

Board Bulletin



BOARD OF STUDIES NSW

August 1998 – Vol 7 No 6

History Stages 4 & 5 consultation

The History Stages 4 and 5 writing brief has been revised by the Board of Studies to take into account feedback on the draft document from teachers across the state.

The draft writing brief was sent to schools in May to gain input from teachers as early in the syllabus development process as possible.

The consultation was extended until the end of Term 2 and, with over 300 responses received, has proved very valuable. Individual responses accounted for 60 percent

of those received and 40 percent were from groups such as school History faculties. Almost 99 percent of surveys were from school-based History teachers.

In addition to the surveys, written submissions were received from many groups, including:

The NSW History Teachers Association, Curriculum Support Directorate DET, Association of Independent Schools, NSW Teachers Federation, Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, Anglican Education Commission, Royal Australian Historical Society.

continued on page 4

Key revisions to the writing brief

The proposal that all topics be programmed chronologically has been removed. Reorganisation of the proposed content will allow teachers to exercise professional judgment in the way in which they program the course to achieve syllabus outcomes.

The content overview, objectives and proposed organisation for the outcomes have been modified to emphasise the interdependence of skills and knowledge acquisition. The perception that skills are no longer important arose largely from the way in which the subject matter was presented and was not the intention of the draft writing brief. Sample units of work, outcomes assessment advice, test specifications and Course Performance Descriptors will reinforce the balance between the knowledge, understandings and skills being developed through the syllabus.

Stage 4 has been changed to:

- allow for more flexibility of programming by teachers;
- allow for a wider range of topics to be studied from Ancient, Medieval and Early Modern societies (including popular topics

such as the Renaissance and Reformation);

- combine two topic areas, Cultures in Contact and European Colonisation, into a single topic area;
- simplify focus issues.

Stage 5 has been reorganised to reduce substantially the subject matter to be covered and to make clear what is mandatory and could therefore be included in the School Certificate test. In prescribing the content, it was recognised that teachers require time to focus on skills development and not be forced into adopting an 'instructional transmission' approach in order to cover the prescribed content.

In approving the amended writing brief, the Board asked the syllabus writers to look again at the amount of content in Stage 5.

The topics prescribed for Stage 5 have been rewritten to provide a better balance of political and social history, while still retaining a clear civics and citizenship focus.

Copies of the amended writing brief and the consultation report will be available on the Board's website.



Primary Matters

Support material for Linkages project on the Board's website

The first material developed for the *Linkages* project will soon be placed on the Board's website (<http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au>).

Linkages is an ongoing curriculum project aimed at identifying related content and outcomes across the six key learning areas as K-6 syllabuses are developed.

Linkages material provides teachers with examples of where curriculum connections can be located across two or more key learning areas. It addresses curriculum integration issues drawing on the latest research; includes advice on generic outcomes; and gives insight into teachers' approaches to curriculum integration using student work samples and teacher-devised units of work.

continued on page 4

HSC and SC Important Dates

Year 10

- 28 Aug** Final date for decision letters to schools on Board Endorsed Course Applications.
- 25 Sep** Final date for submission of deferred courses to Board of Studies Liaison Officers for final rulings.
Requests for special exam provisions for 1999 Year 10 students due at the Board of Studies.

Year 11

- 28 Aug** Final date for decision letters to schools on Board Endorsed Course Applications.
- 18 Sep** General entry forms for JSST courses to be undertaken in Term 4.
- 25 Sep** Final date for submission of deferred courses to Board of Studies Liaison Officers for final rulings.
Requests for special exam provisions for 1999 Year 11 students due at the Board of Studies.

Year 12

- 17 Aug** Commencement date for HSC Dance practical examinations.
- 21 Aug** Assessment Collection Schedule (combined Board Developed and Board Endorsed Courses) sent to schools.
Alternate mark schedule for students with 'U' determinations sent to schools.
- 22 Aug** Commencement date for HSC Oral/Aural examinations in Languages.
- 28 Aug** Final date for decision letters to schools on Board Endorsed Course Applications.
- 30 Aug** Final completion date for Drama and Industrial Technology Individual Projects.
Submission details to be advised.
- 31 Aug** Commencement date for HSC Drama practical examinations.
Commencement date for marking of HSC Industrial Technology major works.
Commencement date for HSC Industry Studies practical examinations.
- 4 Sep** Latest date for principals to notify student of intention to award a 'U' Assessment and to provide student with appeal form.
- 18 Sep** Latest date for principals to submit 'U' determination appeal forms and related documentation to the Board of Studies.
General entry forms for JSST courses to be undertaken in Term 4.

Contents

History Stages 4 & 5 Consultation	1
Primary Matters	1
President's Message	3
Assessing and Reporting the New HSC	3
<i>Official Notices centre liftout</i>	
Board introduces a more consultative syllabus development process	5
The Minister's Young Designers Awards.....	6
Position Vacant	7
Register of curriculum writers.....	7
Building and Constructing CEC – introduction of bricklaying and paving modules	7
Important fax numbers at the Office of the Board of Studies	7
HSIE K-6 Update	8

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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



The changes to the HSC have had considerable press comment and speculation over the past month. Rather than respond to narrow sectional interests that often get media space because of their extreme

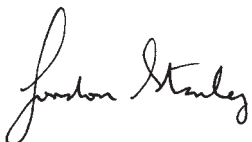
positions, the Board will continue to draw on professional advice and feedback from teachers, parents and students as we continue to engage with the range of complex issues associated with the HSC reforms. To achieve this we will actively seek feedback during the many planned consultation periods.

Opposite is an article on the assessment proposals for the HSC. In the announcement of the new structure, the Government has indicated the importance of professional development and we will ensure that teachers will have plenty of opportunity to become familiar with the new approach to assessment.

With the introduction of the project management approach to curriculum development, the Board has introduced new Curriculum Committees that will have an essential role in quality control.

Each committee will be representative of stakeholders and will report directly to the Board itself. They will play an important role in monitoring the consistency of process as we move into the cycle of syllabus revision and development associated with the new HSC.

The Primary Committee of the Board has welcomed the progress in the Linkages project and is pleased that further work is planned to assist curriculum integration. The Board is aware of the importance of balancing a holistic perspective against a narrow discipline focus.



(Professor) Gordon Stanley


Assessing and Reporting the New HSC

The extensive public consultation undertaken by Barry McGaw identified widespread support from teachers, parents, students and the wider community for a fairer system of examining and reporting. As a consequence, the Office of the Board of Studies has been working with teachers and other educators to identify the standards embedded in existing syllabuses and tested in the 1996 and 1997 HSC examinations.

The reforms to assessing and reporting the HSC include:

- moving from a norm-referenced reporting system to one that is standards-referenced. The new HSC examinations will be marked to reflect the standards that students have achieved, rather than a predetermined distribution and their rank order in a group;
- increasing the emphasis on descriptive reporting;
- considering the examinations in the new course structures. The Board is reviewing several examination models that can engage and challenge all students to demonstrate the standard they have reached.
- improving range and balance in school-based assessment practices, ie conducting school-based assessment that challenges students and enables them to show what they know and can do in ways that do not just mimic the examinations.

At each stage in the development of new assessment and reporting practices, the Office of the Board of Studies will seek advice from teachers and academics and consult widely in schools and with the community.

New assessment and reporting of the HSC will begin in 2001. Teachers will become familiar with and use new methods of assessment in a planned way, with training and development support. 

History Stages 4 & 5 consultation *continued from page 1*


What happens next?


A writing team will be selected from the Board's register of writers and the draft syllabus will be prepared during August.

The draft syllabus and sample support material will be sent to schools in September for consultation. It is anticipated that a completed version of the syllabus will be sent to teachers for use in planning and programming during Term 4, with the final published version dispatched to schools for the start of Term 1, 1999.

Implementation of the syllabus is mandatory for Year 7, 1999 only. The draft syllabus will provide early guidance for teachers to commence programming the course for Stage 4. Schools electing to implement the syllabus with the Years 8, 9 or 10 cohorts in 1999 will also have available the necessary detail to enable them to do so.

The School Certificate testing program will continue as previously notified:

- 1999 Trial testing to be based on the 1992 syllabus
- 2000 Optional testing based on new syllabus
- 2001 Optional testing based on new syllabus
- 2002 Mandatory testing. 



Primary Matters *continued from page 1*

The following sections of the *Linkages* project will be the first items available on the Board's website:

- information about research findings in the area of curriculum integration;
- a list of articles and teaching resources for curriculum integration;
- examples of what generic outcomes (cross-curricula outcomes) might look like;
- the Board of Studies' policy on curriculum integration; and
- information on the proposed *Linkages* CD-ROM.

Chinese K-6

The Chinese K-6 Syllabus, the latest primary language syllabus developed by the Board of Studies, is now available for schools on request. This syllabus will be followed by Korean K-6, which is expected to be available later this term. These syllabuses complete the work funded under the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools, which included the syllabuses in Indonesian and Japanese already available.

A snapshot of K-6 curriculum priorities across Australia

A scan of current curriculum and cross-curriculum priorities across Australia reveals some interesting similarities and differences. If you were wondering what the curriculum development and support priorities are in Australian States and Territories ... here's a snapshot:

- ACT – the ACT Literacy Strategy; Numeracy Project (Count Me in Too)
- Northern Territory – Numeracy project (Count Me in Too); reporting in outcomes (in either English or Mathematics)
- NSW – English; HSIE; the NSW Literacy Strategy; Civics and Citizenship
- Queensland – Science; Health/PE; Literacy
- South Australia – Aboriginal Education; Literacy; Civics and Citizenship
- Tasmania – English; The Arts; Health/PE; Literacy and Numeracy
- Victoria – Science; Early Years Literacy; Civics and Citizenship; Literacy and Numeracy
- Western Australia – Implementation of WA's Curriculum Framework; the WA Literacy Strategy.

Mathematics K-6 on CD-ROM

Mathematics K-6 Outcomes and Indicators (1998), distributed to schools earlier this year, will be available to schools on CD-ROM before long. In addition to the outcomes and indicators, the 1989 syllabus document, which is being transferred from a print-based document to an electronic publication, will also be included on the CD-ROM.

HSIE K-6 Update – see page 8.

If you would like further information on K-6 curriculum matters, contact Phil Lambert, Inspector, Primary Education, phone (02) 9367 8199 or fax (02) 9367 8476.



Board introduces a more consultative syllabus development process

The Board of Studies has introduced a new syllabus development process that will increase opportunities for consultation and improve efficiency. Following a review of the Board's curriculum development process, a decision was made to move to a new system based on principles of project management.

The new process, which will also place greater emphasis on monitoring and quality assurance, involves five stages:

1. planning and promotion;
2. writing brief development;
3. syllabus development;
4. handover for implementation;
5. data collection and evaluation.

Wide consultation with the education community during each stage of the process will lead to the production of quality syllabus documents. At key stages of the process, advice will be sought from teachers, key individuals and organisations. In particular, professional associations of teachers will play a heightened role in this consultation.

To assist with its monitoring and quality assurance role, the Board is establishing Board Curriculum Committees (see inset). Board Curriculum Committees replace existing Syllabus Advisory Committees and will be committees of the Board itself.

Board Curriculum Committees will play an essential role in the syllabus development process, assisting the Board in monitoring the quality of the material produced by project teams and ensuring the integrity of the syllabus development process undertaken by these teams.

The role of the Board Curriculum Committees will be to:

- review documentation prepared during the curriculum development process and provide advice to the Board;
- provide advice to project teams at defined stages throughout the project;
- provide advice on the groups or individuals being consulted during the development of the syllabus document; and
- recommend syllabus documents to the Board for endorsement.

The Board Curriculum Committees will advise the Board on:

- whether the agreed processes have been followed;
- whether attention has been given to the views identified during consultation;
- whether the syllabus design processes have been followed;
- the quality of the syllabus package in relation to the writing brief agreed to by the Board.

Within the framework agreed to by the Board, project

Membership of new Board Curriculum Committees

Membership will be on the same representative basis that occurred for Syllabus Advisory Committees. Also, Board Curriculum Committees will include one or two members of the Board of Studies. They will convey Board perspectives and decisions to the Board Curriculum Committee and report the views of the Committee to the Board. The Board will receive regular reports on the progress of curriculum projects, including the minutes of the meetings of Board Curriculum Committees.


The memberships of Board Curriculum Committees will comprise:

- 1–2 members of the Board of Studies;
- 2 tertiary sector nominees, nominated by the Committee of Chairs of Academic Boards;
- 3 NSW Department of Education and Training nominees (2 with school background and 1 with TAFE background for 7–12 committees);
- 2 NSW Teachers Federation nominees;
- 1 Independent Education Union nominee;
- 1 Aboriginal Education Consultative Group nominee;
- 1 Catholic Education Commission nominee;
- 1 Parents and Citizens Association nominee;
- 1 Association Independent Schools nominee;
- 1 representative with a background in special education;
- 1 Joint Council of NSW Professional Teachers' Associations nominee;
- 1 Federation of School and Community Organisations nominee*;
- 1 NSW Parents Council nominee*;
- 1 Primary Principals' Council nominee*.

(*denotes member of Board Curriculum Committee for K–6 syllabus development)

teams will undertake the development of syllabus and support documentation. This will involve developing the initial proposal, establishing consultative networks, managing wide-ranging consultation and drafting and revising syllabus documentation. Project teams will, at various times, comprise various personnel from the Office of the Board of Studies, including curriculum, assessment and publications personnel.

At particular stages of the syllabus development process the project team will include contracted writers. The Office of the Board has called for expressions of interest for curriculum writers in all areas of the curriculum through advertisements in *Board Bulletin* (February 1998) and the national press. Teachers with demonstrated writing expertise are invited to submit their expression of interest as soon as possible (see page 7).

The term of office of existing Syllabus Advisory Committees expired on 4 July 1998. The Board has determined that, as far as practicable, new Board Curriculum Committees should be operational from August. 

The Minister's Young Designers Awards

The Minister's Young Designers Awards encourage students to look at the world around them, to investigate products, systems and environments, and to design a successful solution to a problem in an area of interest to them.

The challenge offered to students is to develop a project that clearly meets an identified need. The awards aim to build students' confidence by acknowledging their achievements. Students may undertake individual or group activities in the development of the design project.

All schools should have now received an information booklet about the awards and posters advertising the awards and exhibition.

This year, the MYDA exhibition of selected state finalists will be held at the Sydney Visitor Centre, The Rocks, 12 November 1998 – 25 January 1999. An expression of interest form is included below for you to fax back your school's intention to be involved in the awards this year.

If you require further information about the awards, please contact Julie Eather, Exhibitions Coordinator, phone (02) 9367 8309 or fax (02) 9367 8479.



The Minister's Young Designers Awards

Expression of Interest Form

- Sector (please tick)
- Association of Independent Schools
- Catholic Education Commission
- Department of Education and Training
- Other (please specify)

School name (in full)

Address Postcode

Phone () Fax ()

MYDA District

How many students do you think will participate in the awards?
 (Each entry will receive a letter of acknowledgement.)

School contact:

Ms/Mr/Mrs First name Surname

Signature Date



Position Vacant

Project Manager (HSC/SC Research)

The Project Manager (HSC/SC Research) will be responsible for the coordination of the research projects and research services associated with School Certificate and Higher School Certificate marking.

This will include supervision of all staff contracted to work in this area and oversight of the examiner reliability controls project; all analysis relating to question choice; and options within the various examinations. Close liaison will need to be established with the Supervisors of Marking (SOMs) in the planning of these projects; their analysis; the provision of feedback to SOMs; and the determination of appropriate action.

The Project Manager (HSC/SC Research) will be required to prepare a comprehensive report on all research and research services projects. This is to include a detailed summary of all actions taken.

Applicants will need a sound background in statistics and educational measurement, together with experience in the supervision of support staff.

Applications should be submitted with a brief summary of qualifications and experience to:

Mr J S Cook
Director, Examinations and Assessment
Office of the Board of Studies
GPO Box 5300
SYDNEY NSW 2001

The closing date for applications is 28 August 1998.



Building and Construction CEC – introduction of bricklaying and paving modules

Elective modules in bricklaying and paving were offered to Year 11 Building and Construction CEC students in nominated schools during 1998.

An evaluation of the initial implementation will be conducted in Term 4, 1998. After the evaluation, the Board of Studies will determine if these modules will be made more widely available to Building and Construction students in 1999. Schools will be notified through *Board Bulletin*.

Teachers from the nominated schools underwent additional training and assessment to deliver the bricklaying and paving modules. If schools elect to deliver these modules, arrangements for appropriate teacher training will need to be made through the relevant school system.

Contact Paul Rodney, Curriculum Branch on (02) 9367 8177 for further information.



Register of curriculum writers

Calls for Expression of Interest

To assist with the management of its K–12 syllabus development program the Office of the Board of Studies of NSW is creating a register of curriculum writers.

People with expertise in writing syllabuses or support material in general education K–12 or vocational education are invited to submit an expression of interest in being placed on the register. The expression of interest may be for a particular subject/KLA area and/or stage of schooling.

Interested persons are encouraged to submit their expressions of interest for projects which may commence during 1998.

An information package describing selection criteria for placement on the register and an expression of interest form can be obtained by contacting:

Mr Rob Freilich
Project Officer, Curriculum Branch
Office of the Board of Studies
GPO Box 5300

Sydney 2001
Tel: (02) 9367 8385

Email: freilich@boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au



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To fax all other messages and requests to the Office: **(02) 9367 8484.**

NB: A previous fax number used by the Office of the Board – **(02) 9956 5205** – has now been allocated to another Telstra client.





HSIE K-6 Update

Teachers put HSIE K-6 draft syllabus to the test

Over the past nine months, teachers from 18 NSW primary schools have been providing valuable feedback on the draft syllabus and units of work developed to support Human Society and Its Environment K-6.

Apart from collecting and analysing student work samples for incorporation in the final document, the teachers have provided important information on such matters as the scope and sequence of content, the clarity and validity of the outcomes and indicators, the amount of time required to teach the units and approaches to school planning using the draft units.

In addition to working in their own schools on the project, the teachers contributed to workshops held by the Office of the Board of Studies in Terms 1 and 2. At a recent two-day workshop, the teachers examined the collection of student work samples and developed information based on their analyses of the students' work.

'This is our connection with the teachers who must ultimately work with the material in the syllabus,' said Louise Bidenko, Senior Curriculum Officer with the Board of Studies. 'We need teacher input to ensure the syllabus outcomes are achievable and that the content can be taught effectively.'

Mary Baldwin, a teacher from Manly Vale Catholic School was very impressed with the draft syllabus. 'It's really user-friendly and the students enjoyed the topics very much. The syllabus is very interactive and provides for a wide range of learning experiences.'

Country school teachers Julie Café from Westdale Public School in Tamworth and Neil Smith from Kootingal Public School were equally impressed.

'It's great to see something of this high quality,' said Julie Café. 'It's a real bonus for teachers because the draft syllabus is really easy to follow and provides lots of direction. The children were very excited about the

syllabus and this is reflected in the quality of the work samples they produced.'

'I think it's great that there's so much flexibility in the syllabus so teachers can apply it specifically to suit the children they are teaching,' said Neil Smith. 'It's also great that there are support documents available through the Internet, which means smaller country schools have access to a wider range of resources without having to worry about the inhibitions of cost.'

The draft syllabus contains more than 40 new areas of study, and aims to help students participate as responsible citizens in our society.

Anne Barnett from Wiley Park Public School said the changes to the syllabus helped to give students a greater sense of working cooperatively.



Teachers review student work samples from the HSIE draft syllabus.

'I found the syllabus really practical, which is great because I teach mostly students from non-English speaking backgrounds,' she said. 'I liked that it offers greater opportunities for working in groups and using resources.'

'The Transport unit, which I trialled, seemed to address the issues of traffic pollution and environmental problems more than previous syllabus material. This is good because

it teaches children to think of the consequences of their actions and to realise what's happening around them on a wider scale.'

The draft syllabus and support documents are currently in schools. Surveys were sent to all schools and to relevant educational organisations and individuals. Focus group meetings have been held in Glen Innes, Sydney (Liverpool and Manly), Wollongong and Forbes. Whole staff interviews have also been held in a sample of schools, including a K-12 school and an infants school.

The Board of Studies will incorporate this teacher feedback into the final document before the scheduled release in Term 4 of the Human Society and Its Environment K-6 Syllabus and support documents. 