

Board Bulletin



BOARD OF STUDIES NSW

February 2002 – Vol 11 No 1

Recognition of excellence in the New HSC 2001

A wide range of outstanding student work from the 2001 HSC has been showcased in January and February 2002. The Board of Studies has recognised excellence in student performance with a number of exhibitions, awards and ceremonies. ARTEXPRESS, Encore, OnStage and DesignTech featured the highest standards in performance and practical works.

Academic excellence was celebrated at two ceremonies:

First in Course Awards

At a ceremony in the Sydney Conservatorium of Music in December 2001, the Minister for Education and Training, John Watkins, presented awards to students placed first in the State for an HSC course. Students who received the awards had successfully engaged with the first New HSC exams and had met the new, more rigorous HSC standards. The 123 places on the First in Course list were achieved by 62 government school students, 2 TAFE students and 49 students from non-government schools – 79 girls and 44 boys. Some students received awards for more than one course.

In acknowledging the students, Mr Watkins also acknowledged the work of the dedicated and inspiring teachers and the supportive parents and carers who provided the guidance and encouragement essential for reaching this level of achievement.

Premier's Awards

The Premier's Awards for All-round Excellence took place on Thursday 7 February at Darling Harbour – the tenth year of these awards. 339 students received from the Premier an engraved glass trophy recording their name and achievement in reaching the band 6 or band 4E standard in ten or more units.

The students came from all types of schools and all parts of NSW. This diversity confirms that the HSC provides the opportunity for all students to achieve their goals, irrespective of locale or type of school.

The Brother John Taylor Memorial Prize recognised two students for overcoming extreme difficulty in achieving their HSC. 

Students and principals access New HSC 2001 results

In 2001, 62 021 students enrolled in the New Higher School Certificate were informed that they could obtain their results from the Board of Studies website, or by phone, in advance of the post.

To assist speedy access and manage the expected peak of inquiries early on the day the results were released, the Office of the Board of Studies set up a number of mechanisms designed to handle 1000 inquiries per minute. These included:

- the Schools Online system by which principals could download whole-of-school results
- an array of four load-balanced servers especially designed to provide student results online
- an IVR (interactive voice response) phone system for students to obtain their results.

Students began to access their results from 6 am on Wednesday 19 December 2001.


By 10 am, 30 848 students had acquired their results via the internet, and a further 7 252 by phone.

By 5 pm, there had been 51 839 result inquiries via the internet, and 11 081 by phone.

Because many students accessed their results by both internet and phone, and some more than once, the total number of result inquiries for the results-release week was 89 716 – higher than the number of students who sat the examination.

Overall, 85.4% of student result inquiries were via the internet, and 14.6% were by phone.

In addition, 727 principals downloaded their school's results from the Board's computer.

Apart from obtaining their results from the Board website, students could easily access each of the Course Band Descriptions to help them understand what they had achieved. 

HSC and SC Important Dates

Year 10

- 18 Feb Schools online entry service opens
 8 Mar Dispatch Presiding Officer nominations for SC/HSC
 Dispatch Test Supervisor nominations for SC
 18 Mar Latest date for all entries to be received
 Schools must produce confirmations
 4 Apr Latest date for Board Endorsed Course applications
 for 2003 to BOSLO
 5 Apr Latest date to submit SC special exam provisions
 applications
 11 Apr Submit Presiding Officer nominations for SC/HSC
 Submit Test Supervisor nominations for SC

Year 11

- 18 Feb Schools online entry service opens
 VET competency enrolments commence
 18 Mar Latest date for all entries to be received
 Schools must produce confirmations
 28 Mar Final date for submission of VET competencies
 entered
 4 Apr Latest date for Board Endorsed Course applications
 for 2003 to BOSLO

Year 12

- 18 Feb Schools online entry service opens
 VET competency enrolments start
 1 Mar Dispatch Languages Speaking examinations
 timetable (17/8 - 21/9)
 8 Mar Dispatch Presiding Officer nominations for SC/HSC
 18 Mar Latest date for all entries to be received
 Schools must produce confirmations
 28 Mar Final date for submission of VET competencies
 entered
 4 Apr Latest date for Board Endorsed Course applications
 for 2003 to BOSLO
 5 April Latest date for submission of applications
 for special exam provisions for HSC
 11 Apr Submit Presiding Officer nominations for SC/HSC

CHECK YOUR MAILBOX



- ❖ Business Services Framework – Parts A and B
- ❖ Languages K–10 Draft Framework and Survey
- ❖ Creative Arts K–6 CD-ROM
- ❖ Computing Applications Stage 6 Syllabus
- ❖ English 7–10 Draft Syllabus and Survey
- ❖ Maths 7–10 Draft Syllabus and Survey
- ❖ School Developed BEC Guidelines
- ❖ English Stage 6 Prescriptions Poster
- ❖ Working with Aboriginal Communities
- ❖ TAFE Arts and Design catalogue

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The *Board Bulletin* is a regular publication by the Board of Studies NSW. Principals are requested to circulate it among teachers and members of the School Council, P & C and parents. One copy should be filed for reference. Schools may only photocopy this publication for use by teachers, students and parents. Contributions or suggestions for articles are welcome.

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President's Message



With the new school year under way there are important reminders of last year's achievements. ARTEXPRESS, OnStage, DesignTech, Encore and the Premier's Awards Ceremony all provide public recognition of the excellence achieved by students at the end of secondary school. In addition the publication of the Young Writers Showcase 2001, available in book and CD-ROM versions, provides an opportunity to expose the community to some of the outstanding works submitted by students in the new English Extension 2 Course.

The Board is fortunate in having Dr Geoff Masters review the processes used in the assessment of the New HSC and to address concerns raised in relation to the setting and marking of examinations and in the reporting of results. An operation of the size and complexity of the HSC can only profit from an independent and professional consideration of issues raised by principals, teachers, students, markers and members of the public.

Given the change to reporting the HSC in terms of marks related to outcome standards (band descriptions), it is not surprising that a range of responses being expressed in conversations among teachers and students are conditioned by thinking in terms of past practice. The number of students in each band is not determined by statistical manipulation as occurred in the past, but by judgements by experienced teachers of the content of students' answers.

The judgements made at the decision points for each band will be available with examples of student work in the standards packages being distributed to all schools. These packages will also contain the papers and marking guidelines and will enable a more informed discussion about the appropriateness of the standards and evidence of performance required.

The range of differences between subjects in terms of numbers of students in each band (especially band 6) is a cause of concern, especially if it leads to changes in student choice because of perceived differences in the ease of obtaining 'high' performance.

A range of factors determines student achievement of high performance. Examination systems that report on a standards basis do not find identical distributions across subjects. However, it is a legitimate question to ask whether or not the current range is appropriate.

If a distribution is not considered appropriate for a given subject then in order to 'fine-tune', it would be necessary to consider the statement of syllabus outcomes, the band descriptions, the characteristics of the examination and marking guidelines, and the characteristics of the cohort taking that subject. Changes in any or all of these factors could affect the subsequent distribution.

In addressing these concerns it is important for the Board to consider professional advice consistent with the objectives of the HSC reform process.



(Professor) Gordon Stanley

Board Bulletin in Brief

Recognition of excellence in the New HSC 2001

Student performance celebrated at the First in Course Awards, the Premier's Awards and in a number of exhibitions.

Students and principals access New HSC 2001 results

62 021 students made 89 716 internet and telephone result inquiries to the Board.

English Extension 2 course promotes quality works

English Extension 2 course students produced remarkable works.

Review of the 2001 Higher School Certificate examinations

Board of Studies processes for reviewing the HSC, and the Masters' review of the 2001 HSC.

The 2001 HSC standards-setting operation – some facts and figures

The process for setting the standards for the HSC courses.

Why no English Standard course students achieved Band 6 in 2001

English Standard students are less likely to achieve the Band 6 standard, but there is no artificial ceiling on their achievement.

School Certificate Test in Australian History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship

Learning from the trials with volunteer schools will influence the specimen paper.

Should the proportions of students in the performance bands in each course be the same?

Claims that there should be an equal proportion of students in any band miss the central achievement of the New HSC reforms.

The study of English at Stage 6

Detailed textual analysis, analytical processes and critical expression remain important despite a broadening of the scope of courses.

Years 7–10 syllabuses: having your say

Teachers are invited to participate in the consultation process for the development of syllabuses.

Trial Computing Skills Assessment 2001

20 schools participated in the trial assessment. 150 schools are to participate in a further trial in 2002.

Mathematics K–10 syllabus development

Mathematics K–6 and 7–10 draft syllabuses and consultation surveys are ready for comment.

Primary Matters

Mathematics K–6 draft syllabus is currently in schools for consultation, with an accompanying survey. New material has been added to the K–6 website.

Determination of VET qualifications for HSC students

The rules and structure of the HSC VET courses are not always identical to the qualification packaging rules.

National Training Package reviews and implications for VET HSC Courses

Process for reviewing and implementing the VET training packages.

New VET syllabuses in Business Services for delivery to Year 11 from 2002

The new national Business Services Training Package goes beyond general administration to address the needs of the industry.

Profiles: John O'Brien, Director, Curriculum

Introduction to the Office's new Director of Curriculum.

Profile: Your Board of Studies Liaison Officers

Introducing the Board of Studies Liaison Officer in your area.

English Extension 2 course promotes quality works

For the first time in 2001 students undertaking the New Higher School Certificate were able to complete and submit a Major Work as a fourth unit of English study.

The New English Extension 2 course requires students to independently plan and complete an extended composition. It allows students to select an area of personal interest from their specialised study of English and develop their work in this area to a level of distinction.

The work must be conceived and executed by the student under the supervision of an English teacher.

Students have the option of working in a variety of media and forms ranging from critical responses and short stories to poetry, radio drama, CD-ROMs and websites. The Major Work can be imaginative, investigative, interpretive, analytical or a combination of any of these.

The 2001 English Extension 2 candidates rose to the challenge and produced a remarkable range of works. 1468 major works were submitted in the following categories:

Genre	Number of works submitted in each category	Percentages (rounded) %
Short story(ies)	781	53
Critical responses	235	16
Speeches	38	3
Performance poetry	13	1
Multimedia	51	3.5
Poems	134	9
Scripts	108	7
Radio drama	21	1.5
Video	87	6
Total	1468	100%

In their major works, students demonstrated extensive investigation skills and an astonishing ability to compose rigorous, sustained original works to a high level. It is evident that this course activated their love of language and unleashed their inherent creativity.

The course clearly inspired the students to search beyond their current understanding, to make connections, and to produce work that is thoughtful, sensitive, insightful, and artistically complete.

Students were also required to submit a Reflection Statement with their Major Work. The Reflection Statement described their intentions, processes of work and the understanding they gained from undertaking the Major Work.

The Reflection Statements demonstrated sophisticated understanding of composing and research processes, relationships between different texts and ways of thinking, and the development of ideas.

The honest self-appraisal in their statements clearly showed the growth in their understanding of themselves and the deep level of their engagement in the writing process.

The Board of Studies has developed a book and a CD-ROM that contain a variety of the Major Works that were presented for the HSC in 2001 and that were recognised by Higher School Certificate markers as being in the top band of performance. While the book is restricted to works presented in the print medium, the CD-ROM also includes some of the outstanding multimedia products. Both publications include student Reflection Statements.

The book and the CD-ROM are available for purchase from the Office of the Board of Studies.

Order through Client Services.

Phone: (02) 9367 8159 Fax: (02) 9262 6270 or email clientservices@boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au



Review of the 2001 Higher School Certificate examinations

Board of Studies processes for reviewing the HSC

Each year the Board of Studies implements a process for comprehensive review of the HSC examination program.

The Board is provided with:

- reports on aspects of the examination setting and marking process
- reports from supervisors of marking on the effectiveness of marking for each subject
- a report from the HSC Consultative Committee, a group of independent measurement experts from major universities, who ensure that the examination setting, marking and standards setting processes have worked as intended.

Each year the Board's HSC results system is audited independently by two senior members of the Consultative Committee. The accuracy of the results is confirmed prior to the release of HSC results.

This feedback enables the Board to make adjustments and refinements to the HSC examination process where required.

The Masters Review

As part of its review process for 2001 – the first year of the implementation of the New HSC – the Board of Studies has commissioned Dr Geoff Masters, Executive Director of the Australian Council for Educational Research, to conduct an independent review of the New Higher School Certificate examination program.

Dr Masters' review will provide a valuable additional perspective to complement the Board's own monitoring and evaluation.

Dr Masters will table his report on the implementation of the new standards-referenced HSC examination and marking process at the Board's meeting in early April.

Dr Masters' review is considering the quality and effectiveness of:

- a) the processes for setting the examinations and developing marking guidelines in the new standards environment
- b) the procedures for marking the examinations and determining the standard of achievement students have demonstrated
- c) the Board's quality assurance procedures for developing the examinations, marking examination papers and validating results.

Dr Masters is also examining and reporting on issues raised by students, teachers and interest groups concerning the examinations and marking processes for 2001.

NSW school systems and independent schools, teacher unions, professional associations, parent bodies and other key education groups have been invited to meet with Dr Masters to discuss issues relating to the examination program.

Ongoing review

The Board of Studies will continue to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the new syllabuses and assessment procedures to ensure the quality and integrity of the Higher School Certificate reforms.



The 2001 HSC standards-setting operation – some facts and figures

- There were 88 teams of highly experienced teachers/markers (judges) who set standards in 114 courses.
- Most teams consisted of six judges. There were more for some courses (such as English Standard and Advanced) and fewer for the small candidature language courses.
- In total about 460 judges were involved.
- The judges were trained for their task in September and early October.
- The task of setting the standards involved three stages, usually conducted over about a two-week period to give the judges a chance to discuss, reflect on and modify, if they wished, decisions they had made at an earlier stage.
- The judges were supported by 26 Board officers (referred to as Field Officers) as well as five technical officers and 10 administrative staff.
- A group of 5 specialists were appointed to perform a review and monitoring role across all the language courses.
- The judges completed surveys and reports that they discussed with the HSC Consultative Committee during their review meeting.



Why no English Standard course students achieved Band 6 in 2001

The English Advanced course was designed to provide students with the opportunity to undertake the challenge of higher-order thinking in English.

The English Advanced and the English Standard courses have a common Area of Study which constitutes 40% of each course. The remaining 60% of each course is made up of modules unique to that course.

The outcomes of the English Advanced course incorporate and extend beyond the English Standard course outcomes. It is especially through the unique section of the English Advanced course that students have the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge, skills and understanding beyond the outcomes established for the English Standard course.

The English Standard course emphasises reflection on texts and demonstration of the effectiveness of texts for different audiences and purposes. The emphasis of the English Advanced course is on the analysis and evaluation of texts and the ways they are valued in their contexts.

Students who undertake the English Standard course have the opportunity to perform at the levels described in the higher bands, but they are less likely to achieve in those bands than students undertaking the English Advanced course.

In the 2001 HSC examinations no students of the Standard course demonstrated the level of achievement required to receive Band 6.

The Standard and Advanced course students sat for the same Paper 1 and then either Paper 2 (Standard) or Paper 2 (Advanced).

The Board then undertook two procedures in order to make the marks of students comparable across the two courses. The first procedure is based on the common paper and is used to produce the marks

that are provided to UAC (ie for the purpose of calculating students' UAIs). The second procedure relies on the Board's standards-setting procedures to achieve a similar result, but one that can be interpreted in terms of students' achievement in relation to performance bands.

For the first procedure, the distribution of marks awarded to students in Paper 2 (Standard) was adjusted to match the distribution of marks awarded to the Standard course students in Paper 1. The same approach was used to obtain marks for the students in the Advanced course. This procedure equates the marks so that they are in the same 'currency' or, more technically, placed on the same scale, for the UAI calculations.

The second procedure involved teams of highly experienced teacher-markers using professional judgement and a rigorous multi-stage process to determine two sets of band cut-off marks, one for each course. Although student achievement in the two courses is reported on a common scale using a single set of band descriptions, the cut-off marks are determined separately to compensate for the difference in difficulty between the courses. This procedure ensures that students whose English performances are of the same standard achieve the same HSC marks, regardless of which course they do.

These highly experienced teacher-markers were not able to find any English Standard students who achieved the Band 6 standards in 2001.

However, there is certainly no artificial ceiling on the band level available to Standard course students. Students of the English Standard course who can demonstrate performance to the same standard as students of the English Advanced course who achieve Band 6 will also receive a Band 6 result.



School Certificate Test in Australian History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship

The School Certificate Test in Australian History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship is mandatory in 2002.

The test has been trialled with volunteer schools since 1998. The results of the trialling have been used to prepare a package of information for schools about the 2002 test. It will contain a scope statement, specimen test paper with sample marking guidelines and performance descriptions for the test report. The package will be sent to schools in Term 1, 2002.




Should the proportions of students in the performance bands in each course be the same?

Claims that for different courses there should be approximately equal proportions of students in any band miss the central achievement of the New HSC reforms.

The New HSC reports the standard that an individual student has reached in a course against publicly known descriptions of what that means he or she knows and can do. Trained teacher markers make that judgement. The reported mark now has meaning.

An examination of the band descriptions for a range of courses shows that they are all different, even in courses that people regard as being quite similar. This is to be expected given the differences in the outcomes and content of the courses. The band descriptions for any course describe what are appropriate levels of performance in that course. The descriptions do not attempt to capture a set of common levels of achievement across the range of courses and it should not be expected that the proportions of students in each band across different courses would be the same.

The former HSC used a predetermined formula to transform students' marks into a rank so that approximately the same proportion of students was placed in each mark band for every course. The reported mark was a rank position but had no further meaning in terms of the standards achieved. Real performance in a course was not open to scrutiny.

There will continue to be differences between reported achievement in courses because the HSC is now transparently reporting what students have achieved against publicly known standards. The Board will, of course, consider the 2001 band distributions as part of its evaluation of the New HSC. However, one of the key positive outcomes of the changes to the HSC is that standards in each course can now be illustrated through samples of students' work. A Standards Package for each 2001 HSC course will reach schools at the end of Term 1, 2002. Students and teachers will then be able to see the nature and quality of the work that students need to produce in order to achieve each band in an HSC course. 

The study of English at Stage 6

Students and teachers have now completed the first New Higher School Certificate in English and it is time to reflect on the new syllabus and to reinforce some of its aspects, such as the need for rigorous analysis of texts at all levels of the subject.

Meaning remains central to the study of English. The study of English makes explicit the language forms and processes of meaning. English Stage 6 develops this by encouraging students to explore, critically evaluate and appreciate a wide variety of the texts of Australian and other societies, in various forms and media, including multimedia. (English Stage 6 Syllabus, 1999, p7).

In the Area of Study, students in the Standard and Advanced courses examine closely the individual qualities of texts while considering the texts' relationships to the wider context of the area of study.

Students at Standard level are required to undertake a close study of at least four types of prescribed texts and each elective at the Standard level requires the integrated study of language and text.


At the Advanced level students are required to undertake a close study of at least five types of prescribed texts. They are expected to develop their academic achievement through understanding the nature and function of complex texts.

The 2001 HSC Notes from the Examination Centre provide important information which helps support

teachers preparing students for the HSC examination. Markers have stressed the need for a close analysis of texts, particularly:

- at Standard level, all candidates 'preparing for a close study of literature need to be aware of the techniques used by the composer and how these techniques shape meaning'. (2001 HSC Notes from the Examination Centre (Standard/Advanced) p12)
- at Advanced level, the better responses 'were able to develop and sustain a strong, clear thesis supported by relevant textual advice.' (2001 HSC Notes from the Examination Centre (Standard/Advanced) p18)
- at Extension 1 level, strong candidates showed a 'sophisticated structure of responses incorporating complexity and well integrated textual references and quotes in support of arguments'. (2001 HSC Notes from Examination Centre (Extension 1) p7).

While the scope of the courses and the types of texts available for study have expanded in the study of English at Stage 6, skills in detailed analysis remain critical. Attention must be given to:

- clear, careful analysis of texts at all levels of the subject
- development of the knowledge, skills and understanding to assist students to engage in this process of analysis
- expression of student understanding that uses language relevant to the study of English. 

Years 7–10 syllabuses: having your say

The review of the Years 7–10 curriculum will continue to gain momentum during 2002. Recently completed evaluation reports have provided broad directions for the development of draft writing briefs. Following wide consultation the writing briefs will be refined and used as the blueprint for new draft syllabuses. A further period of consultation will occur before the syllabuses are finalised.

Consultation

Consultation is a highly important part of the Board's syllabus development process. It is important to the development of quality syllabus documents that teachers engage with the draft documents and let the Board know their views.

Teachers will have opportunities to engage in the consultation process at every phase of the syllabus development process.

Schools will be sent hard copies of all draft documents accompanied by a survey instrument. Responses from individual teachers, faculties and whole school groups are encouraged. Respondents may provide a written submission if they find that the survey format does not assist in communicating their views.

Each syllabus development project includes a series of strategically planned meetings in metropolitan and regional areas. In some cases the meetings will be open to all interested teachers while in other areas a sampling approach will be used to ensure a representative group of teachers provide their views.

For each course the survey, the timetable for consultation, and the consultation report (which allows teachers to judge the extent of the Board's actions in response to their comments) will be available on the Board of Studies website.

Remember, responses can be made online.

All teachers are encouraged to participate in the consultation process. This may involve:

- becoming familiar with the **K–10 Curriculum Framework**, which will be available on the Board's website, and understanding its implications for the new syllabuses
- reading the evaluation report and broad directions as background to the developments in the subject
- noting the dates for the consultation periods and scheduling a faculty meeting at that time to focus on the draft document
- watching for subject-specific correspondence about other consultation meetings and attending where possible.


The involvement of teachers in this process not only assists in the development of the syllabus but is also helpful in preparing teachers to implement the final documents.

Use our website www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au 

Trial Computing Skills Assessment 2001

In 2001, 1474 Year 10 students from 20 schools participated in a trial Computing Skills Assessment. The assessment consisted of school assessment and an external test based on information communications technology outcomes in current Board syllabuses.

In 2002, 150 schools will participate in a further trial to prepare for the implementation of the Computing Skills Assessment in 2003.

A report on the 2001 trial will appear in a future Board Bulletin. Information about the Computing Skills Assessment, including a copy of the 2001 trial test is available at www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/docs_sc1998/computingskills_assessment.html 


Mathematics K–10 syllabus development

Draft Years K–6 and Years 7–10 Mathematics syllabuses and consultation surveys have been placed on the Board’s website and distributed in hard copy to all schools and key groups for consultation from 28 January to 15 March 2002. A project team of primary and secondary educators developed the draft syllabuses following the approval of the Mathematics Years K–10 Writing Brief at the September 2001 Board meeting.

Schools, teachers and other interested people and organisations can respond to the draft syllabuses in one of three ways:

- written responses on the survey forms that accompany the draft syllabuses
- email survey responses to johnson@boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au
- online survey responses through the Board’s website (www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au).

Consultation meetings with groups of teachers in various locations around the State will be held during February 2002.

The final syllabuses will be prepared in response to consultation input. The consultation report on the draft syllabuses, along with the final syllabuses, will be presented to the Board in 2002. 



Primary Matters

Mathematics K–6 update

The Mathematics Years K–6 Draft Syllabus is currently in schools for consultation, with an accompanying survey. Both documents can also be accessed through the Board of Studies website (www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au) in the What’s New section. Comments and suggestions from schools, teachers and other interested groups in the education community are very important to ensure that the final syllabus will meet the needs of teachers and students in NSW.

The syllabus includes several parts that are common to both the Years K–6 and Years 7–10 syllabuses. These are the Rationale, Aim and Objectives and K–10 Mathematics Scope and Continuum. The draft syllabus also includes Stage 4 Outcomes and Content.

New features include:

- the organisation of content as ‘learn about’ and ‘learn to’ statements
- links to other strands and key learning areas
- language important to the particular content
- relevant background information to support teaching and learning
- a stage statement acknowledging the prior-to-school learning of students.

The consultation period is 29 January to 15 March. Several focus group meetings will also be held in different parts of the state during this period. Teachers’ groups and individuals are urged to take the opportunity to provide feedback during this time.


Throughout 2002 many schools will be participating in the collection of work samples from the trialling of teaching and learning units and assessment tasks that will form part of the support material.

K–6 website update

New material is being added to the website on a regular basis. The most recent additions are:

- outcomes for all key learning areas for each stage in a Microsoft Word format for downloading
- mapping of commonly taught units of work across all key learning areas
- integrated units of work with an Aboriginal perspective for each stage are being added during 2002.

The website can be accessed through www.bosnsw-k6.nsw.edu.au

If you would like further information regarding these items or K–6 curriculum matters in general, contact Suzanne Ziems, Acting Inspector, Primary Education, on ziems@boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au Phone (02) 9367 8274 or Fax (02) 9367 8476. 

Determination of VET qualifications for HSC students

The new HSC VET Curriculum Frameworks are based on units of competency and qualifications from nationally endorsed training packages. These qualifications are determined by the qualification rules for each training package, referred to as qualification packaging rules. The rules describe the number and range of units of competency required for qualification eligibility.


Course structures for the HSC are described in each VET Curriculum Framework syllabus. In order to have satisfactorily completed a framework course, students must follow the course structure, attempt the required units of competency with diligence and sustained effort, and fulfil workplacement requirements.

The rules and structure of HSC VET courses are not always identical to the qualification packaging rules.

In some cases more units of competency are required for the HSC course than are required for successful completion of the qualification.

In some HSC courses, students might not achieve all of the specified units of competency, but may still be eligible for the qualification as a result of meeting the requirements of the packaging rules for that qualification.

Advice on qualification eligibility for each training package is available from www.ntis.gov.au

For further information contact Scott Thomson, Senior Curriculum Officer, Vocational Education and Training, thomson@boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au or (02) 9367 8175. 

National Training Package reviews and implications for VET HSC courses

Training packages are reviewed every three to five years to ensure they meet industry needs and to allow issues arising during implementation to be addressed.

The review of training packages is implemented in two stages. Stage 1 consists of a consultative analysis of the existing package and scoping of the changes required. Stage 2 consists of the development of enhanced or new units of competency.


While NSW has agreed to implement new or revised training packages after their endorsement by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA), an exact timeframe in relation to the rollover to new packages is yet to be determined by the Vocational Education and Training Advisory Board (VETAB).

VET Curriculum Frameworks are based on nationally endorsed training packages. As a result of changes to some training packages, the Board of Studies will need to examine the impact on some VET Curriculum Frameworks. Where the changes are minor the Office of the Board will amend the syllabus and notify schools and TAFE. Where the changes to the training package are major, the Board will redevelop the VET Curriculum Framework following the Board's syllabus development process.

An example of a major change to a Training Package is the replacement of the Administration Training Package by the Business Services Training Package.

The Board developed the Business Services Curriculum Framework in 2001. The Board notified schools of the redevelopment process through a letter to all principals in July 2001. The Industry Curriculum Committee (ICC) was then reconvened and developed a draft syllabus. The draft syllabus was distributed for consultation and amendments were made to the draft in light of consultation with schools, TAFE and other stakeholders. The Board endorsed the new syllabus in November 2001 and the Minister approved the new syllabus for delivery in NSW from 2002. (See article next page.) A similar redevelopment process will be used to accommodate any major changes in training packages resulting from the review process. The Board will notify schools prior to any redevelopment of VET Curriculum Frameworks.

If required, writers will be selected from the Office of the Board of Studies' Register of Writers to develop new syllabuses. To be included on the register, an expression of interest must be completed and forwarded to the Office of the Board of Studies (see advertisement, centre page liftout).

For further information contact Scott Thomson, Senior Curriculum Officer, Vocational Education and Training, thomson@boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au or (02) 9367 8175. 

New VET syllabus in Business Services for delivery to Year 11 from 2002

In November 2001, the Board of Studies released the new Business Services Curriculum Framework for delivery from 2002 in response to the national endorsement of the new Business Services Training Package (BSB01). The Administration Training Package has undergone a national review and this has resulted in the development of a new national Business Services Training Package which goes beyond general administration to specifically address the needs of the business services industry.

The new Curriculum Framework gives students access to the latest Certificate II and Certificate III units of competency from the new Business Services Training Package.

The Office of the Board of Studies has responded to feedback on the design and layout of 1999 documentation and has modified the layout of Part B of the package to make it easier to align aspects of the training package and HSC requirements and advice.

The release of the new Business Services Curriculum Framework follows a period of consultations from 20 August to 21 September 2001. A copy of the consultation report is available on the Board's website (www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au).

What are the key benefits to students?

Courses within the new Business Services Curriculum Framework provide students with up-to-date industry-developed units of competency. These units accommodate advances in technology in the industry and reflect the latest industry standards. These courses provide students with access to new qualifications from the new training package including Certificate II and Certificate III in Business.

When can students start the new course?

Year 11 students will be able to commence the new courses from 2002. Students currently enrolled in Business Services (Administration) courses will complete the courses they have commenced. The first HSC examination developed under the new framework will be conducted in 2003. The 2002 HSC examination will be based on the existing Business Services (Administration) 240-hour course and will be the final examination of the Business Services (Administration) Curriculum Framework.


How can you access the new Curriculum Framework?

The Business Services Curriculum Framework documentation (Syllabus Parts A and B, Competency Record, Resource List and Support Document) can all be downloaded from the Board's website (www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au).

In 2001, all trained teachers, schools and colleges of TAFE were mailed a copy of the Syllabus Parts A and B.

School Authorities (Department of Education and Training, Catholic Education Commission, and Association of Independent Schools) will provide advice to teachers on any additional training required to deliver the new units of competency, although this is only expected to relate to one unit of competency for some teachers.

Additional Information


This article should be read in conjunction with the advice contained in BOS 76/01. For further information contact Scott Thomson, Senior Curriculum Officer, Vocational Education and Training on (02) 9367 8175 or thomson@boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au 

Profile: John O'Brien, Director, Curriculum

John O'Brien took up the position of Director, Curriculum, in January 2002.

John began teaching mathematics and science in Queensland in 1977. He has taught in rural, mining and coastal towns and provincial cities. In 1991 he joined the Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies as a researcher, eventually becoming an Assistant Director in the Moderation and Curriculum Division.

As Assistant Director, John was directly involved with syllabus development and implementation across the curriculum, working closely with teachers on review panels and maintaining a strong partnership with schools.

In 1995 John completed his research Masters degree in Education at The University of Queensland. 



Profiles: Your Board of Studies Liaison Officers

The first point of contact for school staff with a question about Board matters is often the local Board of Studies Liaison Officer (BOSLO). The Board has ten BOSLOs located across the state to provide schools and communities with accurate advice and prompt assistance regarding Board policies and programs related to K–12 curriculum, assessment and credentialling.

Many of you have already made contact with the BOSLO in your area and found their support valuable. This might have taken place during implementation of the New HSC in 2000 and 2001, when BOSLOs facilitated hundreds of sessions around the state on the new Stage 6 syllabuses and standards-referenced assessment and reporting procedures.

BOSLOs provide a range of services in liaising, communicating and consulting with both primary and secondary school staff, students and parents. They assist with workshops, seminars and focus groups, alert the Board to issues of concern raised by schools and the community, and participate in Board advisory panels for course endorsement, HSC Illness/Misadventure appeals and the HSC Inquiry Centre.

Five new BOSLOs have joined the Board this year: four in the regional centres of Wagga Wagga, Coffs Harbour, Tamworth and Newcastle, and one in the Board's Metropolitan South-West office in Parramatta.

If you have not yet met your local BOSLO, here is some introductory information. Please contact them if you require advice or assistance with Board matters.



Chris Bounds – BOSLO, Metropolitan North, based at the Office of the Board of Studies in Clarence Street, Sydney. Formerly Head of Curriculum at St Patrick's Marist College, Dundas. Phone: (02) 9367 8356



Edwina McCoy – BOSLO, North Coast, based in Coffs Harbour. Previously Head Teacher, English, at Coffs Harbour Senior College. Phone: (02) 6659 3274



Wilfried Keller – BOSLO, North West area, based in Tamworth. Previously Assistant Principal (Curriculum) at O'Connor Catholic College in Armidale. Phone: (02) 6755 5043



Jan Nelson – BOSLO, Hunter area, based at Newcastle. Previously Head Teacher of Secondary Studies at The Hunter School of Performing Arts in Newcastle. Phone: (02) 4924 9976



Jenny Bryant – BOSLO, Metropolitan South-West, based at North Parramatta. Formerly a Senior English Teacher and Welfare Co-ordinator at Manly High School. Phone: (02) 9806 1547



Paul Carnemolla – BOSLO, Metropolitan North-West, based at North Parramatta. Previously Head of Curriculum, at St Leo's College, Wahroonga. Phone: (02) 9806 1549



Diane Trist – BOSLO, South Coast area, based at Wollongong. Previously Head Teacher, PDHPE, at Kanahooka High School in Dapto. Phone: (02) 4224 9940



Fran Trefry – BOSLO, Metropolitan East, based at Randwick. Previously Head Teacher, History, at Mosman High School. Phone: (02) 9314 7987



David Lisle – BOSLO, Riverina area, based at Wagga Wagga. Previously Head Teacher, Administration, at Mount Austin High School, Wagga Wagga. Phone: (02) 6937 3889



Kathie Prudence – BOSLO, Western area, based at Bathurst. Formerly Head Teacher, Mathematics, at West Wallsend High School in Lake Macquarie. Phone: (02) 6334 8048 