

BOARD BULLETIN

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NSW School Certificate sets the standard



Mandatory School Certificate courses make NSW the benchmark.
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As calls are made for stronger core curriculum across all Australian schools, New South Wales' School Certificate courses are increasingly recognised as a benchmark in secondary education.

Governments, professional teachers' associations and academics in other states and territories are considering a number of issues already managed in NSW, such as mandatory study of Australian History and Australian Geography as part of the years of compulsory education.

The President of the NSW Board of Studies, Professor Gordon Stanley, believes NSW has much to contribute to the current national discussions about what study should be mandatory for all students.

'This State is unique in the breadth and detail of syllabuses that are required study for every student, in every school and home-school, from Kindergarten to Year 10,' Professor Stanley said following a recent discussion at the June Board meeting which affirmed the value of the School Certificate.

'NSW is alone, for example, in ensuring all students complete stand-alone courses in Australian History, Australian Geography and Science before the end of their compulsory years of school.

'This state also leads the way in integrating Civics and Citizenship into the HSIE learning areas and embedding Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in every syllabus.'

Professor Stanley said the Board not only set Years 7–10 students a broad mandatory curriculum, it also ran public tests at the end of Year 10 to assess and report on the understanding students have gained in these areas.

'No other State or Territory can verify the delivery of its curriculum in this way, or give such feedback to schools, students and future employers,' he said.

Professor Stanley said the future national tests for literacy and numeracy at the start of Year 9 appeared to complement the existing School Certificate tests.



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President's Message



Behind every activity of the Board is a very dedicated team of people. Rob Speers, our Director of Examinations, has been an exceptional team leader and colleague. It is with real sadness that we say goodbye to Rob as she retires this term.

Her professional dedication and personal warmth has provided support to so many who have served in the complex process of supervising and managing our public examinations.

We wish Rob well in retirement knowing that she will always be remembered for her commitment, wise judgement and good humour in dealing with the hothouse environment of each examination period.



Our commitment to the integrity of public examinations continues with the Board of Studies hosting a forum to discuss common issues relating to submitted tasks and the problems associated with making judgements about student cheating. Representatives from each public examination authority in Australia and New Zealand attended the forum in June.

The forum was one of the follow-up activities organised to address issues raised by the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) into the risks associated with assessment and submitted works. It is important that we address this issue in a way that provides consistency and fairness in the credentialling of student achievement.



The syllabus reviews under way this year have also been progressing well, including good attendance at consultations aimed at getting teacher feedback on the *Science and Technology K-6 Syllabus*. We have also had valuable discussions with teacher educators and will benefit from the advice and support of a wide range of experts who have agreed to assist in this important process of syllabus revision.

We are fortunate that at this stage of the project Margaret Malone, our Primary Inspector, has a Churchill Fellowship which will allow her to gain first-hand experience of overseas curriculum work in this area.

(Professor) Gordon Stanley

Mandatory courses make NSW the benchmark *continued from page 1*

'While we are still waiting for more detail about these Year 9 tests, we do know they serve a different purpose from the School Certificate in that they will be used both to set a school benchmark and as a potential diagnostic tool for schools,' he said.

'These tests will cover only aspects of literacy and numeracy, rather than the wide range of subjects at School Certificate level.

'Importantly, the Year 9 tests are proposed to run early in the year, and will not, therefore, be able to test the achievements expected from Stage 5 students in NSW.'

By contrast, the Year 10 School Certificate tests provide an exit credential for the 16 000 students who complete their secondary school education at the end of Year 10. The School Certificate is a useful guide to employers (see the Board's new Employers' Website at www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/employers) and is used as a minimum entry qualification by TAFE NSW and other vocational training providers for many Certificate courses.

In addition, many secondary school principals make significant use of the data the Board provides from School Certificate test results each year. Some schools direct students into the most appropriate levels of English and Mathematics for the Higher School Certificate on the basis of the students' School Certificate results. Many schools also drill down into their School Certificate data to find areas of strength and improvement for the following Years 9 and 10 cohorts.

Professor Stanley said the Board of Studies would always be open to new approaches to curriculum and assessment; however, it was pleasing to see NSW in such a strong position in relation to its mandatory secondary school education. ■

New principles for

The Board of Studies has been considering the recent *Disability Standards for Education* issued under the *Disabilities Discrimination Act* (Cwlth) and any implications that the Act might have for the Board's syllabus, examination and registration processes.

To ensure that the Board complies with the *Disability Standards*, the Board has approved a set of principles developed to guide decisions on the types of arrangements that will allow students with a disability to best access the School Certificate tests and Higher School Certificate examinations.

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Literary feast on offer

The list of HSC prescribed texts for 2009–2012 has been released with a range of new print texts as well as film and multimedia on offer.

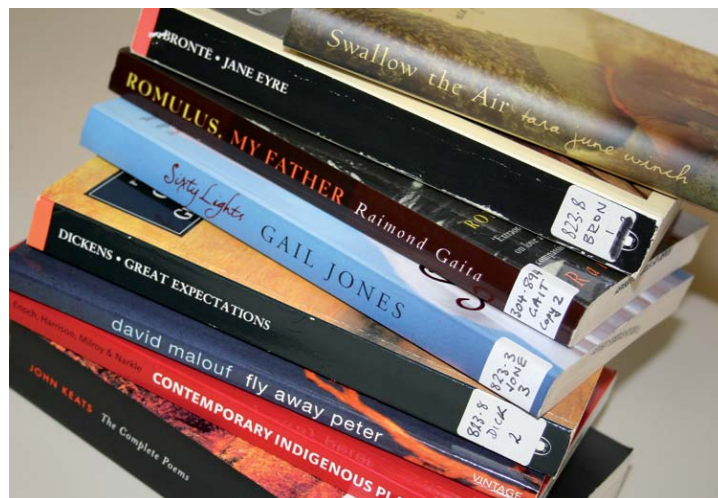
The full list provides a broad mix of Australian content, classic and contemporary literature and film for students of HSC Standard, Advanced and Extension 1 English and English as a Second Language courses.

There is still a strong contingent of classic authors including Shakespeare, Jane Austen, Emily Brontë, George Bernard Shaw, Virginia Woolf, William Blake and Henry Lawson, but there are also many modern stories such as David Malouf's *Fly Away Peter*, Gail Jones' *Sixty Lights*, Michael Ondaatje's *In the Skin of a Lion*, Tim Winton's *Cloudstreet*, Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* and Mark Haddon's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*.

The new print texts include 11 Australian fiction and non-fiction books, bolstering the existing Australian content.

The new texts include:

- Patrick White's *The Aunt's Story*,
- Raimond Gaita's *Romulus, My Father*
- *Contemporary Indigenous Plays, 'Rainbow's End'*
- Robert Dessaix's *Night Letters*
- Tara June Winch's *Swallow the Air*
- *Penguin Banjo Paterson Collected Verse*.



New films for study include Rolf De Heer's *Ten Canoes*, Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window*, Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, Sofia Coppola's *Lost in Translation* and Stephen Frears' *The Queen*.

Community and expert groups were invited to comment on the proposed new texts, with the list being approved by the Board of Studies NSW.

The texts were chosen on the basis of merit and cultural significance, relevance to course candidates, providing challenging teaching and learning opportunities and being available at a reasonable cost.

See the full list and annotations on the texts at the Stage 6 English Syllabus section of the Board's website: www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_hsc ■

special examination provisions

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The new principles are based on the good practices the Board has used for many years to give all students fair access to its examination papers. The principles help ensure that reasonable and fair measures are taken to help students with special needs access examinations on the same basis as other students.

Once a student's application for special provisions is approved, the principles are applied to ensure that:

- every effort is made to provide reasonable

adjustments and access arrangements to a student with a disability needing such adjustments

- the same academic standards are applied to all students
- adjustments and access arrangements are made without giving an unfair advantage.

For the full set of principles and more information, visit the Board of Studies website www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au ■

Projects, practicals and deadlines

Term 3 sees HSC practical exams under way and major works due, as well as deadlines for recording marks and optional VET exam registrations.

More than two months before the HSC written exams commence, students begin submitting their major projects and performing practical exams in a range of subjects including 22 different languages.

The 2007 HSC season opened on Monday 30 July with Society and Culture students handing Personal Interest Projects into their school.

Dance kicks off the first practical exams, starting on Monday 6 August. The six weeks of Language Speaking exams will begin on Saturday 11 August.

The practical exams and submissions timetable can be downloaded and printed from www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/events

The written HSC exam timetable is also on the website, as is the Language Speaking exam timetable.

During Term 3 all schools can submit assessment marks for their Year 12 students through *Schools Online*. The assessment collection service will be open from 6 August to 21 September.

HSC VET teachers must register students who wish to sit the optional exams. Students aren't automatically registered for the exam when they sign up for the course, so their teachers must enrol them through *Schools Online*.

Students will receive letters during Term 3 about the HSC Advice Line, which opens on Monday 8 October. The letter will include the phone number and operating hours as well as an individual subject advice schedule. This information will also be available through *Students Online*. ■

Teachers, students and academics contribute to review



Student constructing a self-propelled boat during a Science & Technology activity.

Teachers in six regions across NSW have been involved in the initial phase of the *Science and Technology K–6 Syllabus* review, with five further consultation meetings to be held during Term 3.

The consultation meetings are an opportunity for teachers to provide feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the current syllabus.

Consultation meetings will be held in Dubbo, Parkes, Penrith, Wagga Wagga and the Hunter during July and August.

A sample of students from across NSW in Years 5 to 7 will also be invited to participate in forums to discuss their experiences with Science and Technology learning in primary school.

In June a group of 15 academics from seven universities were invited to contribute to discussion about the content and organisation of the Science and Technology syllabus.

Later this year an evaluation report, including feedback from the meetings and surveys, will present recommendations and broad directions for revision of the syllabus to the Board of Studies NSW. A writing brief, informed by the broad directions, will be distributed for consultation between April and June 2008. ■

Teachers are invited to attend their closest consultation meeting. See the key dates on the back page of this *Board Bulletin*. Please contact the Board of Studies Liaison Officer (BOSLO) hosting the meeting you wish to attend.

Improving outcomes for Aboriginal students

Aboriginal students have benefited from an innovative approach to teaching Aboriginal languages, mathematics and numeracy, science and visual arts, which incorporates their cultural and physical contexts.

Over the past four years, the Board has worked with several primary and secondary schools, as well as parents and local communities, in Sydney and regional NSW to make these syllabuses more meaningful for Indigenous students.

Board Aboriginal Curriculum Inspector Kevin Lowe said that the Aboriginal Education Contexts program had been successful, resulting in improved educational outcomes for the students involved.

Case study Gilgandra – Mathematics

The Mathematics in Indigenous Contexts Years 6–8 project was introduced in 2003 to help students make the transition from Year 6 to Year 7 in Mathematics. Experienced teachers and university mentors supported the schools, teachers and Aboriginal Education Assistants (AEA) to engage with Aboriginal community members in the development of context-based curriculum.

Gilgandra High School and Public School were among the first to be involved in the program. In 2003, the school team identified an area called The Pines as a possible site for a variety of measurement activities. Many families lived at The Pines from 1955 until the mid 1970s, making it a significant place for the local Aboriginal community.

The Maths unit involved a half-day excursion to the site, the first visit by a group of students in more than 25 years. Six learning activities included estimating and measuring actual distances between trees, measuring the circumference of given trees, and estimating the number of trees in The Pines. The students also engaged in tasks on aspects of Aboriginal history, art, English (creative writing), HSIIE and environmental science. As part of the excursion, an Elder, Mrs Mohomed, spoke to the students, teachers and mentors about life in The Pines.

As well as improving numeracy outcomes for the students, the excursion gave them a deeper appreciation of their culture and history.



Gilgandra students using their calculators in the field.

‘The program is working because of the close cooperation it fosters between the teachers, parents and the local community,’ Kevin said.

‘Students are being supported in achieving outcomes in a way that respects Aboriginal beliefs and ways of learning.

‘They get out of the classroom and learn the subject in the field. At the same time the teacher, who is normally not from an Aboriginal background, finds out about the students’ learning environment.’

Schools interested in introducing Aboriginal educational contexts can gain valuable insights into the programs on the Board’s website ab-ed.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au

The website provides a wide range of materials, including: case studies; reports on how the program has been applied, who has been involved and how they worked together; comments from teachers, parents and community leaders; advice on how to run the program; and teacher resources.

For more information about the program, contact Kevin Lowe on (02) 9367 8198. ■

Rob retires after 35 years of service

After more than three decades working in the education field, one of the Office of the Board of Studies' best-known people is retiring.

Director of Examinations, Rob Speers, will be embarking on new endeavours after a dedicated career, which she began as an infants school teacher at Naremburn Central School in Sydney's northern suburbs.

Rob left the classroom to live and work in Tamworth for 10 years, travelling the region as the executive officer for the Country Areas Program. The role had her working closely with regional schools and teachers to improve the opportunities for students in rural areas.

Rob joined the Office of the Board of Studies in 1990 and became Director of Examinations in 1998. Since then she has overseen the conduct and marking of examinations for more than half a million HSC students and more than 700 000 School Certificate students.

She has managed the NSW examination processes and led the implementation of significant changes to marking for the HSC. Programs such as appeals processes, special examination provisions, and pre- and post-examination student advisory services have all benefited from Rob's leadership.



Rob speaks with great affection for all the people she has had the opportunity to work with.

'I've been privileged to work with teams of very dedicated staff at the Board of Studies, in particular the Exams Team, those involved in the marking program, committees for illness/misadventure, special provisions, and presiding officers.

'I also value the opportunity to work somewhere that has such tangible outcomes – I believe we're making a real contribution,' she said.

Rob also speaks of her mentors as an important element in her working life.

'I have been fortunate to have had generous and supportive mentors in every role I have taken on. They gave me opportunities and encouragement that I found extremely valuable,' she said.

After leaving the Board, Rob will spend the next few months reflecting on her new-found freedom, deciding how she will spend her spare time.

'It has been easier to make the decision to leave knowing that I'm going while I still thoroughly enjoy my job,' she said.

'I will really miss the people I work with but I know there is a very talented team of people who will step up and step in.' ■



Entries now open for Young Designers

Entries for the 2007 Minister's Young Designers Awards (MYDA) are now open. All students of Technology (Mandatory) in Years 7 and 8 in NSW are eligible to enter their design projects, either as individuals or in groups of up to four students.

Projects can be entered in any of the areas of study – Built Environments, Products, or Information and Communications. Each student entry should include a project and a folio. There are regional and state levels

of judging and all students entered will receive a certificate.

MYDA's optional design brief for 2007 focuses on water conservation and protection in your local community or region of NSW.

Information was distributed to all schools during Term 4 of 2006. Schools can register online at www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/exhibitions ■

Positions Vacant at the Office of the Board of Studies NSW

Board of Studies Liaison Officers (BOSLOs)

BOSLO positions in six regions across NSW are now open for applications. The positions are responsible for planning, organising, implementing and evaluating local area liaison services on behalf of the Office of the Board of Studies NSW. They provide advice on Board policies, procedures and programs and disseminate information on curriculum, assessment and credentialling. The roles include conducting forums and workshops.

The six positions are:

- Metropolitan East – based in Sydney
- Metropolitan South West – based in Parramatta
- Metropolitan North West – based in Parramatta
- Riverina – based in Wagga Wagga
- South Coast – based in Wollongong
- Western NSW – based in Bathurst

The positions will also be advertised at: www.jobs.nsw.gov.au

Enquiries: Fran Trefry, Head, Liaison Officer Unit
(02) 9367 8102 or email fran.trefry@bos.nsw.edu.au

For an information package contact Betty Fletcher
(02) 9367 8167 or email betty.fletcher@bos.nsw.edu.au

Applications to: Personnel/Payroll Officer, Office of the Board of Studies NSW, GPO Box 5300, Sydney NSW 2001.

Or apply online at: www.jobs.nsw.gov.au

Closing date: Friday 31 August 2007

Expressions of Interest for Members of Examination Committees and Assessors

The Office of the Board of Studies NSW invites expressions of interest from suitably qualified teachers and academics who wish to participate in the development of the 2008 Higher School Certificate examinations and School Certificate tests as committee members and assessors.

The development of the examinations starts in Term 4, 2007 and continues to about July 2008. Assessing usually takes one day, and generally takes place towards the end of Term 1 and the beginning of Term 2, 2008.

Successful applicants receive an honorarium and travel expenses.

Applications for Chief Examiner closed on 29 June. However, late applications will be considered where vacancies exist.

Enquiries: Beverly Gale (02) 9367 8371 or email beverly.gale@bos.nsw.edu.au.

Applications to: Beverly Gale, Assessment and Reporting Branch, PO Box 5300 Sydney 2001 or by fax: (02) 9367 8474.

Further information and application forms are available at www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/jobs

Closing date: Friday 24 August 2007

KLA Review 2008 – Expression of Interest for KLA Reviewers

The Office of the Board of Studies is establishing a register of reviewers to assist with the annual Key Learning Area (KLA) Review.

The KLA Review supports the non-government school registration program by reviewing the curriculum documentation submitted by non-government schools in support of applications for registration and/or accreditation.

People with high level and successful experience in curriculum leadership and expertise in Board of Studies syllabus requirements are invited to submit an expression of interest for inclusion on the register of KLA reviewers.

Further information and an expression of interest form are available on the Board's website www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/jobs

Enquiries:

Paul Hewitt on (02) 9367 8313 or email: paul.hewitt@bos.nsw.edu.au

Applications to:

Mr Paul Hewitt
Head, Registration and Accreditation Curriculum Branch
Office of the Board of Studies
GPO Box 5300
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Closing date: Friday 26 October 2007

Important Dates

Year 12

25 July	Advice available progressively from this date to candidates of venues and times for HSC Language speaking exams
27 July	Principals' 'N' determination forms sent from BOS
29 July	Completion date for HSC Society and Culture Personal Interest Projects (handed to schools 30 July)
3 August	School Developed BEC applications not endorsed by this date lapse
6 August	HSC Dance practical exams commence (last day 17 Aug) Schools Online assessment collection service opens Schools Online VET exam estimate collection service opens
11 August	HSC Languages speaking exams commence (last day 16 Sept)
12 August	Completion date for HSC Textiles and Design Projects (handed to schools 13 Aug)
19 August	Completion date for HSC Drama Individual Projects and Industrial Technology Major Works (handed to schools 20 Aug)
20 August	HSC Drama practical exams commence (last day 31 Aug) HSC Industrial Technology itinerant marking commences (last day 31 Aug)
21 August	Completion date for HSC English Extension 2 Major Works (handed to schools 22 Aug)
26 August	Completion date for HSC Design and Technology Major Design Projects (handed to schools 27 Aug) Completion date for HSC Visual Arts Body of Work (handed to schools 27 Aug)
27 August	HSC Design and Technology itinerant marking commences (last day 7 Sept)
2 September	Completion date for HSC Music Compositions and Musicology essays (handed to schools 3 Sept) Completion date for HSC Agriculture Research Projects (handed to schools 3 Sept)
3 September	HSC Music practical exams commence (last day 4 Sept)
7 September	Latest date for principals to notify HSC students of intention to issue an 'N' determination
10 September	Final date for submission to the Board for Music Compositions and Musicology essays
11 September	Latest date for HSC student appeals against 'N' determinations to be lodged with the principal
17 September	Latest date for principals to notify HSC students of outcome of school review of 'N' determinations

21 September	Final date for submission of school assessments. Schools must produce assessment confirmations Final date for submission of VET exam estimates Final date for amendments to current HSC student entries Latest date for principals to submit HSC 'N' determination appeal forms with related documentation for appeals which have been declined and Board review has been requested
28 September	Final date for amendment to current Preliminary student entries
1 OCTOBER – 12 OCTOBER TERM 3 VACATION	
17 October	Latest date for principals to notify Preliminary students of intention to issue an 'N' determination
18 October written HSC examinations commence	
22 October	Latest date for Preliminary student appeals against 'N' determinations to be lodged with the principal
26 October	Latest date for principals to notify Preliminary students of outcome of school review of 'N' determinations
13 November	Last day of HSC examinations

Year 10

27 July	Board to dispatch principal's School Certificate 'N' determination forms
3 August	School Developed BEC applications not endorsed by this date lapse
1 OCTOBER – 12 OCTOBER TERM 3 VACATION	
15 October	Board to dispatch School Certificate Illness/Misadventure forms
12–16 November	School Certificate tests

Primary

2 August	K–6 Science and Technology syllabus review consultation meeting – 4.30pm to 6.30pm, Level 2 Conference Room, DET Office, Wagga Wagga. BOSLO contact: Ken Lansdown ph: (02) 6937 3889
9 August	K–6 Science and Technology syllabus review consultation meeting – 4.30pm to 6.30pm, Penrith Leagues Club. BOSLO contact: Sam Cannavo ph: (02) 9806 0931
14 August	K–6 Science and Technology syllabus review consultation meeting – 4.30pm to 6.30pm, Parkes Shire Council. BOSLO contact: Melanie Meers ph: (02) 6334 8048
27 August	K–6 Science and Technology syllabus review consultation meeting – 4.30pm to 6.30pm, Club Macquarie, 485 Lake Road, Argenton. BOSLO contact: Philippa Young ph: (02) 4924 9976

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. Schools may only photocopy this publication for use by teachers, students and parents. Contributions or suggestions for articles are welcome.

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