

Board Bulletin



BOARD OF STUDIES NSW

May 2002 – Vol 11 No 2

The Masters Review: Board Endorses HSC Review Recommendations

In September 2001 the Board of Studies commissioned Professor Geoff Masters, Executive Director of the Australian Council for Educational Research, to conduct an independent review of the examination procedures introduced for the New Higher School Certificate. After extensive research and consultation, Professor Masters presented his report, *Fair and Meaningful Measures?*, to the Board at its meeting on Tuesday, 9 April.



As part of the process of review, peak education groups and other interested teachers and community members put forward 181 submissions expressing their views, concerns and opinions. Professor Masters also held wide-ranging discussions with key interest and educational groups including schools, parent bodies, teacher unions and professional associations.

Professor Masters has confirmed that the HSC examination processes are thorough and consistent with international best practice in educational measurement and that there were no serious flaws in the assessment and reporting procedures in the 2001 HSC. He has also provided suggestions about areas for improvement.

Most concerns raised in submissions and discussions centred on:

- the adequacy of marking guidelines for some courses and consistency of their application
- differences among courses in the percentage of students scoring 80 or better and, in particular, the low percentage scoring above 80 in Standard English
- a widespread lack of understanding of the relationship between HSC marks and the UAI, and the processes for calculating the UAI
- the adequacy with which some examination papers reflect syllabuses.

The vast majority of submissions were supportive of the changes that have occurred as part of the New HSC and were focused on suggesting improvements to a system that students, teachers and interest groups, believed already worked. Many submissions expressed strong support for the introduction of standards-

referenced assessment in the HSC and described it as a fairer way to assess a student's knowledge.

The Board has voted to adopt all 20 recommendations and other suggestions included in Professor Masters' report, and has endorsed an action plan and timeframe for their implementation.


Among the report's recommendation are proposals that the Board of Studies:

- links more closely its processes for developing, piloting and revising guidelines for marking examinations
- explores the feasibility of appointing a Chief Examiner to oversee the development and marking of each HSC paper
- investigates why some courses had unusually small, and other courses had unusually large, numbers of students scoring 80 or better
- provides additional details of the marks achieved in each HSC course (including, for example, the mark achieved by the top 5% of students in each course)
- continues to work with tertiary institutions to ensure that students, parents and teachers understand the relationship between new HSC marks and the Universities Admission Index (UAI).

Many of the recommendations will be dealt with through refinements to existing procedures and better communication to address misunderstandings. At the same time some significant challenges remain for the Board of Studies in order to consolidate the reforms.

The Board's action plan will enable it to monitor the steps being taken to implement the recommendations and the timeline being followed. Schools will be kept informed about the steps being taken through *Board Bulletin* and in special HSC newsletters.

Professor Masters' independent audit of the New HSC provides valuable information that will assist the Board in achieving even higher standards for students and will strengthen the confidence the community can have in this world-class credential.

Professor Masters' report, *Fair and Meaningful Measures?*, is available on the Board's website (www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au). 

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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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HSC and SC Important Dates

Year 10 (SC)

- 6–9 May Board Endorsement Panel meeting to consider new course applications
- 31 May Final date for decision letters to schools on Board Endorsed Course applications
- 21 June Final date for submission of deferred courses to Board of Studies liaison officer for final rulings
- 1–2 July Board Endorsement Panel final decisions

Year 11

- 6–9 May Board Endorsement Panel meeting to consider new course applications
- 31 May Final date for decision letters to schools on Board Endorsed Course applications
- 21 June Final date for submission of deferred courses to Board of Studies liaison officer for final rulings
- 1–2 July Board Endorsement Panel final decisions

Year 12 (HSC)

- 6–9 May Board Endorsement Panel meeting to consider new course applications
- 31 May Final date for decision letters to schools on Board Endorsed Course applications
- 31 May Final date for amendments to student entries online for courses with practical components
- 21 June Final date for submission of deferred courses to Board of Studies liaison officer for final rulings
- 28 June Dispatch 2002 HSC Exam Timetable
- 28 June Final date for receipt of changes to HSC Drama and Music course options

President's Message



The Masters Review has provided valuable professional evaluation of the implementation of the New HSC examinations. What is reassuring from Professor Masters' independent review is that the Board achieved such major change with only minor issues requiring refinement.

His 20 recommendations cover process improvement, investigative follow-up and communication issues. The Board accepted these recommendations and agreed in addition to act on some issues raised but not made as formal recommendations. The response of the Board can be seen in the Action Plan for implementation which has been posted on the Board's website.

Following the Board meeting we have been meeting with representatives of key interest groups to discuss our action plan and to respond to any further issues. The Board has set tight timelines for those actions, which will assist understanding and improve the examination process for this year. There are some syllabus issues that will require further work and consultation before they can be implemented with a new cohort of students.

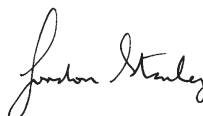
We have commenced a range of research projects to better understand the results of the New HSC. In this Board Bulletin the evidence that the Fundamentals of English course assisted student performance in Standard English is reported.

Although there were initial concerns that the new Standard English course was too demanding for students who in the past would have undertaken Contemporary English, the results indicate that most students did not just meet the minimum standard in Standard English, but performed in the mark range 60–70 or better. This outcome is a tribute to the commitment of teachers in engaging students and motivating them to achieve higher outcomes.

At its April meeting, the Board also accepted recommendations for developing a syllabus for teaching Aboriginal languages in NSW schools. This represents an important step in providing support for indigenous languages and has been the subject of much consultation.

The Board's website plays an increasingly important role in the dissemination of information. Within the first 24 hours of posting, 5955 copies of the Masters Review were downloaded as pdf files. On page 11 you can read how our talented team has redesigned the site to make it more accessible for all users.

The Grimshaw Review of Non-government Schools recommends some strengthening of the processes for registration and accreditation to enable the Board to ensure appropriate professional standards can be attained in this area. The recommendations are in line with contemporary best practice in the regulation of educational services.



(Professor) Gordon Stanley

CHECK YOUR MAILBOX

❖ Guide to the School Certificate 2002

❖ Standards Packages CDs currently available

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| - Aboriginal Studies | - Information Technology |
| - Ancient History | - VET Exam |
| - Biology | - Legal Studies |
| - Business Services | - General Mathematics |
| - Business Studies | - Mathematics |
| - Chemistry | - Mathematics Ext 1 and 2 |
| - Earth and Environment | - Physics |
| - Economics | - Primary Industries |
| - Engineering Studies | - Retail |
| - English ESL | - Senior Science |
| - English Ext 1 and 2 | - Society and Culture |
| - Food Technology | - Software Design and Development |
| - Geography | - Studies of Religion 1 and 2 |
| - History Ext | - Textiles and Design |
| - Hospitality | - Tourism |
| - Information Processes and Technology | |

The HSC Standards Packages

The HSC standards packages have been developed to assist teachers to develop a clear understanding of the performance standards established for each HSC course. Already the packages for the majority of large-candidature courses have arrived in schools and those for the remaining courses will arrive during Term 2.

By using these packages, teachers and their students will be able to bring together the descriptions of the standards (the Band Descriptions), the tasks students were asked to perform (the examination and marking guidelines) and samples of the responses of students who demonstrated the standard of work typically produced by students at the borderlines between different performance bands. By working through these materials teachers will develop an understanding of the standards for their course and be able to use this information in planning their teaching programs and learning strategies.


Each package contains

- an introduction which explains the nature of the package and the standards-setting procedure
- the syllabus
- the band descriptions
- the examination paper and marking guidelines
- samples of student responses and works that were awarded the band cut-off marks for each question which were established during the standards-setting procedure
- statistical data showing how those students placed at the borderline between two bands performed on the multiple-choice questions
- navigation tips that will assist in using the package in the most efficient manner.

By looking at each question students were required to answer and then studying the responses of the students, teachers will gain a clear understanding of the standard of work typically produced by students at the borderline between each band. This understanding will be further enhanced when teachers re-read the band descriptions used to report student achievement and match these descriptions to their images of students at each borderline.

In January members of the teams involved in the 2001 standards-setting operation began selecting the student responses to be included in these packages. These were then scanned and processed and included in a draft version of the package ready for evaluation. These draft packages were then sent to a wider group of teachers who had been involved in the judging and marking processes for review. At the same time Board officers tested and checked the packages. The subject representatives then used comments received from the reviewers to finalise the packages.

The second major role of the packages will be to equip the teams of judges for the 2002 HSC with clear and concrete information about the standards they are to apply in determining what examination marks will represent the borderlines between the performance bands.

A copy of every package will be sent to schools. If schools wish to purchase additional copies, or if students or parents wish to purchase copies of some of the packages, this can be done by completing the order form on the inside cover of the plastic case (fax it to Client Services on 02 9262 6270), or by ordering on the Board's website. 


Statistics on the 2001 HSC Standards Packages CD-ROMs

In total, the 89 HSC Standards Packages CD-ROMs contain:

- approximately 10,000 PDF files
- 160 audio and 50 video samples (over 2 gigabytes)
- more than 1 hour of music and listening samples
- 45 minutes of video excerpts of practical student work
- a total of 15 gigabytes of data
- 1800 sample question responses from the 2001 HSC exams and HSC major works and projects
- 27,000 scanned pages – exam papers and work samples
- more than 300 digital photos of student practical work.

Environmental savings resulting from electronic distribution to schools and libraries

- The Board produces a print-run of 1500 of every standards package.
- Distribution on CD-ROM has saved approximately 40,050,000 pages or 801,000 reams of paper.

- This amount of paper represents a pile of paper 42.5 km thick. Pushed on its side, this pile would cover a little more than the distance run in a marathon. 



Is Fundamentals of English effective in improving student performance at the HSC?

A report from a study involving the 2001 HSC data

The Fundamentals of English course is a 2 Unit Preliminary course. Under prescribed circumstances principals may certify that students have satisfied the outcomes of the course after 60 hours of study, with accreditation for one unit (see BOS Notice 64/99).

One way to assess the effect of a pedagogic treatment is the research design where low achieving students are measured before a treatment, the treatment is given, and the students are measured after the treatment. In our case, the ‘before’ measurement is a raw score on the School Certificate (SC) English external test in Year 10, the treatment is the Fundamentals of English course and the ‘after’ measurement is the scaled examination mark in the appropriate HSC English course.

Table 1 below shows the effects of taking various units of Fundamentals of English on students presenting for Standard English. Only students who had both an HSC score and a SC score were included.

To assist comparisons, the mean scores of the groups taking Fundamentals of English are expressed as Z scores relative to the majority group which did not take Fundamentals of English. A Z score gives the number of standard deviations that a measure is above or below a specified mean score. For example, the 1741 students taking 2 units of Fundamentals of English have a SC mean score of 54.4 which is compared to the mean of the non-Fundamentals of English group, viz 61.3. The former mean is 0.55 standard deviations below the latter mean, which gives a Z score of -0.55 . Similarly, a Z score of -0.33 is constructed for the group taking 1 unit of Fundamentals of English.

Z scores based on Standard English mean scores were also constructed for these two groups, relative to the majority non-Fundamentals of English group. The group taking 2 units of Fundamentals of English had a Z score of -0.26 while the group taking 1 unit of Fundamentals of English had a Z score of -0.12 .

Table 1: Standard English and SC English statistics for Fundamentals of English categories


Measure	F.Eng Units	N	Mean	SD	Z score
‘Before’ SC raw	2	1741	54.4	13.22	-0.55
	1	1203	57.2	13.53	-0.33
	none	30942	61.3	12.49	
‘After’ HSC Scaled	2	1741	30.2	4.47	-0.26
	1	1203	30.7	4.46	-0.12
	none	30942	31.2	3.93	

The mean results for the SC show that in Standard English, those students taking 2 units of Fundamentals of English ($Z = -0.55$) were weaker than those taking 1 unit of Fundamentals of English (-0.33) and that both groups were weaker than the majority group not taking Fundamentals of English. This is consistent with expectations. An important finding is that the Fundamentals of English-taking groups have improved their relative positions (as measured by the Z scores) from the SC to the HSC. The 2U Fundamentals of English group improved its Z score position from -0.55 to -0.26 while the 1U Fundamentals of English group improved its Z score position from -0.33 to -0.12 .

A similar result occurred for ESL students taking Fundamentals of English, as shown in Table 2 below. The students taking 2 units of Fundamentals of English ($Z = -0.23$) were weaker than the students taking 1 unit of Fundamentals of English (-0.07) and both groups were weaker than the majority group not taking Fundamentals of English. On the HSC measure, however, the 2U Fundamentals of English group improved its Z score position from -0.23 to -0.03 and the 1U Fundamentals of English group improved its Z score position from -0.07 to 0.12 , the latter result being slightly above the majority group.

Table 2: ESL and SC English statistics for Fundamentals of English categories

Measure	F.Eng Units	N	Mean	SD	Z score
‘Before’ SC raw	2	194	36.4	13.25	-0.23
	1	153	38.6	14.50	-0.07
	none	488	39.6	14.18	
‘After’ HSC Scaled	2	194	34.9	5.41	-0.03
	1	153	35.8	5.69	0.12
	none	488	35.1	5.93	

These results are encouraging for the implementation of Fundamentals of English. Strictly speaking it is not possible to claim that the improvement in each of the four groups is due solely to their taking Fundamentals of English. For recently arrived students, factors such as more exposure to the English language and greater experience of schooling in general (over the time between the Year 10 and Year 12 testings) may have contributed to the improvements. However, it is likely that the Fundamentals of English course was a major contributor to these improvements. 

New HSC Examination Issues

Glossary of key terms and representative sampling

Following the first examinations in the New HSC in 2001 the Office of the Board of Studies received feedback on a number of features in the new examinations. The use of the glossary of key terms and the principle of representative sampling of outcomes are two features that attracted comment from teachers.

Glossary of key terms

The glossary of key terms can be found in the *New HSC Assessment Support Document* (Board of Studies 1999). The glossary was developed to give some consistency in usage to terms used in outcomes in syllabuses, performance descriptions, questions and marking guidelines. The glossary is not prescriptive, nor exhaustive and does not replace the language applicable to different courses. Existing definitions that are used in ways that are particular to a subject should still be used. For example, the term ‘evaluate’ has a different definition in mathematics to that used in history.

HSC examination questions will continue to draw on the glossary of key terms where appropriate; however, questions may be framed using terms that are not in the glossary, such as ‘how’, or ‘why’ or ‘to what extent’. Students should understand how to respond to questions that use such terms.

The Board will provide further advice to schools on how the glossary of key terms relates to the Board’s tests and examinations.

Representative sampling

Prior to the first New HSC examinations, the Board of Studies developed a set of principles for setting examination questions and marking guidelines in a standards-referenced framework. One of these principles was related to the coverage of syllabus content in the examination.

The examination will test a representative sample of the knowledge, understanding and skills outcomes in any given year. The intention of the examination in its formulation is to avoid predictability and encourage students to prepare for all syllabus outcomes. Over a number of years, it is expected that the full range of syllabus outcomes that are appropriately measured by an examination will be covered.

As recognised by the principle, an examination cannot ask questions on every aspect of the syllabus. Hence, examination papers in 2002 and beyond will continue to use a representative sample of outcomes from the syllabus.

In order to avoid predictability, questions will focus on specific areas or broader overviews of topics. Students may need to be able to respond to both types of questions. The examination might not cover all outcomes or all content areas but together the internal assessment and external assessment will ensure that all outcomes contribute to the final HSC mark.

Examination committees will ensure that the areas of the syllabus covered by the examination paper will be sufficiently comprehensive to allow well-prepared students to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding.

For more information on these issues schools can contact the Assessment Branch at the Office of the Board of Studies on (02) 9367 8300.

Planning under way for 2002 HSC marking

The Office of the Board of Studies has commenced detailed planning for the marking of the 2002 HSC examinations.

In early April 2002, a series of forums was conducted with the supervisors of marking. These forums provided further opportunity to discuss the 2001 marking operation, to report back to Board officers, and to share advice and successful strategies with other supervisors.

Marker application forms for the 2002 HSC examinations have been sent to schools. A personal copy was also sent to last year’s markers. The enhanced, generic form captures all relevant information from the applicant, and provides for teachers to nominate themselves to be considered as either a senior marker or a judge for the standards-setting program.

Supervisors of marking have been appointed in all courses to be examined in 2002. They will undertake a comprehensive training program commencing in May. Topics to be covered will include equity in marker selection, development of marking guidelines, marker briefing and selection of sample answers, and quality assurance in marking.

The recommendations of the Masters Review will be incorporated into the training program for the Supervisors of Marking.

**Further information: Examinations and
Certification Branch
(02) 9367 8298**



'Young Writers Showcase 2001' (print anthology and CD-ROM) demonstrates top achievement in English Extension 2


The Board of Studies has published the 'Young Writers Showcase 2001', a print anthology and CD-ROM of a selection of the finest works by students studying English Extension 2 in the 2001 New Higher School Certificate. The print anthology and CD-ROM will be valuable for teachers and students seeking to understand the quality of the work that achieved the highest standards in this course.

The CD-ROM holds 36 print, sound and visual compositions and the print anthology consists of 16 works including critical responses, poetry and short stories. They also incorporate student reflection statements that demonstrate the high order research and thinking skills that have led to the major work. This collection demonstrates the students'

remarkable ability to produce highly creative and original work that engages its audience.

The English Extension 2 course is an exciting concept in English education, and appeals to students with an interest in multimedia, radio and film, as well as print media.

The excellent standard of the students' major works reflects the commitment of teachers and the fine teaching that has activated the students' love of language and inherent creativity.

The book and CD-ROM of these excellent works is now available to schools, students and the community. To order email clientservices@boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au or telephone (02) 9367 8178. 

Distinction Course Cosmologists Rocket to Coonabarabran

by Phillip Butler, student, Koorringal High School

What is the universe?...How was the universe created?...What does the universe look like on a large scale?...What sound does a kangaroo make?...These are some of the thought provoking questions we were faced with recently at the first residential school of the Cosmology Distinction Course held in Coonabarabran. A question that you may be asking is, "What is cosmology?" The answer is quite simple - cosmology is the science of the universe.




Phillip Butler, Koorringal High School, attended the Cosmology Distinction Course residential school at Coonabarabran in February 2002

There are 23 students undertaking the Cosmology course this year. As most of our work is done by distance education - especially through course notes and email interaction - the residential school allowed me to meet the other students and the course organisers for the first time, face to face. Thus the time spent in Coonabarabran was a valuable opportunity for me to talk with people with similar interests.

Over the course of five days we visited eight of the world-class telescopes in north western NSW: the

Parkes radiotelescope, (we saw a video of *The Dish* in the bus as we travelled), the 3.9m and Schmidt Anglo-Australian telescopes, the 2.3m ANU New Technology Telescope and the UNSW Patrol Camera at Siding Spring, the Mopra radiotelescope, the radio antennae of the Australian Telescope Compact Array and the Sydney University Interferometer (SUSI) near Narrabri. The scientists who ran each of these telescopes graciously gave up their time to guide us around their facilities and the visiting astronomers we met were happy to answer all of our questions.

As well as being introduced to these amazing telescopes we were privileged to be given lectures by Dr Fred Watson, Astronomer-in-Charge, Anglo-Australian Observatory, Siding Spring, Dr Joanne Baker, a visiting astronomer from Oxford University UK, and Dr Bruce McAdam, Chair of the Cosmology Distinction Course Committee. Another highlight of the residential was observing at night with small telescopes. The combination of a new moon with clear weather gave perfect viewing conditions.

The Cosmology residential renewed my enthusiasm for learning everything I can about the universe. I am sure everyone else doing the course this year feels the same way. 

Years 7–10 Syllabus Development

The review of the Years 7–10 curriculum is well under way with the development of final syllabuses in English and Mathematics and draft writing briefs for a number of other syllabuses being prepared and consulted on. The following table provides a quick reference to the progress of projects in various key learning areas.

Syllabus	Current Situation	Next Step
English and Mathematics	English 7–10 and Mathematics K–6 and 7–10 syllabuses are being finalised following broad consultation. A number of schools are trialling sample assessment tasks.	Draft assessment tasks have been developed and are being used by schools to generate work samples. The work samples will be annotated and included as part of the support materials for schools.
Personal Development, Health and Physical Education Life Skills syllabuses in English, Mathematics, Science, and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education	Final writing briefs are currently being prepared following broad consultation.	Final writing briefs will go to the May Board meeting. Draft syllabus development will occur June–August.
Life Skills syllabuses in Languages, Creative Arts, Technological and Applied Studies, and Human Society and its Environment	Draft writing briefs are currently being prepared	Draft writing briefs will be available for consultation 13 May – 21 July
Languages	The Framework for Languages K–10 is being finalised.	Writing teams will commence development of draft syllabuses for Japanese, Chinese, Indonesian and Korean in April. The development of French, German, Spanish and Italian draft syllabuses will commence in May.
Technological and Applied Studies Creative Arts	Draft writing briefs currently distributed for consultation include Technology (mandatory), Textiles Technology, Industrial Technology, Music and Visual Arts. Consultation meetings are planned with systems, teachers, academics and industry.	Draft writing briefs are being developed for Food Technology, Graphics Technology, Design and Technology, Dance and Drama. They will be available for consultation 13 May – 21 June.
Human Society and its Environment	Draft writing brief development is under way for Aboriginal Studies, Commerce, Social and Cultural Studies and Work Education. The review of History and Geography (mandatory and elective) has commenced. It focuses on how these documents, developed in 1998, meet the Board’s newly developed criteria for K–10 syllabuses.	Draft writing briefs will be available for consultation for the period 13 May – 21 June. Draft syllabuses will be developed based on the findings of the review.
Science	An initial evaluation of the Science Years 7–10 syllabus has taken place. A preliminary draft evaluation report is being discussed through a series of meetings with the Science Years 7–10 BCC, teachers and school systems.	Consultation on the draft syllabus will occur later this year.

Contact: Julie Hurrell
K–10 Senior Curriculum Officer
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DesignTech Seminars

The *DesignTech* 2002 seminars were held at the Powerhouse Museum from 26 February to 8 March 2002. Each half-day seminar consisted of four sessions of forty minutes and focused on syllabus outcomes related to the major design project in Design and Technology. Students and teachers found the sessions rewarding, and the exhibition helped them appreciate the standards that students could achieve. Teachers also appreciated the opportunity to share information about teaching strategies.

Students and teachers from across NSW attended the seminars. The seminars for Year 12

were fully booked, with 1600 students attending. Of the 1600 places in the Year 11 seminars, 1300 were filled.

In 2003, the *DesignTech* seminars will again be held at the Powerhouse Museum. Each seminar will consist of three lectures or discussion sessions and a session in the exhibitions gallery to view previous students' work.

Schools wishing to attend in 2003 will need to complete the booking form which will be sent to schools in Term 4 this year. 

Designers on Tour

Following a successful exhibition at the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney earlier this year, the regional tour of the *DesignTech* exhibition will begin in Wollongong on 30 April 2002. The *DesignTech* exhibition features outstanding major design projects by HSC Design and Technology students.

There were more than 4300 candidates for HSC Design and Technology in 2001. Of the 233 projects nominated by markers for *DesignTech*, 79 were chosen for exhibition. The projects exhibited were selected for their creativity, technical expertise and project design, and represent a range of technologies. They are evidence of the extremely high standard of work being done by NSW students and are also a tribute to the dedication of teachers.

The projects selected for *DesignTech* will provide stimulation and inspiration for students and teachers. The exhibition will enable students, parents and teachers to experience first-hand the high standards that can be achieved in the HSC Design and Technology course.

The work of outstanding local students will be featured in each regional exhibition.

Locations and venues for *DesignTech* exhibitions

Wollongong Central Shopping Centre	30 April – 5 May 2002
Wagga Wagga Marketplace	8 May – 12 May 2002
Orana Mall, Dubbo	15 May – 19 May 2002
Tamworth Shopping World	22 May – 27 May 2002
Park Beach Plaza, Coffs Harbour	30 May – 5 June 2002
Charlestown Square, Newcastle	12 June – 16 June 2002

Contact: **Jody Ziesel**
Exhibitions Coordinator
(02) 9367 8309
ziesel@boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au





Primary Matters

Release of the Creative Arts CD-ROM

A new CD-ROM for Creative Arts K–6 was distributed to schools in Term 1. This completes the package provided for Creative Arts K–6. The CD contains the Creative Arts K–6 Syllabus, Units of Work, Principal's Package, Introduction to Parents and Community Members, School Planning for Creative Arts and student work samples.

The work samples include a variety of examples of student performance in Visual Arts, Music, Dance and Drama. The use of audio and video work samples will provide support for teachers in gaining an understanding of different learning experiences that can be developed for the different artforms and assessment of student performance and achievement of outcomes.

The work samples link to the units of work to provide further support for planning and programming and assessment.

Two new integrated units with an Aboriginal perspective

The first of four integrated units of work with an Aboriginal perspective have recently been added to the linkages website. There will be one unit for each stage added by the end of Term 2.


Maths with the Mob – an integrated unit for Early Stage 1

This unit provides opportunities for students to investigate integrated mathematics and visual arts activities by exploring lifestyles and perspectives using currently available resources. It enables teachers to introduce mathematics concepts through a variety of aspects of contemporary and traditional Aboriginal culture.

The unit includes student work samples and worksheets. The unit and worksheets can be readily downloaded.

My Place – an integrated unit for Stage 1

This unit provides opportunities for students to explore concepts of belonging to groups of people and of belonging to places. It focuses on the students' local community and local area, and provides opportunities for learning experiences and Aboriginal people's relationships with family community, environment and place. The unit also looks at aspects of pre-invasion Aboriginal life as well as contemporary Aboriginal communities.

Additional units still to come include British Colonisation for Stage 2 and Aboriginal Technology for Stage 3. 

Schools Online update

eBOS Schools Online is a web-based system enabling schools to retrieve and enter relevant information about their students. Over the past three years it has expanded from a trial system to a fully operational system.

In response to feedback from schools and analysis of the 2001 data capture process, several new online web functions were introduced and some existing functions enhanced.

- The *Generate Student Enrolment* function used information already held by the Board plus information entered by schools to enroll entire cohorts with their courses in the calendar and study year.
- The *Maintain Students by Subject* function allowed schools to add and remove student's courses across an entire subject using a single easy to use form.
- The *Load Student Enrolments and Courses* from a file functions allowed bulk uploading of students' information from files extracted from another computer package such as the OASIS system used

in government schools. This eliminated duplicate data entry and increased the accuracy of the captured data.

In addition, the Board doubled the processing power of its main server and increased its internet bandwidth capacity eightfold.

This year more than 96% of schools entered student enrolments over the internet. This amounted to 218,903 students undertaking 2,232,847 courses. The process was largely completed in four weeks. Some schools completed all entries for their students within 24 hours of the service opening. Others preferred to schedule the task over several weeks.

The Board will continue to improve the capability and usability of Schools Online and welcomes any suggestions from school users.

Contact: Client Services
(02) 9262 6270
clientservices@boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au



Board Website Gets a Makeover

On 10 September 1995, the Board of Studies opened its website for the first time, and teachers began downloading digital copies of syllabuses, exam papers, support documents, Board Official Notices and early editions of this Board Bulletin. The site has continued to grow in size and the numbers of people using it have increased to such an extent that it is now the sixth most visited Government sector website in Australia. Currently, 13,000 pages are viewed every day. In the past 200 days, more than two million Acrobat PDF files have been downloaded from the site. The site is composed of more than 12,500 files.

Since 1995, not much has changed in the look and structure of the Board website — it just got bigger and bigger. Until now.

Your online filing cabinet

The Board web-team has been analysing comments received from users and watching the way in which visitors use the website, and has come up with a new design capitalising on the existing site's ease of use and simple navigation and structure, while attempting to make it even easier and faster to find what you are looking for. A guiding principle during development has been to make all the important Board documents quicker to find in our website filing cabinet than in yours.

The Board's website is developed and maintained by an in-house team — the same people who desktop-publish all Board publications. This enables documents to be prepared and posted on the website within an hour or so of authorisation for publication. Even using the most efficient contractors in the business, getting them printed, packaged and mailed to schools takes days by comparison.


Direct access for primary teachers

Along with this new site development, one of the most important requests by primary teachers has been fulfilled. They felt that wading through lots of Higher School Certificate and School Certificate documents before they got to what they were looking for could be avoided, by giving K–6 documents their own home page. This has been done at www.bosnsw-k6.nsw.edu.au.

Immediately the K–6 site was made public, primary teachers and parents took to it. Over the past six months, 30,000 people have downloaded copies of the Mathematics K–6 Syllabus and 25,000 people have downloaded the English K–6 Syllabus, among many other documents. It has been and continues to be very busy. The busiest hour on the K–6 website is between 9.00 pm and 10.00 pm. (For comparison, the busiest hour on the main Board website is between 3.00 pm and 4.00 pm.)

Assistance in finding key documents

The new Board website has a simple added feature that may appeal to many. At different times of the school year, a large number of teachers and students come looking for certain documents. The HSC timetable is an obvious example and it is easy to post it in a prominent place on the website to enable visitors to get to it without drilling down deep into the site. Others are not so easy to post prominently, such as the current list of Board-approved scientific calculators for exams. The site is using a series of advertisement-like 'stamps' at key locations throughout the site to provide one-click access to these documents at different times in the year, guided by their popularity in the website document-access statistics.

In their annual awards in December 2000, *PC User* magazine named the Board website the most useful educational website (along with the Encyclopedia Britannica website). We were flattered to be listed alongside such esteemed company, but it only encouraged us to continue to listen to the needs of teachers and students to provide even better access to digital educational resources. Please visit the site and let us know what you think. 

What's New on the BOS Website this Month?



Masters Review, April 2002

- The Masters Review into the New Higher School Certificate examination program: Fair and Meaningful Measures?
- Board of Studies NSW Action Plan Related to the Recommendations in the Masters Report

The Year 10 Trial Computing Skills Test

The 2001 Trial Computing Skills Test is now available for viewing. This document provides one example of the type of test that could be prepared for computing skills assessment at Year 10.

http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/docs_sc1998/computingskills_assessment.html

The Years 7–10 Draft Writing Briefs and Surveys

Music, Visual Arts, Technology (mandatory), Industrial Technology and Textiles Technology among others are available at this location.

http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/writing_briefs/writing_brief_index.html

The K–10 Curriculum Framework Report

The K–10 Curriculum Framework Report establishes parameters for the Board of Studies NSW curriculum for the compulsory years of schooling.

http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/writing_briefs/writing_brief_index.html

Evaluation Report for Aboriginal Studies Years 7–10 Syllabus

http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/writing_briefs/writing_brief_index.html#a

The 2002 School Certificate Australian History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship Specimen Test and related documents

Includes:

- Introduction to the 2002 School Certificate Australian History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship Specimen Test
- 2002 Australian History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship Specimen Test
- Mapping Grid
- 2002 Performance Bands – Australian History, Civics and Citizenship
- 2002 Performance Bands – Australian Geography, Civics and Citizenship
- Sample Marking Guidelines
- School Certificate Australian History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship Scope Statement

- 2002 School Certificate Australian History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship Test Specifications

http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/docs_sc1998/sc_austhist_geog.html

Cognitive Science Stage 6 Draft Writing Brief and Survey

http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus99/syllabus2000_listc.html

Home Education in NSW – Information Package

This information package is intended to provide a description of the steps to be followed when applying for registration for Home Education and to assist parents/guardians in preparing to home educate their children.

http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/parents/parents_page1.html

2001 Notes from the Examination Centre and HSC exam papers

http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/hsc_exams/index.html

Guide to the 2002 School Certificate Rules and Procedures for Students

http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/docs_sc1998/sc_review.html

Dance Stage 6 Course Prescriptions 2003–2004

http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus99/syllabus2000_listd.html#d

Report on the development of a K–12 Technology Statement

<http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/docs/docs.html#tech12statement>

Entertainment Industry Curriculum Framework

http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus99/entertain_draft_2002_index.html

The list of approved scientific calculators for HSC 2002

http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/docs/calculators_hsc02.html

In addition, the following documents are now available for viewing and downloading

- Entertainment and Music Industry Curriculum Framework Draft Writing Brief Consultation Report
- Entertainment Industry Curriculum Framework Writing Brief
- Entertainment Industry Curriculum Framework Draft Syllabus and Survey