



School Certificate Australian History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship Test Scope Statement

Background

In 1997, as part of the Government's review of the Higher School Certificate, a decision was made to provide students with a stronger, more focused School Certificate. To strengthen the credential of the School Certificate, a test in Australian History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship has been added in 2002 to the existing suite of School Certificate tests: English–literacy, Mathematics, and Science.

The New South Wales Government's White Paper, *Securing Their Future*, emphasised the need for strong foundations to be laid as a basis for students' effective participation in Year 11 and 12 studies, and for their role in society as adults. The study of Australian History and Australian Geography, incorporating civics and citizenship, contributes to the development of strong foundations by providing opportunities in:

- Analysing and evaluating texts
- Gathering and analysing data
- Evaluating arguments
- Critically assessing the ideas and opinions of others
- Expressing students' own ideas and arguments
- Developing research skills

Australian History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship

The School Certificate test in Australian History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship from 2002 – 2005 will be based on the mandatory Stage 5 History and Geography content of the 1998 History and Geography syllabuses, using a representative sample of outcomes from year to year.

The test will include questions that allow students to demonstrate their understanding of aspects of Civics and Citizenship that are embedded in the mandatory Stage 5 History and Geography syllabuses.

The Board has developed Stages 4–5 Support Material Parts A and B for both the History and Geography syllabuses. These will assist teachers and students in understanding the place of Civics and Citizenship in the mandatory Australian History and Geography content. The support materials are available from the Board's website (www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au).

Student performance in the test will be reported as marks aligned to performance bands. Separate marks will be awarded, with corresponding performance bands, for achievement in the Australian History, Civics and Citizenship and the Australian Geography, Civics and Citizenship components of the test. The test does not attempt to determine achievement in terms of all aspects of the outcomes and content of the

mandatory Stage 5 History and Geography courses. School-based grades and the test marks (and bands) determined by the Board of Studies should be seen as separate measures of student achievement. Student achievement in relation to the full range of outcomes and content for the mandatory and elective Stage 5 History and Geography courses is assessed by schools through their own assessment programs, using the History and Geography Course Performance Descriptors written for this purpose.

Nature and Scope of the test

The test will draw from a representative sample of the outcomes and content of the Stage 5 Australian History (Mandatory) topics and the five Focus Issues, and the four Stage 5 Australian Geography (Mandatory) Focus Areas, and Geographic tools and skills. The test will contain questions that assess aspects of civics and citizenship within the context of the course topics and Focus Issues and Focus Areas. The questions will be designed to focus in part on active and informed citizenship and students' understanding of civics. Questions may require students to reflect on aspects of community action, the role of government at different levels, and community based interest groups, and how they influence decision-making processes in a modern democratic state. The section on Australian History, Civics and Citizenship will not require students to refer specifically to site studies in their answers, although the mandatory site study in the Stage 5 History syllabus may be incorporated by students in an answer to a question(s) on the paper.

The different parts of the test will focus on the knowledge, understanding and skills outcomes and content of the syllabuses as shown:

Australian History, Civics and Citizenship

Parts A and B:

- at least two nominated topic areas*

Part C:

- Five Focus Issues

* The nominated topics for Section 1 Parts A and B of the 2004 and 2005 tests are:

Topic 4: Australia and World War II

Topic 6: Social and Political Issues from the 1970s to the 1990s

Section 2 – Australian Geography

Parts A and B:

- Geographical tools and skills and the four Focus Areas

Part C:

- Four Focus Areas, and may include geographical tools and skills