



An Introduction to Aboriginal Studies Stage 6 in the New HSC

The new *Aboriginal Studies Stage 6 Syllabus* replaces the current syllabus in Aboriginal Studies (1993). The new *Aboriginal Studies Stage 6 Syllabus* is for implementation with Year 11 in 2000 and will be first examined in 2001.

The syllabus provides information that was formerly available in the KLA handbook. This includes descriptions of course requirements, assessment weightings for internal and external assessment and examination specifications.

What is similar?

The *Aboriginal Studies Stage 6 Syllabus* is similar to the current syllabus, but refinements have been made to account for History Stages 4–5 and current political, legal and social issues.

The syllabus continues to have the local Aboriginal community/ies as the focus of the study. Aboriginal community members will continue to be involved wherever possible in all facets of the course, including planning, programming and evaluating.

Students will continue to undertake a major project. The course continues to provide for a range of forms from which students can choose when presenting their project, for example, written text, performance forms, visual forms including photography and video, paintings, drawings, sculpture, screen printing or collage.

What are the overall improvements?

- A reduction in the layering of the course structure.
- A progression between the Preliminary and HSC courses in knowledge and understanding as it relates to Aboriginal history, experiences and significant issues.
- A reduction in the amount of content to be covered.
- Fieldwork has now been mandated.
- An increase in the weighting so that there is a greater recognition of reward for effort for the major project.

The following changes have been made to particular sections of the syllabus

Rationale, Aim and Objectives (pp 6–8)

- The rationale has been revised to reflect developments in the understanding and appreciation of the historical and contemporary experiences of Aboriginal peoples, particularly relating to the concepts of social justice and shared histories. It also acknowledges the links between Aboriginal Studies and post-school opportunities for students.
- The aim encapsulates the essence of the revised course.
- The objectives reflect the revised knowledge and understanding within the content and the skills of investigation and communication that are developed throughout the syllabus. Specific values and attitudes relating to social justice, ethics, intercultural understandings and empathy are emphasised in the new syllabus.

Course Structure (pp 9–10)

The course structure has been simplified.

In the Preliminary course, a comparative case study will now only be undertaken in Part I between the local Aboriginal community/ies and a national Indigenous Australian community.

The HSC core contains a global perspective on social justice and human rights issues and is followed by a comparative case study of two topics across three communities: the local Aboriginal community/ies, a national Indigenous Australian community and an international Indigenous community.

The electives in Part II incorporate a significant part of the current component Context. The local Aboriginal community is the only community to be used for the case study in Part II.

In Part III – Research and Inquiry Methods — the completion of the major project has increased weighting, representing 40% of the internal assessment for the HSC.

Outcomes (pp 11–12)

- An outcomes-based approach to teaching and learning has been adopted in the syllabus. The outcomes are designed to provide a description of what students will know and be able to do as a result of the teaching and learning in the course.
- The Stage 6 outcomes have been reduced in number. The outcomes are linked to the syllabus objectives, with outcomes differentiated to indicate progression in student knowledge, understanding and skills between the Preliminary and HSC courses.
- The outcomes are linked explicitly to the course content.

Content (pp 14–36)

- There is a clear differentiation of outcomes and content between Preliminary and HSC courses, with the Preliminary course covering the period from pre-contact to the 1960s and the HSC course covering the period from the 1960s to the present.
- The scope and depth of the course content is made clear by the description of what students learn.
- Content has been updated to reflect developments in the subject matter, particularly in relation to political, legal and social issues.

Changes specific to the Preliminary course

- The Preliminary course provides the foundation in knowledge, understanding and skills for the HSC course.

Changes specific to the HSC course

- Part I, the core study investigates Social Justice and Human Rights Issues from a global perspective and across the ‘three comparative communities’ study.
- Students learn about:
 - national and international Indigenous human rights issues
 - the current socioeconomic status of Aboriginal and other Indigenous peoples
 - issues concerned with social justice and racism, including the impact of invasion and colonisation
 - Aboriginal and Indigenous responses and initiatives to improve the legal and political status of Aboriginal and Indigenous peoples
 - the degree to which Aboriginal and other Indigenous peoples have achieved equality within society.

Course Requirements (pp 37–38)

- In both courses, students must undertake community case studies. A case study is an in-depth study of a specific community, focused on a particular topic.
- Within the HSC comparative case study, the national Australian Indigenous community case studies and the international Indigenous community case studies may be different for each area of content studied.
- Community-based fieldwork has been mandated; however, the location and quantity of fieldwork will be dependent upon factors such as the area of study undertaken and the availability of community members and organisations.
- Community-based fieldwork should be ongoing throughout the duration of the project and must be documented by students in their project log book.

Assessment (pp 40–46)

- A range and balance of instruments in school-based assessment are proposed (see p 43) to reflect the subject’s diverse range of student learning styles.

What will be needed to teach this subject?

- *Aboriginal Studies Stage 6 Syllabus.*
- Aboriginal Studies Higher School Certificate Examination, Assessment and Reporting Supplement (the sample examination, marking guidelines and draft performance scale).

Current resources are appropriate for use with the new syllabuses although there may need to be some adjustment in the way teachers use them.

A further subject-specific document is being developed by the Board of Studies for distribution later in the year. This will assist teachers with the implementation of the revised syllabuses.

A list of a number of resources will be placed on the Board's website, <http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au>.

The Board of Studies will also provide assessment support materials, which will be generic across subjects.

Cross-sectoral professional development workshops (Department of Education and Training, Catholic Education Commission and members of the Association of Independent Schools) for Aboriginal Studies Stage 6 will be held. Venues and dates for these workshops have been published on the *New HSC* website — <http://www.newhsc.schools.nsw.edu.au> — and distributed to schools. The materials from the workshops will be available on this website.

CURRICULUM SUPPORT for Teaching in Human Society and Its Environment 7–12 — a publication distributed each term by the Department of Education and Training — will carry an HSC supplement.

Assessment and Reporting Bulletin — published each term as a joint venture of the Department of Education and Training, the Catholic Education Commission and the Association of Independent Schools — will build on principles outlined in Board of Studies' newsletters and assessment support materials.