approach used to examine the core, including different approaches to source-based questions. 	<p>Bathurst (CM) Campbelltown (CM) North Ryde (CM) Submissions 1, 3, 8 Survey (x6)</p>	<p>Examination specifications will be reviewed during syllabus development.</p>

5.8 Other comments

Summary

The majority of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the draft writing brief provides a sound basis for developing the final writing brief.

Some respondents noted that further clarification is required about the scope and focus of topics, and the links and progression between Year 11 and Year 12.

Feedback affirming the draft writing brief

Feedback	Sources
The draft writing brief retains familiar approaches that have worked well with some more contemporary approaches and provides some guidance.	AIS HTANSW Submission 8

Key matters and actions

No other key matters were raised.

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
Rationale							
1. The proposed rationale describes the nature of the course in broad terms and explains its purpose in the curriculum.	120	14%	82%	3%	1%		
2. The proposed rationale reflects a contemporary view of the course.	121	13%	80%	6%	2%		
Aim							
3. The proposed aim provides a statement of the overall purpose of the syllabus.	117	22%	74%	3%	1%		
Objectives							
4. The proposed objectives define in broad terms the knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes to be developed through study in this course.	117	18%	78%	3%	1%		
Outcomes							
5. The sample of outcomes is appropriate.	113	13%	77%	10%	0%		
Course structure and options							
6. Option 1 is preferred.	13					16%	
7. Option 2 is preferred.	48					59%	
8. Option 3 is preferred.	10					12%	
9. Option 4 is preferred.	10					12%	
10. The proposed core topics across the options are relevant and appropriate.	86	8%	48%	35%	9%		
11. The structure and sequence of content and topics presented in each option is logical and appropriate.	87	7%	54%	31%	8%		
12. The content and topics are contemporary and relevant.	86	9%	71%	15%	5%		

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Survey Item	Number of responses	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Yes	No
13. The content and topics enable depth of study and a broad understanding of the modern world.	85	14%	65%	19%	2%		
14. World Wars I and II are represented in appropriate ways in each option.	84	13%	57%	21%	8%		
15. The inclusion of Asian and Pacific history content and topics is appropriate.	87	15%	70%	13%	2%		
16. Is there another structure or option BOSTES should consider?	79					61%	39%
General							
17. 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.	85	7%	66%	20%	7%		

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 Tuttocuore	Association of Independent Schools of NSW
Ms Margaret Vos	NSW Teachers Federation
Mr Peter Wilson	NSW Department of Education

7.2 Written submissions

Organisations, groups and individuals	Code
Association of Independent Schools of NSW	AIS
Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia (AHISA) Academic Committee	Submission 1
Australian Catholic University History Group	Submission 2
Catholic Education Office Sydney	CEOSYD
Communities of Catholic Schools – Diocese of Broken Bay	CCSOBB
History Teachers Association of NSW	HTANSW
NSW Department of Education	DoE
NSW Distance Education History Network	Submission 5
NSW Teachers Federation	NSWTF
Sydney Girls High School	Submission 13
Individual Respondent	Submission 3
Individual Respondent	Submission 4
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