

Board Bulletin



BOARD OF STUDIES NSW

March 2000 – Vol 9 No 1

New-look examinations for the New HSC

With the assistance of teachers, academics and Board's officers, the Board of Studies has been working hard to develop new-look examinations for the New HSC.

Specimen papers for the new examinations will be available to teachers and students by the end of Term 1, 2000.

Preparing specimen examination papers for the New HSC has involved a rigorous quality assurance process. In the November/December 1999 *Board Bulletin*, the principles endorsed by the Board for the setting of examinations in a standards-referenced framework were published. These principles have guided the conversion of the sample papers published in 1999 into specimen examinations.

In some specimen examinations, significant changes have been made to the style of questions used so that the papers meet the Board's principles for standards-referenced examinations.

In some subjects, for example, the range of outcomes addressed in the sample paper has been reduced in the specimen examination. Testing a representative sample of outcomes each year will make papers less predictable and encourage students to prepare for all syllabus outcomes.

Free response questions have been made simpler in structure and language. Rubrics at the beginning of free response sections will give students a clear indication of what is expected. Students will have flexibility to demonstrate what they know, understand and are able to do. *continued page 3*

Sample Marking Guidelines for the Stage 6 Specimen Examination Papers

Last year the Board endorsed a set of principles for developing marking guidelines for the New Higher School Certificate examinations to be introduced in 2001. These principles will assist examiners to develop marking guidelines which markers can use to clearly and consistently determine the standards of performance reached by students.

Officers are currently developing new marking guidelines, based on the Board's principles, for selected questions in each of the specimen papers. The principles and the marking guidelines will be published on the Board's website by the end of May. Together, these will provide students and teachers with a good understanding of how different types of questions will be marked and how closely linked the marking guidelines are to both the specimen paper and the syllabus.

The marking guidelines for the sample papers in the Examination, Assessment and Reporting Supplements (EARS) will not be as relevant once the specimen examination papers are released this month. The new

marking guidelines for selected questions in the specimen papers will replace them.

The marking guidelines for the New HSC will assist markers by providing information on the examiners' expectations for each question. This means that markers will be provided with more guidance than at present. Even though the principles for setting examinations and the principles for preparing marking guidelines are actually intended for examiners and markers involved in the external examinations, teachers should find them helpful for setting and marking their own internal assessment tasks.

The specimen papers and the sample of marking guidelines will assist students and teachers to develop an understanding of the standards of performance expected of HSC candidates in 2001 as a result of their engagement with the New HSC syllabuses. Students will have a better idea of what they have to be able to do, know and understand in preparation for the HSC examinations.



HSC and SC Important Dates

Year 10

- 28 Jan Dispatch applications for special exam provisions for Year 10 students
- 21 Feb BOS Central service for entries opens
- 6 Mar Schools Online entry service opens
Entry forms sent to schools not using BOS Central or Schools Online services
- 10 Mar Dispatch Presiding Officers' nominations for SC
Dispatch Test Supervisor nominations for SC
- 13 Mar Dispatch School-designed Board Endorsed Courses 2001: Guidelines and Applications Booklet
- 29 Mar Latest date for all SC entries received either electronically or by entry form
Schools using Schools Online can produce confirmations as entries are processed
- 7 Apr Latest date for submission of applications for special exam provisions for Year 10 students

Year 11

- 21 Feb BOS Central service for entries opens
- 6 Mar Schools Online entry service opens
Entry forms sent to schools not using BOS Central or Schools Online services
- 13 Mar Dispatch School-designed Board Endorsed Courses 2001: Guidelines and Applications Booklet
- 5 Apr All Preliminary entries received either electronically or by entry form
Schools using Schools Online can produce confirmations as entries are processed

Year 12

- 28 Jan Dispatch applications for special exam provisions for Year 12 students
- 18 Feb Dispatch preliminary advice re: dates and submission details for practical examinations in Term 3
- 21 Feb BOS Central service for entries opens
- 25 Feb Dispatch Oral/Aural Languages Timetable
Examination period 5 August – 2 September
- 6 Mar Schools Online entry service opens
Entry forms sent to schools not using BOS Central or Schools Online services
- 10 Mar Dispatch Presiding Officers' nominations for SC/HSC
- 13 Mar Dispatch School-designed Board Endorsed Courses 2001: Guidelines and Applications Booklet
- 22 Mar Latest date for all HSC entries to be received either electronically or by entry form
Schools using Schools Online can produce confirmations as entries are processed
- 7 Apr Latest date for submission of applications for special exam provisions for Year 12 student.

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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CHECK YOUR MAILBOX



- ❖ Draft Languages Extension Stage 6 Syllabus and Survey
 - Arabic
 - German
 - Indonesian
 - Italian
 - Japanese
 - Modern Greek
 - Spanish
 - French
- ❖ SC Standards Pack CD – English
- ❖ SC Standards Pack CD – Mathematics
- ❖ Music Years 7–10 CD
- ❖ President's letter re New HSC specimen papers and standards
- ❖ VET

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President's Message



The year 2000 is well underway without any of the hazards predicted last year. Each year does seem to have its own particular challenges and the expectation of us doing the best that we can never changes. From the perspective of the Board we are aware of another busy year of curriculum projects and assessment developments.

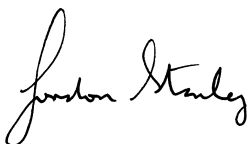
During the non-teaching period a lot of work was put into the development of specimen papers for the New HSC to ensure that they appropriately reflect changes to the syllabuses as well as the requirements of the new assessment model.

This year the first cohort of students enrolled in the New HSC has commenced their study. They will be the first group to benefit from the enormous professional engagement of teachers, subject specialists and community members who have worked tirelessly with Board officers to ensure that students have the best possible preparation for the challenges of 21st Century life.

A special feature of the New HSC, which has not been recognised sufficiently in the broader community to this point, is the major shift in how results will be reported. The shift to standards-referenced reporting of achievement that now has been attained successfully in the School Certificate will also occur with the HSC.

In the traditional approach to the HSC there has been a focus on attainment of marks almost as an end in itself. This has often led students, parents, employers and others to ask what the outcome of a high mark really means. In the future meaning will be an essential element of reporting marks. Student achievement of syllabus outcomes will be referenced to performance standards so that the marks will have a clear meaning in terms of these standards.

This will provide much more useful information about what students know and can do as a result of their study. It brings general education reporting somewhat closer to the reporting of vocational education in that both forms of reporting focus on outcomes achieved, although at present the competency reporting methodology adopted by ANTA does not recognise levels of performance beyond achievement of competency standards.



(Professor) Gordon Stanley

New-look examinations for the New HSC
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Questions in some sample papers contained many sub-parts requiring simple recall of facts. These sub-parts have been reduced in the specimen examinations. They have been replaced with questions requiring a more integrated response. This gives students the opportunity to show higher-order thinking skills, while not reducing the capacity for all students to be rewarded for demonstrating what they know about the topic.

The wording of questions has been made consistent by using the glossary of key words published in the Board's Assessment Support Document. This provides a common language and will help teachers to show students what each question requires.

The specimen examinations use consistent layout design and the instructions to candidates and placement of marks have been standardised. This will help students to work confidently through each examination paper.

These improvements mean that the final specimen examinations will appear different from the original sample papers that are already in schools. The papers now show how the range of students will be given the opportunity in the New HSC examinations to demonstrate their level of achievement of course outcomes.

During their preparation all examination papers for the 2001 HSC will be able to be monitored against their effectiveness in meeting the Board's principles for standards-referenced examinations. By having clear and openly published expectations, the Board will be able to ensure that its papers meet the necessary standards in 2001.

The Board's expert monitoring group has carefully reviewed and endorsed the specimen papers. Board Curriculum Committee members are now checking that each paper complies with the Board's principles.

Specimen papers will be published progressively on the Board's website from March 2000. In addition, schools will receive a hard copy of all specimen papers (except for some small candidature language papers) and a full set of papers on CD-ROM. This resource will be valuable to schools as they prepare their students for the 2001 HSC examinations.





Primary Matters

Primary Curriculum Issues

In the last edition of the *Board Bulletin*, this new section of 'Primary Matters' dealt with the notion of a crowded curriculum. In this edition, the impact of learning technologies on curriculum development is considered.

The impact of learning technologies on curriculum development

Learning technology is a priority area for both curriculum policy development and professional development activities across Australia. It is a major agenda item that will continue to challenge and redefine our views about teaching and learning.

Over the last decade and a half, a significant amount of money has been spent on the provision of computer hardware and software to schools. As a consequence, computers are now very much a part of classroom 'furniture'. Indeed, an artist's sketch of the average primary classroom would include a computer (or two) somewhere in the frame — along with the chalkboard.

Despite the ongoing supply and enhancement of computer-based technology in schools, there is still a great deal of information needed on the extent to which such technologies are improving or enhancing student learning. Though there is an expanding body of literature in the area, we simply need to know more.

What we do know now is that computer-based technologies appear to support learning in various ways. Foremost among these are:

- students can access information from sources that extend far beyond their local environment;
- students can explore and produce various texts (written, spoken, visual and combinations of each);
- particular software programs can assist and engage students with aspects of learning, some of which may otherwise be considered repetitive or mundane; and
- task-setting can be monitored and adjusted by students as well as by teachers.

We also know that approaches to the use of computer-based technologies in and across schools can be grouped broadly as:

- those in which computer-based technologies are used as single/one-off activities, eg used as a reward for 'fast workers';
- those in which students and teachers supplement learning experiences and resources in specific key learning areas, eg used by students for publishing final texts, used by students to practise number skills;
- those in which computer-based technologies are incorporated into the teaching/learning process, eg used as one of several strategies for creating, acquiring and interpreting information in some or all aspects of the curriculum.

It is this final approach that reflects the policy intentions that have supported the supply of computer hardware to schools. In recent years the development of syllabus content has also been based on this approach.

Several issues have been considered when developing syllabuses, incorporating knowledge, skills and understanding related to learning technologies. These include issues concerning:

- equity (the level of supply and access to learning technologies within and across schools);
- the rate of change (as new technologies surface and existing technologies become redundant);
- the specification of content (the knowledge, skills and values teachers will teach within and across key learning areas);
- learning outcomes (when the research base in this area is not extensive at this stage).

Computer-based technologies are now part of the regular infrastructure of society. However, their use in schools, at least for most of the 1990s, was more instrumental than conceptual. Like other technologies in education, such as chalkboards and projectors, they have been used as a support for pedagogy rather than as something that is changing the nature of learning itself. The extent to which we reflect this latter use in syllabus content and outcomes requires considerable thought and discussion — it may well be something that is informed more by the learner than the teacher!

Please send your comments on this issue, or suggestions for other issues, by email to: lambert@boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au

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Update on Creative Arts K–6

A report on the findings of the consultation on the Creative Arts K–6 Draft Syllabus and support documents was considered by the Board at its December 7 meeting last year.

The report acknowledges that teachers who commented on the draft syllabus package felt it provided a comprehensive description of the art forms. However, a number of issues were identified during the consultation which need to be attended to in the development of the final syllabus package.

These can be described generally as those concerning:

- clarity of language used in the syllabus and support documents;
- consistency in relation to other K–6 syllabus documents (syllabus components, terminology, organisation, layout and design);
- direction and guidance for classroom teachers in what to teach in each stage in each art form (Visual Arts, Music, Drama and Dance);
- implementation issues related to the four art forms;
- the standards described;
- classroom teachers' knowledge of the art forms and confidence in teaching these areas.

These issues are being addressed now through the redevelopment of the draft documents and through feedback obtained from systems' representatives, consultants and groups of primary classroom teachers.

It is expected that the syllabus package will be released to schools in Term 3 this year.

Further information on the Creative Arts K–6 Syllabus can be obtained by contacting Phil Lambert at lambert@boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au or by phone on 9367 8199, or Kerry Thomas at thomas@boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au or by phone on 9367 8161.

Check Our Website

<http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus99/syllabus2000>

- Mathematics, Mathematics Extension 1 and Mathematics Extension 2 Course Outcomes (previously called Mathematics 2 Unit, 3 Unit and 4 Unit)
- Industry Curriculum Frameworks for Students with Special Needs
- Support Documents and Resource Lists for New HSC Stage 6 Syllabuses
- Life Skills Special Program of Study
- Some frequently asked questions about assessment in the New Higher School Certificate
- Standards-referenced Assessment in Primary Schools



Primary Matters *continued from page 4*

Standards-referenced Assessment in Primary Schools

Standards-referenced assessment refers to the process of collecting and interpreting information about students' learning, using outcomes as key reference points for decisions about their progress and achievement. Though the term has been used most recently in association with the New Higher School Certificate, it is an approach that primary teachers have been using for a number of years following the release of K–6 syllabuses with outcomes and related support material (such as indicators, stage statements and student work samples).

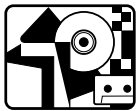
A bulletin, 'Standards-referenced Assessment in Primary Schools', has been developed for use by primary schools. The bulletin, which is available on the Board's website, looks at four key questions:

- What is meant by standards-referenced assessment?
- What is the relationship between K–6 syllabus development and standards-referenced assessment?
- What are the key elements in the use of standards-referenced assessment?
- What does standards-referenced assessment look like in practice?

'Standards-referenced Assessment in Primary Schools' can be located in the K–6 Pages section on the Board's website (<http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au>).

If you would like further information regarding these items or K–6 curriculum matters in general, contact Phil Lambert, Inspector, Primary Education, on lambert@boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au, ph (02) 9367 8199 or fax (02) 9367 8476.





CLIENT SERVICES COLUMN

Sale of Board Publications

Brochures enclosed in this *Board Bulletin* refer to:

- past Sample Answer titles
- Aboriginal Literacy Resource Kit for Years K-6
- a range of Years 7-10 resources, and
- a range of CD-ROM titles

all being sold at incredibly reduced prices!

Extending the BOS Schools Online Service

In 1999 over 600 schools used this service to obtain their HSC results and statistical information on the performance of their students. Many schools also used the service to access their SC results and to send SC grades and HSC assessments to the Board.

This year new features are being added to the BOS Schools Online service. These will open up some exciting opportunities for improving communications and exchanging information between schools and the Board.

The new features will enable schools to transmit all School Certificate, Preliminary and Higher School Certificate student entry data to the Board electronically, thereby significantly shortening the time required to complete student entries. By using Schools Online, schools will be able to instantly update and amend the information submitted on each student, such as change of subjects, change of address and so on. Your principal has received further information.

This service is of value to all schools. Once a school is registered (email/fax contact numbers below to obtain a registration form if not already registered) it is possible to keep all information about the school totally up to date. For example, the principal's name can be changed, subject teacher numbers in high schools and teacher numbers in a primary school can be adjusted, and the mailing address, telephone, fax and email information can be kept current. A school that has

registered with Schools Online can keep all this information current, a great advantage both in time saved and accuracy.

Board officers supporting schools using the expanded Schools Online service in 2000 can be contacted on any of the contact numbers below.

The Release of the 1999 HSC Results Electronically

In 1999 a total of 33705 individual students accessed their HSC results on the Internet. Some students used the service more than once. In addition, there were over 39000 calls to the telephone service.

Over 600 schools accessed their HSC results using Schools Online. While some schools experienced congestion on the line, others had no difficulty. The Office of the Board has taken steps to speed up this process.


Encore CDs and Onstage videos available

Past years' Encore CDs and Onstage videos make great teaching resources for Music and Drama teachers and are currently available for the following prices:

Encore 97	-	\$20
Encore 98	-	\$20
OnStage 96	-	\$40
OnStage 98	-	\$50

Contact Information

To place an order simply fax it to this number (02) 9262 6270, quoting an official purchase order number. Orders can be placed over the phone, using credit cards by calling (02) 9367 8178. If paying by cheque, orders may be posted to GPO Box 5300 Sydney 2001. A postage charge of \$4 for one item or \$8 for two or more items applies.

Client Service officers can address enquiries about any of the Board's products — phone (02) 9367 8178. Alternatively, the email address is clientservices@boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au. 

The New HSC – A Better Future For All Our Kids

More than 70,000 Year 11 students will become the first to study the New Higher School Certificate this year, Education and Training Minister, John Aquilina, told a breakfast meeting of industry, academic, teacher and student representatives last month.

'The New HSC has a renewed and reinvigorated curriculum that is fairer and better prepares students for further study or work,' Mr Aquilina said.

'The New HSC raises the standards of courses, challenges all students to stretch themselves and expands opportunities for students to undertake accredited vocational education and training while at high school.

'For the first time students, parents, teachers and employers will also get detailed assessment reports on what students know, understand and can do in each course set against clear standards.

'The world was a very different place when the HSC was introduced in 1967. If today's students are to be properly prepared for their future educational, life and job opportunities, the HSC had to be reformed and re-energised.

'After more than four years of community consultation, extensive research and review, and tens of thousands of hours of work by teachers and academics, we have developed a better, fairer HSC that will secure the future for the next generation of students.


'Through this cooperative effort involving teachers, academics, parents, industry, employers and the wider community we have built on the current HSC's strengths and ensured that the New HSC is a truly world-class and internationally recognised credential,' Mr Aquilina said.

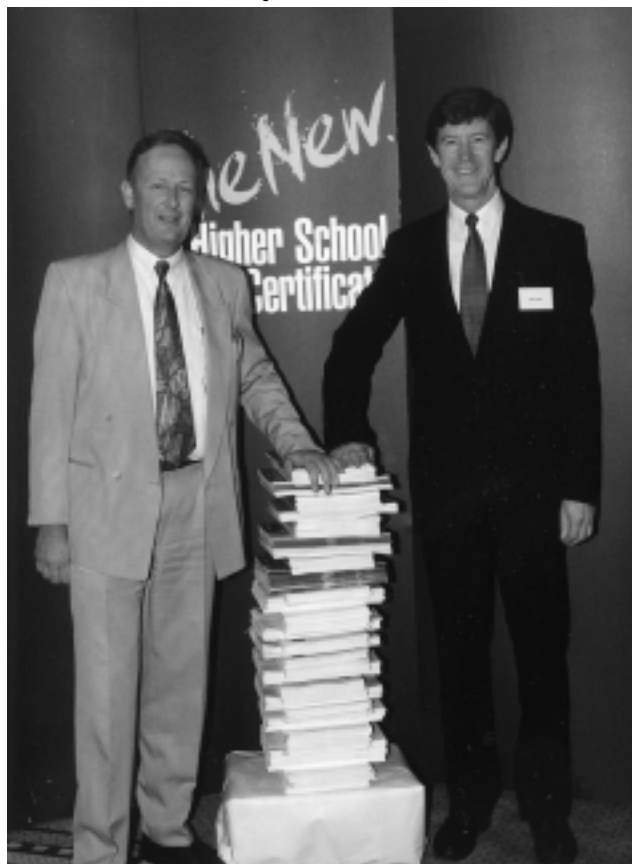
The reform process which began in 1995 has involved:

- the release of two discussion papers, with more than 1000 submissions being received generating more than 6000 pages of comment;
- the publication of the Government's White Paper, 'Securing Their Future';
- reviewing and rewriting 99 syllabuses in 52 subjects; involving almost 11,000 submissions from teachers, schools, academics, industry and the community;
- 738 teacher training workshops across the State, attended by more than 20,000 teachers;
- mail-outs of information booklets and materials to students and parents;
- 140 community information seminars, attended by more than 20,000 parents, to explain the New HSC;
- more than \$30 million spent on implementation, including funding for training and development;

- establishment of a dedicated professional development website for teachers;
- distribution of newsletters, videos and support materials.

Key elements of the New HSC include:

- Abolishing the Tertiary Entrance Rank (TER) and replacing it with a confidential Universities Admission Index (UAI);
- Students receiving new detailed individual reports describing their knowledge, competence and achievements in each subject;
- Students to receive individual marks out of 100 for each subject studied, with 50 being the minimum standard;
- Reforming the curriculum to include a broad range of vocational education subjects, fully recognised by industry;
- Combining existing 'advanced' courses with 2 unit courses that will challenge and test all students; and
- Allowing capable students to do more demanding extension study in English, Mathematics and other selected subjects. 



President of the Board of Studies, Professor Gordon Stanley and General Manager of the Office of the Board of Studies, John Ward at the launch of the New HSC.

Top HSC Students Recognised at Premier's Awards

Excellence in education was recognised with more than 200 Higher School Certificate students being presented awards by the Premier of NSW, Bob Carr MP and the Minister for Education and Training, John Aquilina MP, at the Annual Premier's Awards for Excellence in the 1999 Higher School Certificate at Darling Harbour this month.

More than 800 people attended the ceremony including the recipients, their parents, school principals, representatives from the Board of Studies NSW, the NSW Department of Education and Training, the Catholic Education Commission and the Association of Independent Schools.

The Annual Premier's Awards for Excellence in the Higher School Certificate recognise and reward the efforts of top achieving NSW students. This year, 77 students were awarded the prestigious Premier's Trophy for achieving 90 per cent or higher in at least 11 units in their Higher School Certificate, an indication of outstanding all-round academic excellence. Certificates for Excellence in the Higher School Certificate were awarded also to 144 students placed first in a course where they achieved a mark of more than 90 per cent.

'These students have achieved outstanding results through their dedication, talent and determination to succeed. They reflect the level of academic excellence that is being cultivated in schools throughout NSW and they are a credit to the support of their talented teachers and parents', Mr Carr said.

'The students come from many areas of our State and from a wide range of schools — proving that it matters little where you live or the type of school you attend.'


'If you have the desire to succeed and the motivation to excel, you will achieve your goal', Mr Carr said.

Minister for Education and Training, John Aquilina also congratulated the award

winners, and all HSC students, on their achievements.

'Students now have more choice and flexibility in their studies to strive for their full potential and this will be further increased with the New Higher School Certificate', the Minister said.

Mr Aquilina presented a special annual award, The Brother John Taylor Memorial Prize, to a student who has achieved academic excellence whilst overcoming significant disabilities and disadvantage.

This year's recipient was Roberta Carney from Crookwell High School, who achieved outstanding HSC results and first rankings in her school in English and Biology despite being ill for 96 days out of 150 school days last year — the majority of these being spent at the New Children's Hospital in Westmead. Roberta has cystic fibrosis but was determined to complete her HSC in the same timeframe as her classmates. Roberta also faced the challenge of a daily 120km round trip from her home in the small village of Tuena to attend school. 



Carla Davis, from Barker College sings the national anthem at the 1999 Premier's Awards. Official party (l-r), General Manager of the Office of the Board of Studies, John Ward; President of the Board of Studies, Professor Gordon Stanley; Premier of NSW, Minister for Arts and Minister for Ethnic Affairs, the Hon. Bob Carr MP; Minister for Education and Training, the Hon John Aquilina MP; Executive Director, Catholic Education Commission, Dr Brian Croke; Acting Director General of TAFE, Ms Jan McClelland; Director, Association of Independent Schools, Mr Geoff Newcombe.