

Languages

Arabic, Chinese, German, Indonesian, Italian, Korean and Vietnamese

Continuers Level Stage 6 Syllabuses

Consultation Report

1. Background

The preparation of the **Languages** Stage 6 Syllabus Packages took into account the instructions described in the Generic Framework presented to the Board in November 1998.

The **Languages** Stage 6 Draft Syllabuses have been distributed widely for comment over the period **3 – 31 March, 1999**. Additionally, consultations on the **Languages** Stage 6 Draft Syllabuses have involved meetings with the following:

school sector representatives

- Broken Bay Diocese languages Teachers and Coordinators 17/03/99
- North Coast area Teachers 25/03/99
- South Coast area Teachers 29/03/99
- Far North coast area Teachers 19/04/99
- Armidale area Teachers 20/04/99
- AHISA/AIS Teachers 21/04/99
- Met North Teachers 22/04/99
- DET representatives 05/03/99; 22/04/99

professional organisations

- ILTA (Italian Language Teachers Association) 23/03/99
- Indonesian Teachers Group (inaugural meeting) 23/02/99
- German Teachers Inservices (Goethe Institut) 12/03/99 and 30/04/99
- MLTA (Modern languages Teachers Association) President and/or other representative(s) 12/03/99; 24/03/99

Modifications to the draft syllabuses, following these consultations and survey responses, will enable the syllabus package to be finalised for submission to the Board.

Up to 30/04/99, **201** written responses to **Languages** were received, **193** being individual or group survey responses and **8** submissions. Of these responses, there were 28 Arabic survey responses, 14 Chinese, 70 German, 17 Indonesian, 42 Italian, 3 Korean and 11 Vietnamese. Approximately 80%

of survey respondents completed the data required for the compilation of statistics. The sample profile, based on the information available, is as follows:

136 Individual responses to survey (where data provided)

Teachers	128				
Government	78	Catholic	11	Independent	39
Academics	8				

7 institution/group responses to survey (where involvement of 5 or more persons indicated)

Organisation details:

Schools:	5				
Government	4	Catholic	<input type="text"/>	Independent	1
Teacher/professional associations			2		

2. Key Issues

Summary of Key Issues for Stage 6 Languages arising from the consultation process:	Summary of action taken as a result of these Key Issues:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern regarding the level of demand as being too high in general, and its impact on a broad-based candidature. Specifically in German and Arabic, concern that the syllabus needs to cater for the current 2 unit general candidature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressed in the amended syllabuses by revising the outcome statements, reducing the number and range of topics and text types in the content, and amending the external examination specifications to reduce the amount of productive use of the language (See section 3.2).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern about time constraints in meeting the demands of the syllabus, with respondents claiming that Languages are largely taught with reduced face-to-face teaching time. • Dissatisfaction with the perceived emphasis on productive, as opposed to receptive, skills in the external examination specifications. • Objection to the discussion component of the oral examination as being difficult to administer and maintain parity across candidates. Concern that the requirement to take part in a discussion in the language was too demanding a task. • General uncertainty about the place, purpose and role of the Special Study • The number of words required in the writing section(s) of the external examination was considered excessive. • Less emphasis on the target language for responses in the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressed in the amendments by revising the outcomes, reducing the breadth of content, amending examination specifications (as above) (See section 3.2) • Examination specifications revised to accommodate greater emphasis on receptive skills and reduction in requirements for productive use of the language. Weightings of external examination components revised. • Discussion deleted in the amended specifications (See Section 3.2) • Special Study deleted in the amended syllabuses (See Section 3.2) • Reduced requirement in terms of number of words to be written in the language. (See Section 3.2) • Revised specifications for the Listening and Responding and
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external examination was considered desirable	Writing sections of the external examination, and the deletion of the Discussion in the oral examination give less emphasis to productive use of language (See Section 3.2)
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3. Analysis

3.1 Quantitative Analysis (*number of responses varied from question to question)

3.1.1 Rationale is appropriate (193*)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8	96	79	15	2	1
4%	49.7%	40.9%	7.8%	1.0%	.5%

3.1.2 Aims and Objectives appropriate (190*)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
11	32	76	37	14	31
5.5%	15.9%	37.8%	18.4%	7.0%	15.4%

Comment: Objectives need to be clarified as to their intent.

Action: Objectives clarified by refining outcomes which are derived from the objectives and articulating those objectives which could, more appropriately be assessed in English.

3.1.3 Outcomes encompass those of existing 2 Unit syllabuses (185*)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
16	24	85	44	23	9
8.0%	11.9%	42.3%	21.9%	11.4%	4.5%

3.1.4 Outcomes appropriate (191*)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10	19	72	45	35	20
5.0%	9.5%	35.8%	23.6%	18.3%	10.5%

Comment: Outcomes seen as being too demanding for a 2 unit syllabus.
 Action: Some outcomes deleted, others revised.

3.1.5 Outcomes achievable (192*)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9	12	46	53	41	40
4.5%	6.0%	22.9%	26.4%	20.4%	19.9%

Comment: Some outcomes seen as being beyond the ability of 2 unit candidates.
 Action: Outcomes deleted and/or revised.

3.1.6 Outcomes assist in determining achievement (185*)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
16	27	69	54	18	17
8.0%	13.4%	34.3%	26.9%	9%	8.5%

3.1.7 Role of Themes adequately explained (193*)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9	55	82	36	11	8
4.5%	27.4%	40.8%	17.9%	5.5%	4.0%

3.1.8 Proposed Themes provide adequate focus (183*)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
18	30	80	37	22	14
9%	14.9%	39.8%	18.4%	10.9%	7.0%

3.1.9 Topics appropriate (193*)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8	22	42	69	35	25
4.0%	10.9%	20.9%	34.3%	17.4%	12.4%

Comment: Some of topics seen as being too demanding for 2 unit candidates.

Action: Topics reduced in number and range. Clarification in content as to the language in which topics discussed provided.

3.1.10 Number and range of Topics appropriate (190*)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
11	9	44	46	42	49
5.5%	4.5%	21.9%	22.9%	20.9%	24.4%

Comment: Number and range of topics seen as being too extensive for 2 unit syllabus.

Action: Number of topics reduced and range of topics revised.

3.1.11 Special Study Options permit needs (180*)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
21	8	52	51	22	47
10.4%	4.0%	25.9%	25.5%	10.9%	23.4%

Comment: Special Study seen as needing clearer articulation as to its place in the syllabus document. See also below.

Action: Special Study deleted from syllabuses.

3.1.12 Special Study Options of Potential Interest (181*)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
20	26	47	48	22	38
10.4%	12.9%	23.4%	23.9%	10.9%	18.9%

Comment: Special Study seen as being potentially too demanding in terms of teaching time available and unclear as to its purpose in the syllabus document.

Action: Special Study deleted from syllabuses.

3.1.13 Provision of recommended texts appropriate (183*)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
18	37	50	38	28	30
9.0%	18.4%	24.9%	18.9%	13.9%	14.9%

Comment: Resources to support the Special Study through Texts need revision to ensure resources are appropriate, available and contemporary.
 Action: Special Study deleted. No recommended texts provided in revised syllabuses. Separate document to include resources, which can be regularly updated, to be provided.

3.1.14 Language and Culture through VET appropriate (137*)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
64	16	26	44	19	32
31.8%	8.0%	12.9%	21.9%	9.5%	15.9%

Comment: The role and purpose of the VET component unclear in the document.
 Action: Special Study deleted. Method of embedding VET modules incorporated into syllabus content.

3.1.15 Text types suitable (192*)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9	34	87	38	15	18
4.5%	16.9%	43.3%	18.9%	7.5%	9%

3.1.16 Grammar is appropriate (193*)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8	63	78	36	11	5
4.0%	31.3%	38.8%	17.9%	5.5%	2.5%

3.1.17 Components and weightings appropriate (192*)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9	27	71	51	24	19
4.5%	13.4%	35.3%	25.4%	11.9%	9.5%

Comment: Weightings of some components seen as inappropriate, particularly those requiring productive use of language.
 Action: Specifications and weightings revised to reduce emphasis on productive use of language.

3.1.18 Sample assessment tasks useful

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
17	48	67	43	13	13
8.5%	23.9%	33.3%	21.4%	6.5%	6.5%

3.1.19 Special Study weighting appropriate (184*)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
17	37	59	37	23	28
8.5%	18.4%	29.4%	18.4%	11.4%	13.9%

Comment: 15% internal assessment weighting seen as too large a proportion of the overall school-based assessment.

Action: Special Study deleted. School-based assessment components comparable with external assessment components.

3.1.20 Examination Specifications appropriate (187*)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
14	38	55	63	17	14
7.0%	18.9%	27.4%	31.3%	8.5%	9.5%

3.1.20 Oral Examination Specifications appropriate (182*)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
19	13	34	53	33	49
9.5%	6.5%	16.9%	26.4%	16.4.4%	24.4%

Comment: Discussion component seen as inappropriate in terms of difficulty and ability to ensure parity in examining.

Action: Discussion deleted.

3.1.21 Listening and Responding Examination Specifications appropriate (176*)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
25	23	47	40	35	31
12.4%	11.4%	23.4%	19.9%	17.4%	15.4%

Comment: Concern that responding in Language (Part B) is too demanding.

Action: Part B deleted with specifications revised so that open-ended responses are in English.

3.1.22 Reading and Responding Examination Specifications (Part A)
appropriate (178*)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
23	43	51	49	20	15
11.4 %	21.4%	25.4%	24.4%	10.0%	7.5%

3.1.23 Reading and Responding Examination Specifications (Part B)
appropriate (188*)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
13	20	52	41	19	56
6.5%	10.0%	25.9%	20.4%	9.5%	27.9%

Comment: Extended responses in language seen as inappropriate.

Action: Part B deleted from examination specifications with specifications revised to ensure that open-ended responses are in English.

3.1.24 Number of Words for Reading and Responding appropriate (180*)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
21	14	33	32	40	61
10.4%	7.0%	16.4%	15.9%	19.9%	30.3%

Comment: Number of words required in the response seen as too demanding.

Action: Number of words required in the response reduced.

3.1.25 Writing Specifications appropriate (182*)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
19	46	49	53	15	19
9.5%	22.9%	24.4%	26.4%	7.5%	9.5%

3.1.26 Number of Writing Words appropriate (177*)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
24	15	40	33	41	48
11.9%	7.5%	19.9%	16.4%	20.4%	23.9%

Comment: Number of words required in the response seen as too demanding.

Action: Number of words required in the writing task(s) reduced.

3.1.27 Relative weightings appropriate (158*)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
43	8	38	27	40	45
21.4%	4.0%	18.9%	13.4%	19.9%	22.4%

Comment: Weightings seen as giving inappropriate emphasis on productive use of language.

Action: Specifications revised to reduce the amount and weighting of productive use of language.

3.1.28 Criteria for judging specifications appropriate (180*)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
21	24	51	69	18	18
10.4%	11.9%	25.4%	34.3%	9.0%	9.0%

3.1.29 Level of Sample assessment items appropriate (167*)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
34	25	58	52	18	14
16.9%	12.4%	28.9%	25.9%	9.0%	7.0%

3.1.30 Overall Assessment (177*)

Nil Response	Excellent as is	Good, with fine-tuning	Acceptable with re-working	Unsure	Unsatisfactory in issues treatment
24	2	30	58	17	70
11.9%	1.0%	14.9%	28.9%	8.5%	34.8%

Comment: Many of respondents indicated lack of satisfaction with a particular issue or issues which had been addressed in the other sections of the survey.

Action: Issues of concern addressed as outlined in consultation report.

3.2 Issues Raised and Writing Team Action

Syllabus Item	Issues	Source/s	Action
Objectives and Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The perceived level of difficulty of some outcomes, particularly in relation to objective 3, was seen as too demanding for a Continuers course 	Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two outcomes, relevant to higher order skills, have been deleted from the generic framework, with language-specific syllabuses revising further as required. Outcomes have been ordered in difficulty. Outcomes clarified by articulating the language in which texts/topics would be discussed, in the content of the syllabus.
Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some topics were considered to be beyond students' experience and interest It was felt that there were too many topics to be covered in the time available 	Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and range of topics (and suggested sub-topics) reduced Some aspects of topics (sub-topics) were highlighted as being for receptive use only The number of topics was reduced to between 9 and 12 across all syllabuses
Special Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Special Study was seen as an additional burden in an already content heavy course 15% weighting was considered too great for the component if it is 	Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deleted from all syllabuses

	<p>not to be examined in the writing section of the external examination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was dissatisfaction with the discussion section of the oral examination and its link with the Special Study • It was suggested that the Special Study warrants a separate course • Concerns were expressed regarding parity and equity of delivery of this aspect of the syllabus where there was no external component to moderate performance in it. 		
Text Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was considered that there are too many variables inherent in the text types • Some text types were seen as having too great a level of difficulty 	Surveys Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text types have been reviewed and reduced in number and range, with texts types seen as the same, grouped together • The level of difficulty of some text types has been clarified by indicating that they are for receptive use only.
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was suggested that weightings for components in the internal and external assessment should be the same 	Surveys Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparable weightings for internal and external assessment components established. • Tasks suggested for internal

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The suggestion that tasks for internal assessment should be different from those for the HSC examination was not well received. 		assessment are comparable to those for external examination
Oral Examination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part B Discussion was considered overly ambitious, impracticable and addressing only communication skills and not the knowledge base of the Special Study 	Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion part of the Oral examination deleted. Overall weighting of Oral examination reduced from 25% to 20%
Listening and Responding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was claimed that lengthy passages test recall not comprehension It was felt that responses in the target language to Part B test writing skills not comprehension 	Surveys Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More texts, generally shorter, are now specified. Section B deleted from amended external examination with the specifications revised to ensure that open-ended responses be in English.
Reading and Responding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objections were raised in respect of Part B, which was considered a writing test rather than a test of comprehension, thus giving too much emphasis to writing 	Surveys Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modifications made to specifications and criteria for judging performance. Criteria for judging performance reflect both reading and writing. Specifications regarding length of response revised so that less words required. Section III (Writing) has been revised to

			incorporate shorter tasks, thus reducing the amount of writing overall
Language of Response to external examination tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responding to comprehension questions in the target language (in Part B of both Listening and Responding and Reading and Responding) was viewed as placing too much emphasis on productive use of the language. 	Surveys Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oral examination reduced from 25% to 20% overall. Part B of Listening and Responding has been deleted with specifications amended to ensure that open-ended responses be in English. Part B of Reading and Responding remains with amended specifications regarding length of response, in view of variations noted above.
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing in language was seen as having undue weighting in the external examination (35% overall) A shorter writing task was considered preferable 	Surveys Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall weighting is now 30%, with revised specifications in Section III (Writing) plus further reduction of production in Oral examination by 5%. Number of words in both Reading and Responding and Writing reduced.
Performance criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exception was taken to the degree of importance given to writing 	Surveys Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weighting for writing has been reduced by 5% with attendant revision to specifications (number of words, as above). Tasks, graded in difficulty, have

			been included in the revision to the Section III (Writing) specifications.
Sample items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was some feeling that the items did not adequately reflect the objectives and suggested themes • Omission of sample Speaking items from the sample tasks offered was criticised 	Surveys Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment specifications have been revised and sample paper developed which reflects the specifications, the objectives and outcomes and the themes and topics • Sample questions of the type which could be used in the oral examination have been developed

4. Responses

Written submissions, other than survey documents, were received from the following individuals and groups:

Individuals

Name	School/Group
Dawn Yule	Mosman High School (German)
Kerry Dunne	School of Languages UNE (German)
Tadros I Helmi	SSCL – Dulwich Hill Centre (Arabic)
T M Drevikovsky	Sydney Grammar School (German and Italian)

Groups

Group
Teachers of Chinese – SSCL – Dulwich Hill Centre (Chinese)
Academic Committee of AHISA (general)
Curriculum Support Directorate (general)
Languages Faculty – Cabramatta High School (Chinese)

5. Survey Report

This report is based on data provided by a panel of teachers and academics who acted as independent reviewers. The report gives details of the consultation process and of the findings of that consultation. It involves comments from respondents specific to the seven languages contained in the first consultation (ie Arabic, Chinese, German, Indonesian, Italian, Korean and Malay) and an overall summary of issues.

The place of the survey in the consultation process

This report summarises the qualitative data resulting from the survey. In reporting the comments, efforts have been made to present both the majority viewpoint and areas of contention. the quantitative data is included in this report (Section 3).

The consultation on individual syllabuses follows earlier consultation on the generic framework which replaces the Draft Writing Brief required by subjects other than Languages. The framework was developed in collaboration with other ACACA agencies.

The individual syllabuses were initially developed on a collaborative basis, with individual states hosting the writing teams as follows:

NSW	French, Modern Greek, Arabic and Korean
South Australia	Chinese , Italian and German

Victoria **Indonesian**, Japanese, Spanish and **Vietnamese**.

New South Wales teachers were involved with the writing and on-going consultation on all syllabuses.

The consultation and ensuing revisions to the syllabus documents take into account the views of teachers and other interest groups in New South Wales only.

The survey produced both quantitative data, which was processed by an officer of the Board of Studies, and qualitative data, which was collated by the reviewers and subsequently synthesised for presentation in this report. The survey addressed specific areas of the draft syllabuses, allowing for comments and suggestions as well as value judgements. The majority of questions required numerical rating. The complete record of quantitative data is attached. It must be observed, at this point, that matters raised in comment sometimes led to anomalies between the quantitative and qualitative findings.

Surveys were reviewed as relevant to particular languages. Efforts have subsequently been made to distinguish areas of commonality. It is relevant to note that only 4 responses were received for Korean and that these may not be truly representative.

Some of the issues raised do not directly affect discussion on the framework, but will be invaluable in assisting the writers of individual language syllabuses.

The submissions received from the Curriculum Support Directorate and from AHISA were in relation to all 11 Continuers syllabuses, including those four (French, Japanese, Modern Greek and Spanish) which will form part of the next Languages Continuers consultation and syllabus packages.

Survey Reviewers:

Arabic

Ms Maria Joannidis	De La Salle, Ashfield	AIS
Ms Valeria De Fina	St Patricks College, Strathfield	AIS
Ms Kathy Barr	Burwood High School	DET

Chinese

Ms Shirley Johnston	Open High School	DET
Ms Cynthia Haskell	LMPC	DET

German

Mr Steven Dunk	The Kings School	AIS
Mr Helmut Schaeffer	Oxley College	AIS
Ms Irene Smith	PLC, Pymble	AIS
Ms Melissa Gee	Meriden School	AIS

Indonesian

Mr Noel Thomsen	Sydney Girls High School	DET
Ms Maryse Wahbe	Blakehurst High School	DET
Ms Dawn Yule	Mosman High School	DET

Italian

Ms Carmen Prados-Valerio	Ku-ring-gai Creative Arts High School	DET
Ms Patrizia Berti	University of Western Sydney	
Ms Lucia Sini	Riverside Girls High School	DET

Ms Josephine Ardino Burwood High School DET

Korean and Vietnamese

Ms Kate Whitty Christian Brothers, Lewisham AIS
 Ms Ingelore Gyory Mt St Benedict College AIS
 Ms Joanna Giagios James Cook Boys High School DET

General Comments

183 survey responses and 8 individual or group submissions were analysed by the survey reviewers.

73% of respondents indicated the system to which they belonged:

	DET	AIS	CEO	Other	Informal	Total responses
Arabic	12	0	0	1	15	28
Chinese	10	2	0	1	1	14
German	24	30	5	2	12	73
Indonesian	10	3	1	0	3	17
Italian	20	5	5	3	9	42
Korean	3	0	0	1	0	4
Vietnamese	5	0	0	0	6	11

Language Specific Comments

Arabic

Of the surveys received for Arabic 4 were group responses comprising 3, 4, 4, and 11 respondents, so the overall volume of opinion is greater than it would appear.

In respect of the target group there was widespread concern as to the number of hours of study students would be presumed to have undertaken. Aims were considered too complex and expectations were considered too high, with outcomes too difficult for the current 2 Unit candidature. Concern was expressed for the position of students who would formerly have undertaken the 2 Unit General course, based on the assumption that they would find the syllabus too demanding. This referred particularly to Objective 3.

Specific to Arabic was the concern that no mention is made in Objective 1 as to whether the standard or dialectical forms of the language may be used.

Little comment was generated on themes and topics though a minority expressed approval.

One respondent called for trialing before an informed response on their appropriateness is requested. In respect of the Special Study there was strong support for external assessment, with common criteria to ensure parity of weighting.

Some text types were noted as having highly specialised vocabulary and were considered unsuitable.

A number of variations were suggested in respect of assessment weightings and it was noted that weightings for internal and external assessment be the same. Cues in the discussion section of the oral examination were commended but in general the discussion component was not well received.

The issue of language of response was raised in connection with Listening and Responding, particularly as it was considered that response in Arabic to Part B leads to further assessment of writing skills. This comment also applied to Part B of Reading and Responding, where suggestions covered limiting the length of the response or deleting it entirely. It was also felt that the length of text and level of language difficulty in Part A exemplified in the sample task were inappropriate. In the Writing section, the majority of responses considered 150-200 words to be the optimum.

In respect of the Performance Criteria it was felt that discussion only addresses communication skills and not the knowledge necessary for proper assessment of the Special Study outcomes.

General comments included an undue emphasis on writing and productive skills in general and complaint regarding the presence of regional dialects in suggested resources.

Summary of proposed changes to Arabic:

There has been a revision to the number and range of topics to be studied. Grammatical table has been expanded to include exemplars. The Special Study has been deleted.

Examination specifications have been revised to allow - greater weighting to those sections requiring responses in English; a reduction in the number of words required in the responses in Arabic; modification to the specifications in the Writing section; deletion of an extended response in Arabic in the Listening and responding section and the deletion of the discussion part of the oral examination.

Chinese

A number of comments related to outcomes, which were considered too numerous and too ambitious in respect of level of difficulty and time limitations. A view was expressed that the outcomes would encourage 'teaching to the exam', with the corollary that the exam specifications are in themselves too demanding and the performance criteria too ambitious.

There was a call for an emphasis on the teaching of functional language. The issue of time constraint was also raised in respect of the number of topics suggested and the Special Study was regarded as an additional burden in an already full course.

The text types listed were also considered too extensive and it was considered appropriate to delete the more demanding.

The emphasis on writing in the overall assessment was criticised and a reduction in the number of required characters in the writing section was recommended. There was a call for the deletion of the discussion component of the oral examination. The request for suggested assessment weightings revealed no consensus but it was suggested that they reflect the objectives. In respect of sample tasks, anomalies were found between the description of tasks and the samples provided.

While there was approval for the syllabus as a whole it was considered to be content heavy and some doubts were expressed regarding the ability of students, at this level, to relate to the cultural component.

Summary of proposed changes to Chinese:

There has been a revision to the number and range of topics to be studied. The Special Study has been deleted. Character list will be provided as a resource, not part of the syllabus.

Examination specifications have been revised to allow - greater weighting to those sections requiring responses in English; a reduction in the number of characters required in the responses in Chinese; modification to the specifications in the Writing section; deletion of an extended response in Chinese in the Listening and responding section and the deletion of the discussion part of the oral examination.

German

While Aims and Objectives were generally considered appropriate time constraints, resulting from varying levels of previous study and the limitation of face-to-face teaching time in the senior school, were highlighted.

Outcomes were felt to go well beyond the current 2 Unit course and to take no account of the needs of students who would previously have opted for the 2 Unit General course.

There was a call for themes, topics and sub-topics to be more prescriptive and their relationship to the external examination clarified. Some topics were considered to be too difficult and it was felt that topics, such as globalisation, should only be assessed passively. The current practice of linking skills to topics was applauded.

More information was deemed necessary in regard to the Special Study. It was generally felt that the time it warrants could not be accommodated, though a number of respondents saw potential in it, on a par with current options.

In respect of texts the majority favoured prescription and a number requested regular up-dating of the list of resources. Some approved the range of text types, while others felt it was too broad to allow standardisation, too long to be covered in the time available or, on occasion, too demanding.

Comment in respect of grammar was also divided. Some found it a good reference for teachers while others found it too demanding and too time-consuming.

In respect of assessment weightings there was a call for greater emphasis on receptive skills. In addition, there was strong feeling against developing school-based tasks of a different nature from those required in the examination. Suggested assessment tasks were seen as too numerous and in some instances difficult to assess. It was noted that some are dependent on interests as well as ability and some would require revision of the primary syllabus to ensure adequate preparation. It was considered that internal and external assessment components should have comparable weighting. Maintaining parity between schools was an issue in internal assessment. It was felt that the Special Study would be better tested through inclusion in the external writing examination.

Comments were wide-ranging on the links between the examination specifications and the outcomes. Some felt that by default they were unrealistic or more suitable for 3 Unit candidates. Opinion favoured less emphasis on writing overall but there was also support for less emphasis on the oral/aural skills and more weighting for the 'written' examination.

Respondents wanted more guidelines for the oral components, with some requesting scripting or cues, and many felt the discussion was beyond the capabilities of most students.

In Listening and Reading it was felt that lengthy passages test recall rather than comprehension and questions relative to content not form were recommended.

Responses in German to comprehension were not considered valid. Reading and Responding Part A was considered too difficult because of the requirement to compare, evaluate etc and part B was considered a test of writing skills. In Reading and Responding one task only was considered preferable when writing in German, with a limit of 200 words emphasising quality not quantity.

Basic everyday writing tasks were called for, with a preference for only one, with a limit of 250 words and with reduced weighting.

In respect of relative weightings it was felt that the productive skills had been given increased and undue emphasis.

The Performance Criteria were seen to favour the more able students, with assessment giving little consideration to the current 2 Unit General candidature. In respect of the sample items, picture components were considered a retrograde step and there was widespread demand for set speaking cues, as the new exam represents a departure from the current practice.

Positive comments related to the presentation of the Aims, Objectives and Outcomes and to the manner in which linkages are maintained throughout the syllabus.

Summary of proposed changes to German:

There has been a revision to the number and range of topics to be studied. Aspects of some topics (sub topics) have been designated for receptive use only. The Special Study has been deleted.

Grammar table has been revised, together with a greater emphasis on those items for receptive use only.

Examination specifications have been revised to allow - greater weighting to those sections requiring responses in English; a reduction in the number of words required in the responses in German; modification to the specifications in the Writing section; deletion of an extended response in German in the Listening and responding section and the deletion of the discussion part of the oral examination.

Indonesian

There was general support for the Rationale. Similarly the Aims and Objectives were approved, with some minor qualifications and a request for clarification in respect of the language of response envisaged in Objective 3.

The 'language of response' issue impacted on comments throughout the survey. Some outcomes were considered too sophisticated and, if requiring a response in the target language, outcomes under Objective 3 were deemed unrealistic. It was also noted that outcomes do not satisfactorily match the performance criteria. Time and teacher competence levels were also seen as impacting on achievement of the outcomes.

There was a call for quality rather than quantity in respect of topics and, in the interests of equity, prescription of sub-topics was considered appropriate. An indication as to whether the topics are to be treated as for receptive or productive use was requested and concern expressed as to the amount of vocabulary required.

A reduction in the number of topics was deemed necessary, and a classification as receptive or productive. The inclusion of 'Traveller Abroad' was one of a number of modifications and suggestions made. Politics were considered too sensitive an issue and lacking interest for students.

Many teachers felt that, particularly in view of time constraints, the Special Study warranted a separate course and some envisaged problems if consensus could not be reached, within a class, as to the choice of option. Questions were raised as to whether the 15% weighting should equate with 15% of teaching time.

In respect of the text special study option, issues of equity were raised in respect of the provision of texts. There were calls for the inclusion only of texts relevant to themes and also for provision for up-dating of resources. Prescription was equated with parity. Comment on the VET option was limited due to a perceived need for more information.

Respondents were concerned by the number of variables inherent in the text types and some sought the inclusion of a prescribed vocabulary list to assist both students and teachers.

In general the grammar section was well received but not all respondents were familiar with some of the terminology used.

Teachers envisaged difficulty in elaborating tasks for school-based assessment which were not based on the exam model and concerns were expressed about guaranteeing performance integrity. In general it was felt that sample tasks were useful but concerns were expressed about the 'literary' element in some.

There was little support for the oral examination specifications, with particular reference to the discussion component and the inclusion of the Special Study. Element within the discussion. It was suggested that Part B of the Listening and Responding be deleted to decrease the emphasis on writing skills and issue was also taken with Part B of Reading and Responding.

The length of responses in various sections was also an issue and, to some extent, the level of difficulty of required tasks. 250 words were considered reasonable for the writing task. An imbalance favouring writing (35%) was noted in weightings. This was reflected in comment on performance criteria and concerns were also expressed about the role of the teacher in oral examination both in relation to ability and ensuring parity.

Most teachers felt that this syllabus, with its proposed assessment component, was less appropriate to the candidature than the current one and there was a call for trialing before implementation.

Summary of proposed changes to Indonesian:

There has been a revision to the number and range of topics to be studied. Aspects of some topics (sub topics) have been designated for receptive use only. Content has been revised to better articulate those objectives/aspects of topics/tasks that lend themselves to responses in English.

The Special Study has been deleted.

Examination specifications have been revised to allow - greater weighting to those sections requiring responses in English; a reduction in the number of words required in the responses in German; modification to the specifications in the Writing section; deletion of an extended response in German in the Listening and responding section and the deletion of the discussion part of the oral examination.

Italian

At the outset there was a call for clarification of terms. This was reflected in various areas of the document.

There was general support for the Rationale but the time factor was a concern in relation to the degree to which the Aims and Objectives of the syllabus could be met. Outcomes were a concern in respect of level and depth of study, which was viewed as more demanding than the current course and somewhat elitist.

Theme 3 was of some concern and anxiety was expressed over the number of topics. Technology, commerce and the world of work were considered inappropriate, with a call for more everyday items. Specific reference was made to the absence of 'Traveller Abroad' and the relationship of sub-topics to the examination was raised.

In relation to the Special Study respondents felt there was insufficient information in respect of the VET option and they were uncertain as to the equity of the options. Equity was also a concern because of internal assessment of the Special Study.

In general respondents opted for the listing of resources under theme/topic headings and called for a reduction in the number of text types.

The grammar section was seen as too ambitious.

In respect of weightings, the use of the target language in writing was seen as excessive and a number of respondents felt that the four macro skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) should be given equal weighting.

Some respondents felt that 15% would not adequately compensate for the work involved in the Special Study.

Overwhelming concern was expressed with regard to the discussion part of the oral examination and many recommended its deletion. In Listening and Responding, Part B caused concern as to the length of items and as to what exactly was being tested. The latter was at issue in Part B of Reading and Responding along with the notion of too much writing. In this section the need to compare and contrast was considered too difficult for the candidature and 200 words recommended for the responses. A number of respondents preferred the current short writing tasks. The writing section was considered too difficult and too long, with a number of respondents suggesting its elimination, if there is to be no change to Part B, Section II. These concerns were echoed in relation to the appropriateness of assessment items.

In the Performance Criteria writing was still an issue, as was the place of discussion.

General comment included the need for in-servicing of teachers, for trialing of the syllabus before implementation and for yearly evaluation and up-dating. A need for consistency of expectation across all language syllabuses was called for.

Summary of proposed changes to Italian:

There has been a revision to the number and range of topics to be studied. Aspects of some topics (sub topics) have been designated for receptive use only. Content has been revised to better articulate those objectives/aspects of topics/tasks that lend themselves to responses in English.

The Special Study has been deleted.

Examination specifications have been revised to allow - greater weighting to those sections requiring responses in English; a reduction in the number of words required in the responses in Italian; modification to the specifications in the Writing section to include short responses; deletion of extended responses in Italian in the Listening and responding section and the deletion of the discussion part of the oral examination.

Korean

Respondents preferred the new syllabus and assessment model to the current but expressed concern with respect to two particular aspects of the syllabus. It was felt that writing is still given too much emphasis in the external examination as a whole and that in the writing section students should be asked to write no more than 200 words.

The discussion section of the oral examination was considered beyond the language skills of the average student.

Additional comments related to the high level of difficulty of some outcomes; the nature of some topics was considered beyond the scope of students language competence; and a similar criticism was made in respect of certain text types.

It was considered that 15% is an excessive weighting if the Special Study is not to be examined externally. A call was made for assessment items to have a comparable level of difficulty, with balance afforded across the sections.

Clarification was requested regarding the nature of the target group for which the syllabus is written.

In respect of support materials, it was felt that the sample tasks provided did not adequately reflect the themes and objectives.

Summary of proposed changes to Korean:

There has been a revision to the number and range of topics to be studied. Aspects of some topics (sub topics) have been designated for receptive use only. Content has been revised to better articulate those objectives/aspects of topics/tasks that lend themselves to responses in English.

The Special Study has been deleted.

Examination specifications have been revised to allow - greater weighting to those sections requiring responses in English; a reduction in the number of words required in the responses in Korean. Sample examination paper has incorporated closer links to syllabus themes, topics and objectives.

Vietnamese

There were variations in responses dependent upon the perceived nature of the candidature. Aims, Objectives and Outcomes were seen as too ambitious by those respondents concerned with Australian born students, with particular reference being made to analysis and time constraints to successful completion of the syllabus. This criticism also applied to the Performance Criteria. However, respondents favouring greater latitude welcomed the inclusion of a literary link in the special study through texts.

This dichotomy was also reflected in conflicting comment on the cultural component of the course, with exception being taken in one instance to 'the migrant experience'.

A preference was expressed for the topics in the current syllabus, with the new topics being seen as either too difficult or too numerous.

Opinion was divided about the appropriateness of the Special Study, though it was welcomed in some quarters. It was also noted that the Special Study warrants at least 25% weighting, in view of the time it will involve and in order to motivate students.

Measured against its place in the outcomes, a weighting of 15% for writing was deemed insufficient. In respect of assessment, the incorporation of English for responses was welcomed by some but others called for greater use of Vietnamese, at least as an option.

One respondent considered the nature of the oral exam intrusive.

There was dissatisfaction with the sample tasks provided.

Summary of proposed changes to Vietnamese:

There has been a revision to the number and range of topics to be studied. Aspects of some topics (sub topics) have been designated for receptive use only.

The Special Study has been deleted.

Examination specifications have been revised to allow - greater weighting to those sections requiring responses in English; a reduction in the number of words required in the responses in Vietnamese; deletion of extended responses in Vietnamese in the Listening and responding section and the deletion of the discussion part of the oral examination.

Summary of issues common to many syllabuses

A main area of concern, as indicated below, related to the level of expectation and its impact on a broad-based candidature. Time constraints were also a matter of concern in meeting the demands of the syllabus. The ratio of productive skills to receptive skills was questioned, and there was almost universal rejection of discussion in the oral examination. Exception was taken to the amount of writing in the external examination specifications and specifically the number of words required in the writing section was considered excessive.

The following list indicates specific areas of concern and the languages in which the issues were raised. Issues in italics were of major concern.

Key: **A** Arabic, **C** Chinese, **G** German, **Ind** Indonesian, **It** Italian, **K** Korean, **V** Vietnamese

- Concern re assumed hours of previous study (A, G)
- Aims, Objectives, Outcomes too ambitious (A, V)
- Concern re time constraints overall (C, G, V)
- Concern for former 2 Unit General candidates (A, G)
- Outcomes too numerous (C)
- *Some outcomes too ambitious/unrealistic/sophisticated* (C, G, Ind, It, K)

- *Some topics beyond student capability* (C, K, V, G)
- *Too many topics in available time* (C, G, Ind, It, V)
- Traveller abroad (Ind, It)
- *Some text types beyond student capability/too specialised* (A, G, Ind, K)
- Too many text types (C, G, It)

- *Too much emphasis on writing in general* (A, C, G, It, K)
- Rejection of different skills for school assessment (G, Ind)
- *Discussion unsatisfactory* (C, G, Ind, It, K, V, It)
- *Section II Part B emphasises writing not comprehension* (A, C, Ind, It, G)
- *Writing section to be limited to fewer words* (A, G, Ind, It, K)
- *Issue of language of response* (A, G, Ind, It, K, V)
- Texts in assessment too long (A, G, Ind, It)
- Trialing requested (A, Ind)
- Criticism of emphasis on productive skills (A, G)

DET Position

Additional issues raised relative to the 11 Continuers syllabuses

- Too much jargon
- Should be specific link between outcomes K-12
- No explicit link between outcomes and content
- Themes and topics should be presented in English and target language
- Themes etc emphasise teacher rather than student interests
- There should be consistency across syllabuses as to topics and sub-topics
- Requirements regarding text-types should be rationalised across languages
- Assessment tests macro skills not objectives and outcomes
- Short response items more appropriate for Listening and Responding
- Short written tasks preferable

Summary of proposed changes in response to DET position:

Syllabus documents have been revised in terms on jargon and terminology explained where appropriate. It should be noted that some terms will be clarified in support material appropriate to the move to standards-referenced assessment.

Syllabus outcomes have been revised. Outcomes, Stage 6, can be mapped to the generic K-6 and 7-10 outcomes.

Topics and sub topics in all syllabuses have been revised to incorporate concerns in relation to number, range and the language in which they are to be discussed.

Number and range of text types have been rationalised in all syllabuses.

External examination specifications and internal assessment components have been linked to objectives, rather than macro skills.

External examination specifications have been revised to accommodate shorter listening items with no requirement for extended responses, and short writing tasks have been included in specifications for Section III (Writing).

AHISA Position

The AHISA document addresses in general terms the possible explanation for fairly strong adverse reaction to the syllabuses in some quarters. This is seen, in part, as relating to the rationale for language learning itself. Citing the comprehensional as well as the communicative function of language, it claims that a key curricular objective is the refining of one's understanding of one's mother tongue, through learning another language.

The vocational role of language study is seen as secondary. In respect of the construct underpinning the syllabuses it is claimed that there has been a marked shift in the intention for language learning. Higher order skills, a swing from receptive to productive tasks, the length of writing tasks and the excessive number of themes and

text types, some of a very sophisticated nature, are cited as examples of this. These are, of course, the elements of most concern in the survey responses.

The submission acknowledges the need for a tighter framework, in view of time constraints, but is concerned about its vagueness and lack of prescription. It recognises that the VET option has probably been included in an attempt to open up the course for a broad-based candidature but sees difficulties inherent in the processes for examination if general students are to be catered for and more able students extended. This is deemed the area which needs to be urgently addressed by differentiated examinations within a course.

Summary of proposed changes in response to AHISA position:

Outcomes have been revised with aspects indicated as requiring higher order skills amended.

The number and range of topics has been revised with clearer articulation as to those aspects of topics that would be more appropriately dealt with in English.

The emphasis on productive use of the language has been lessened by:

- Indicating in the content those aspects of topics which may, more appropriately, be treated in English
- Removing the discussion component from the oral examination and reducing the overall weighting of the oral component
- Reducing the number of words required in the written tasks in language in the external examination
- Removing Part B of the Listening and responding in the external examination so that there is no requirement for extended responses in the language
- Reducing the weighting of those sections of the external examination requiring a response in the language.

The issue of differentiated assessment has been addressed in relation to the productive use of the language by specifying writing tasks which are graded in difficulty in Section III, Writing, of the external assessment.