

Languages

French, Japanese, Modern Greek, Spanish

Continuers Level Stage 6 Syllabuses

Consultation Report

1. Background

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

The four **Languages** Stage 6 Draft Continuers Syllabuses have been distributed widely for comment over the period **15 March-23 April, 1999**. Additionally, consultations on the eleven **Languages** Stage 6 Draft Continuers Syllabus Packages have involved meetings with the following:

school sector representatives

- Broken Bay Diocese Language 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

- MLTA (Modern Languages Teachers Association)
President 12/03/99;
Meeting of members 24/05/99

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

Up to the 23/04/99, **204** written responses to **Languages** were received, 195 being individual or group survey responses and 9 submissions. Of the survey responses 106 were for French, 74 were for Japanese, 5 were for Modern Greek and 10 were for Spanish. 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:

150 Individual responses (from data provided)

Teachers	144				
Government	72	Catholic	17	Independent	55
Academics	0				

6 institution/group responses (where involvement of 5 or more persons indicated)

Organisation details:

Schools:	6				
Government	5	Catholic	0	Independent	1
Teacher/professional associations			0		

2. Key Issues

<p>Summary of Key Issues for Stage 6 Languages arising from the consultation process:</p>	<p>Summary of action taken to the framework and for continuers syllabuses as a result of these Key Issues:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern regarding the level of demand, seen in general as being too high, and its impact on a broad-based candidature. Specifically in French, concern that the syllabus needs to cater for the current 2 unit General candidature. • 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. 	<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). • Addressed in the amendments by revising the outcomes, reducing the breadth of content, amending examination specifications (as above) (See section 3.2). The issue of face to face teaching is noted as a systems issue. • 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.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 external examination was considered desirable	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 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 (based on 213 surveys, including those received after formal qualitative review completed).

Number of responses completed for each question varies and is based on the number of respondents per survey rather than the number of surveys.

3.1.1 Rationale is appropriate (324)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7	115	169	33	7	0
2.05%	34.7%	51.1%	10.1%	2.05%	0%

3.1.2 Aims and Objectives appropriate (331)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
15	43	123	100	41	9
4.5%	13.0%	37.2%	30.2%	12.4%	2.7%

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

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

3.1.3 Outcomes encompass those of existing 2 Unit syllabus (331)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
32	31	99	106	47	16
9.7%	9.4%	29.9%	32.0%	14.2%	4.8%

3.1.4 Outcomes appropriate (312)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
19	19	92	78	60	63
5.7%	5.7%	27.8%	23.6%	18.1%	19.0%

Comment: Outcomes seen as too demanding, particularly for the current 2 unit General candidature (in French).

Action: Some outcomes deleted, others revised.

3.1.5 Outcomes achievable (307)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
24	25	54	86	102	40
7.3%	7.6%	16.3%	26.0%	30.8%	12.1%

Comment: Some outcomes seen as being beyond the ability of 2 unit candidates, but particularly the 2 unit General candidates in French.

Action: Outcomes revised or deleted.

3.1.6 Outcomes assist in determining achievement (306)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
25	31	89	65	40	81
7.6%	9.4%	26.9%	19.6%	12.1%	24.5%

Comment: Some outcomes seen as requiring clearer definition as to level of achievement required.

Action: Outcomes revised or deleted.

3.1.7 Role of Themes adequately explained (322)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9	32	137	66	66	21
2.7%	9.7%	41.4%	19.9%	19.9%	6.3%

3.1.8 Proposed Themes provide adequate focus (316)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
15	22	149	79	43	23
4.5%	6.6%	45.0%	23.9%	13.0%	6.9%

3.1.9 Topics appropriate (312)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
19	24	85	105	74	24
5.7%	7.3%	25.7%	31.7%	22.4%	7.3%

Comment: Some topics seen as too demanding for 2 unit candidates and for 2 unit general candidates in particular.

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

3.1.10 Number and range of Topics appropriate (320)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
11	14	102	91	81	32
3.3%	4.2%	30.8%	27.5%	24.5%	9.7%

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

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

3.1.11 Special Study Options permit needs (263)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
68	15	69	87	33	59
20.5%	4.5%	20.8%	26.3%	10.0%	17.8%

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 (317)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
14	20	131	99	40	27
4.2%	7.6%	22.7%	21.1%	23.6%	13.6%

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

Action: Special Study deleted from syllabus.

3.1.13 Provision of recommended texts appropriate (293)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
38	25	75	70	78	45
11.5%	7.6%	22.7%	21.1%	23.6%	13.6%

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 the revised syllabuses. Separate document to include resources, which can be regularly updated, to be provided.

3.1.14 Language and Culture through VET appropriate (248)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
83	13	50	86	39	60
25.1%	3.9%	15.1%	26.0%	11.8%	18.1%

Comment: The role and purpose of 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 (315)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
16	38	87	86	42	62
4.8%	11.5%	26.3%	26.0%	12.7%	18.7%

Comment: Number and range of text types considered excessive.

Action: Text types reduced in number and range. Indication provided as to those for productive use in external examination. Consistency across syllabuses established.

3.1.16 Grammar is appropriate (308)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
23	97	105	86	7	13
6.9%	29.3%	31.7%	26.0%	2.1%	3.9%

3.1.17 Components and weightings appropriate (294)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
37	39	106	66	27	56
11.2%	11.8%	32.0%	19.9%	8.2%	16.9%

Comment: Weighting of some components seen as inappropriate, particularly those requiring productive use of language.

Action: Specifications and weightings of external examination revised to reduce emphasis on productive use of language.

3.1.18 Sample assessment tasks useful (320)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
11	47	99	122	41	11
3.3%	14.2%	29.9%	36.9%	12.4%	3.3%

3.1.19 Special Study weighting appropriate (239)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
92	21	82	57	32	47
27.8%	6.3%	24.8%	17.2%	9.7%	14.2%

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

Action: Special Study deleted. School-based assessment components revised, and made comparable with external assessment components.

3.1.20 Examination Specifications appropriate (285)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
46	12	86	89	30	68
13.9%	3.6%	26.0%	26.9%	9.1%	20.5%

Action: See 3.1.21 – 3.1.27 below.

3.1.21 Oral Examination Specifications appropriate (280)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
51	11	55	53	52	109
15.45%	3.3%	16.6%	16.0%	15.7%	32.9%

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

Action: Discussion deleted from external examination specifications.

3.1.22 Listening and Responding Examination Specifications appropriate (289)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
42	12	113	74	40	50
12.7%	3.6%	34.1%	22.4%	21.1%	15.1%

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

3.1.23 Reading and Responding Examination Specifications (Part A) appropriate (288)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
43	69	111	55	25	28
13.0%	20.8%	33.5%	16.6%	7.6%	8.5%

3.1.24 Reading and Responding Examination Specifications (Part B)
appropriate (300)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
31	26	76	54	35	109
9.4%	7.9%	23.0%	16.3%	10.6%	32.9%

Comment: Less emphasis on productive use of the language seen as desirable.

Action: Adjustments made to the number of words required (number reduced). Revision made to other parts of external examinations requiring written responses in language.

3.1.25 Number of Words for Reading and Responding appropriate (299)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
32	25	59	37	53	125
9.7%	7.6%	17.8%	11.2%	16.0%	37.8%

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

Action: Number of words required in the response reduced.

3.1.26 Writing Specifications appropriate (312)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
19	43	96	50	55	68
5.7%	13.0%	29.0%	15.1%	16.6%	20.5%

Comment: One long task considered too difficult.

Action: Number of words required in the response reduced. Two short tasks, graded in difficulty, replace long task.

3.1.27 Number of Writing Words appropriate (256)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
75	23	53	43	65	72
22.7%	6.9%	16.0%	13.0%	21.8%	22.7

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

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

3.1.28 Relative weightings appropriate (247)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
84	9	43	46	49	100
25.4%	2.7%	13.0%	13.9%	14.8%	30.2%

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

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

3.1.29 Criteria for judging specifications appropriate (294)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
37	20	76	99	30	69
11.2%	6.0%	23.0%	29.9%	9.1%	20.8%

Comment: Concern as to the place of writing in language and its emphasis as evidenced in the criteria for judging performance.

Action: Specifications revised to reduce the amount and weighting of the productive use of language and this reflected in revisions to criteria for judging performance.

3.1.30 Level of Sample assessment items appropriate (266)

Nil Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
65	13	99	92	30	32
19.6%	3.9%	29.9%	27.8%	9.1%	9.7%

3.1.31 Overall Assessment (301)

Nil Response	Excellent as is	Good, with fine-tuning	Acceptable with re-working	Unsure	Unsatisfactory in issues treatment
30	1	34	101	17	148
9.1%	.3%	10.3%	30.5%	5.1%	44.7%

Comment: Many of the respondents reiterated their dissatisfaction with a particular issue or issues which had been addressed in other sections of the survey.

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

3.2

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 undertaking further revision as required Outcomes were clarified by articulating, in the content section of the syllabus, the language in which texts/topics would be discussed
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 The number of topics was reduced to between 9 and 12 across all syllabuses

<p>Special Study</p>	<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 not to be examined in the writing section of the external examination • 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 in the delivery of this aspect of the syllabus where there was no external component to moderate performance in it. 	<p>Surveys</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special study deleted from all syllabuses • Discussion component deleted from external oral examination
<p>Text Types</p>	<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 	<p>Surveys Meetings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text types have been reviewed and reduced in number and range, with grouping of related text types • Text types made comparable in range, number and type across languages • The level of difficulty of some text types has been clarified by indicating that they are for receptive use.

Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was suggested that weightings for components in the internal and external assessment should be the same • The suggestion that tasks for internal assessment should be of a different order than those for examination was not well received. 	Surveys Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparable weightings for internal and external assessment components established • Tasks suggested for internal assessment are comparable to those for external examination
Oral Examination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section B Discussion was dismissed as 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%, with a revision of the weighting to the conversation.
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 Section 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 the amended external examination with the specifications revised to ensure that open-ended responses be in English.

<p>Reading and Responding</p>	<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 	<p>Surveys Meetings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modifications made to specifications and criteria for judging performance. Criteria for judging performance reflect both reading comprehension and writing. Specifications regarding length of response revised so that fewer words required. • Section III (Writing) has been revised to incorporate shorter tasks, thus reducing the amount of writing overall
<p>Language of Response</p>	<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 the productive use of language 	<p>Surveys Meetings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall weighting of productive, as opposed to receptive, use of language reduced • 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 increased and 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 for writing has been reduced. Reading and responding, Part B is 15%, with criteria for judging performance including both comprehension and writing with modifications made 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"> • Concern that performance criteria need to reflect balance of productive and receptive skills 	Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria for judging performance adjusted to reflect revisions to external examination 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 Speaking items from the sample tasks offered was criticised 	Surveys Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment specifications have been revised and a sample paper developed which reflects the revised 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
Greg Robinson	Newcastle High School (French)
Senya Matkovich	Turramurra High School (French)
Vanessa Faynes	Coffs Harbour Education Centre (French)
Heather Morrison	Not given (French)
Angus Martin, Professor of French	University of Sydney

Groups

Group
Curriculum Support Directorate (general)
Academic Committee of AHISA (general)
Abbotsleigh (French)
SCEGGS Darlinghurst (French)

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 four languages contained in the second consultation (ie French, Japanese, Modern Greek and Spanish) 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 Writing Brief required by subjects other than Languages. The Generic 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.

The survey which accompanied the draft syllabuses was the third stage of the Consultation on the Draft Syllabuses undertaken by NSW. Consultation has also included discussions with language specific reference groups and with other agencies prior to finalisation of the drafts.

Reviewers:

French

Patrizia Berti	University of Western Sydney	
Julia Lambert	Chatswood HS	DET
Kathy Kerestes	International Grammar School	AIS
Sara McIntosh	St Paul's Grammar School	AIS
Sonia Mrva Montoya	Open High School	DET
<i>Carmen Prados-Valerio (assisted after completing Spanish)</i>		

Japanese

Dawn Gilchrist	St George Girls HS	DET
Jan Holland	Monte Sant' Angelo (NS)	AIS
Di Judson	Macarthur Girls HS	DET
Masumi Sorrell	Abbotsleigh	AIS
<i>Lucia Sini (assisted after completing Spanish)</i>		

Modern Greek

Maria Joannidis	De La Salle, Ashfield	CEO
Svetlana Krestovsky	Open High School	DET

Spanish

Carmen Prados-Valerio	Kuringai Creative Arts HS	DET
Lucia Sini	Riverside Girls HS	DET

General Comments

195 survey responses and 9 individual or group submissions were analysed by the survey reviewers.

80% of survey respondents indicated the system to which they belonged:

	DET	AIS	CEO	Other	Not indicated	Total
French	33	38	7	0	28	106
Japanese	30	18	9	0	17	74
Modern Greek	5	0	0	0	0	5
Spanish	9	0	1	0	0	10

Language Specific Comments

French

Particular concern was expressed with regard to Objective 3 and the use of the term 'analyse'. In addition the related outcomes where students demonstrate the ability to infer meaning, compare and contrast text and interpret information and ideas, were considered too demanding.

More than half the respondents felt the outcomes were too demanding (particularly those involving students' ability to perform analytically) and do not cater for students at the former 2 unit general level. It was widely felt that the provision of work samples with each syllabus was essential if teachers were to be able to interpret performance scale. No clear linkage was found between outcomes and the content or performance scale. There was a call for greater specificity to indicate levels of achievement within each outcome, currently perceived as too broad.

In respect of themes respondents wanted a clearer indication of the required depth of study. About 20% of teachers wanted fewer prescribed topics but more sub-topics with prescription. Concern in respect of the number of topics was directly linked to time constraints imposed on teachers. Most respondents felt that the topics were interesting but a significant number considered they were beyond the linguistic competence of most students.

The issue of time constraints was raised again with regard to the special study and over 75% of teachers requested clarification or further explanation. A similar percentage had concerns in respect of country students accessing vocational education. Some questioned the validity of having only oral assessment of the special study in the external examination. Respondents in general requested a 'prescribed' list of resources in preference to a 'suggested' list, and issues of parity, availability and currency were raised.

Many teachers wanted fewer text types particularly of a productive nature and noted that some were too difficult for a Continuers course. One group of teachers requested provision of more spoken texts, noting an excess of written text types. Grammar requirements were judged beyond the capability of 2 unit general students and a call made for some elements to be designated receptive only. Exception was taken to the 'traditional' presentation of the grammar.

In respect of assessment it was felt that the objectives are not adequately reflected, that there is too much emphasis on productive skills and that the 15% allocated to writing is disproportionate to the amount of writing required. Some respondents felt there were too many assessable components and others questioned the rationale behind non-HSC tasks in the internal assessment.

A number of concerns were expressed in relation to the nature and conduct of the discussion component of the oral examination and there was a call for the 'Traveller abroad' situations to be maintained. A number called for deletion of the discussion which would involve re-working of weightings.

In Listening and Responding it was felt that writing is not the object of the exercise and that only responses in English validate comprehension. It was noted that short items are necessary to obviate the element of testing memory. Some did not approve of incorporating the listening examination into the written examination. In Reading and Responding, Part A, issue was taken with 'respond critically' and in Part B one task only was favoured to avoid undue emphasis on writing. Many respondents felt that the writing in Part B justified the exclusion of Section III altogether. 150 words maximum was considered appropriate in both Sections. Many felt that 60% was too great a weighting for productive skills.

In respect of criteria for judging performance concerns were expressed regarding the conduct of oral component and the absence of phonological elements in the criteria. Some teachers felt the specifications were more suited to 3 unit standard.

In general teachers were dissatisfied with the assessment items which were seen as not catering for the candidature as a whole. Concern was also expressed regarding the limited time before implementation of the new syllabus. There was a perception that introducing dictionaries would entrain an increased level of difficulty and that teaching students to use them imposed additional strain on an already weighty course. A substantial number of respondents felt the methodology section should be omitted as having little intrinsic value.

Summary of proposed changes to French:

The outcomes have been reduced in number and revised, particularly those relating to objective 3 – analyse, process and respond to texts that are in French.

Issue: It should be noted that where, in the other 10 languages Continuers syllabuses, an outcome states:

The student summarises, interprets and evaluates information

in the French syllabus, this outcome reads:

The student summarises information.

This now limits assessment of students' ability to analyse and process text (either written or spoken) to summarising text, rather than incorporating the additional skills of interpreting and evaluating.

This puts French at variance with those 7 languages Continuers syllabuses endorsed by the Board on May 18 and the other 3 syllabuses currently under consideration.

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 by suggesting that texts on these aspects may be discussed in English.

The special study has been deleted with the requirement that the language be studied through a range of texts. The syllabus provides the possibility of embedding VET language modules within course programs.

Text types have been reduced in number and range. Those designated for production in the external examination have been indicated. Text types have been made comparable across all Continuers languages syllabuses.

External 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 French; modifications to the specifications in the Writing; deletion of an extended response in French in the Listening and responding section and the deletion of the discussion part of the oral examination.

'Traveller abroad experiences' has been incorporated in the syllabus content as a sub topic within the mandatory topic of travel and tourism.

The methodology section has been deleted.

Japanese

The Rationale was often well received but with a proliferation of minor variations suggested. Respondents had problems with both the Aims and the Objectives on the basis that much depends on the level of difficulty envisaged. Objective 3 was deemed far too demanding for students at Continuers level, with attendant outcomes being ranked as 3 unit or beyond.

Many responses called for greater specificity with regard to expectations and for the establishment of a clear standard, attainable by all candidates studying Japanese as a second language. It was widely felt that, in framing the outcomes, regard had not been paid to the time involved in learning the script.

Themes were seen to be reasonably well explained but prescription was seen as desirable through to the sub-topics. While Themes 1 and 2 were considered relevant and interesting, 'the Changing World' was deemed too difficult. In general, respondents sought more direction in respect of depth of treatment and, in some instances, in respect of associated skills and vocabulary. Depth of study was a particularly relevant issue as there was doubt that all topics could be covered in view of the time available and the variations inherent in students' length of previous study.

Teachers wanted considerably more information on the Special Study Options and their implementation and were concerned about the oral assessment of this part of the syllabus. Many were doubtful about the Special Study options having any significant benefit. A number of respondents preferred the old options system.

In respect of texts, some respondents commented that too much choice was offered and wanted some prescription. Text types were seen as too numerous and on occasion too difficult, even in English. Many respondents requested definition or samples to assist in determining level of difficulty and felt they should be divided into skills-based components. Opinion, when expressed, was divided as to whether vocabulary should be listed alphabetically or by theme/topic.

In respect of weightings, opinions were many and varied and produced no significant trends. The production of sample tasks was supported as a means of ensuring uniformity across the state. Concerns were expressed about parity of assessment in relation to the arrangements for the Special Study and the variation between internal and external assessment weightings was queried.

Considerable concern was expressed about the actual process of the oral examination and the problems inherent in the role of the examiner. A significant number of respondents felt that the examination should be scripted with a limited/prescribed number of topics. Listening and Responding, Part B engendered considerable concern particularly in relation to responding in Japanese, which was seen either as too difficult or not reflecting real comprehension. In relation to Reading and Responding Part A there was a call to restrict questions to 'content' only. Part B was seen as a writing task, giving too much weighting overall to this skill. There was confusion resulting from inconsistent use of 'words' and 'ji' in the document but no consensus on the number required. The idea of choice in the writing section received some support but there was a call for text types to be predictable and non-threatening in the examination context. The emphasis on writing was again criticised but no consensus reached on the optimum number of 'ji' required. While a significant number deemed 300 'ji' realistic, in view of the place of writing in other sections, it was acknowledged that this limited the scope of the response.

In respect of the criteria for judging performance, some considered them too demanding, while others called for work samples to make them more meaningful. Respondents from the Open High School considered the assessment items difficult and called for samples for the speaking component. Some concern was expressed regarding the testing of more than one skill, as in Part B of Listening and Reading.

As a whole, the syllabus was seen as favouring the more able students, those who have been to Japan and those who write well. Respondents were not happy with assessment in general and reference was made to the need for greater guidance, provision of support and a more favourable time-frame for implementation of the new syllabus.

Summary of proposed changes to Japanese:

The outcomes have been reduced in number and revised, particularly those relating to objective 3 – analyse, process and respond to texts that are in Japanese.

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 by suggesting that texts on these aspects may be discussed in English.

The special study has been deleted with the requirement that the language be studied through a range of texts and providing the possibility of VET modules within course programs.

Text types have been reduced in number and range. Those designated for production in the external examination have been indicated. Text types have been made comparable across all Continuers languages syllabuses.

External examination specifications have been revised to allow: greater weighting to those sections requiring responses in English; a reduction in the number of words (*ji*) required in the responses in Japanese; modifications to the specifications in the Writing; deletion of an extended response in Japanese in the Listening and responding section and the deletion of the discussion part of the oral examination.

Modern Greek

Because of the limited number of responses (5), comments represent individual viewpoints rather than commonality of thinking. Outcomes were seen as more numerous than the current course, too general and appropriate only if the maximum number of hours of study was common to all students. They were judged achievable in the long term.

Clarification was sought as to the allocation of themes to the Preliminary and HSC courses. The range of topics and sub-topics was applauded, but concerns were expressed in respect of time constraints. Some indication of the time to be spent on each topic was requested.

While the Special Study was seen as having some potential, an excessive weighting and the lack of assessment in the external examination were seen as problematic. Prescription of texts was considered preferable to a canon of recommended texts. Text types were seen as too numerous and some were considered unsuitable. More information was requested regarding those for productive use

An undue emphasis on productive skills was noted overall. Issues of parity, rote learning and the role of the examiner were raised in respect of the discussion section of the oral examination. Part B of both the Listening and Responding and Reading and Responding sections was seen as a test of writing and there were concerns regarding time allocation and calls for limiting the number of words required. The latter comment also applied to the Writing section.

There was no consensus on weightings. With reference to criteria for judging performance, the phrase 'convey the information accurately' was seen as applying to both content and linguistic accuracy. A preference for uniform weighting between internal and external assessment was indicated. The passing of the literature 'option' was lamented and the limited time-frame for the introduction of the new syllabus was considered untenable.

Summary of proposed changes to Modern Greek:

The outcomes have been reduced in number and revised, particularly those relating to objective 3 – analyse, process and respond to texts that are in Modern Greek.

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 by suggesting that texts on these aspects may be discussed in English.

The special study has been deleted with the requirement that the language be studied through a range of texts.

Text types have been reduced in number and range. Those designated for production in the external examination have been indicated. Text types have been made comparable across all Continuers languages syllabuses.

External 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 Modern Greek; modifications to the specifications in the Writing; deletion of an extended response in Modern Greek in the Listening and responding section and the deletion of the discussion part of the oral examination.

Spanish

Because of the limited number of responses (10), comments appeared to represent individual viewpoints rather than commonality of thinking.

Concern was expressed in respect of outcomes, on the basis that they are too ambitious in view of time constraints. It was considered that they were achievable only by background speakers and some were seen as more appropriate for the Extension course.

In respect of topics there was a call for greater specificity and a change was requested from 'Duties and Responsibilities' to 'Types of Trades and Professions'.

Most respondents felt they had insufficient information to give an informed opinion on the Special Study. A number of respondents called for text prescription and a need for additional resourcing was perceived in respect of some text types. There was a call for vocabulary lists in both Castilian and South American Spanish.

The background knowledge of the examiner was a concern in respect of the discussion in the oral examination. In Listening and Responding it was felt that students should have the option to respond in either English or the target language and 5 texts were seen as a reasonable number. There was call for shorter answers or multiple choice questions. In Reading and Responding the number of words was considered excessive but opinion varied as to the optimum number. In writing the majority opinion specified 200 words.

There was no consensus on weightings and further clarification was requested in respect of criteria for judging performance for the oral/aural components. In assessment, questions were raised regarding perceived testing of memory and skills in note-taking were flagged as being absent from the outcomes.

As with the other syllabuses there were concerns regarding the implementation of the new syllabus in 2000. The provision of adequate resourcing and the currency of recommended texts were also touched upon. Some called for more sample tasks and attention was drawn to the absence of sample oral tasks. Reference was made to the need for standardisation across languages within the various components of the course.

Summary of proposed changes to Spanish:

The outcomes have been reduced in number and revised, particularly those relating to objective 3 – analyse, process and respond to texts that are in Spanish.

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 by suggesting that texts on these aspects may be discussed in English.

The special study has been deleted with the requirement that the language be studied through a range of texts.

Text types have been reduced in number and range. Those designated for production in the external examination have been indicated. Text types have been made comparable across all Continuers languages syllabuses.

External 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 Spanish; modifications to the specifications in the Writing; deletion of an extended response in Spanish in the Listening and responding section and the deletion of the discussion part of the oral examination.

Summary of issues common to many syllabuses

Many areas of concern mirrored those of the first Continuers languages consultation package, particularly in the responses to French and Modern Greek. For example, a particular area of concern related to the level of expectation and its impact on a broad-based candidature. Similarly there was almost universal rejection of discussion in the oral examination. The ratio of productive skills to receptive skills was questioned and exception was taken to the amount of writing in the syllabuses in general and specifically to the number of words required in the writing section. There was also a call for less emphasis on the target language for responses in the examination.

The following list indicates specific areas of concern and the languages in which the issues were raised. Mention in two language areas has warranted notation, in view of the limited number of languages in this package.

Key: **F** French, **J** Modern Greek, **MG** Modern Greek, **S** Spanish

- Objections to the analytical nature of Objective 3 (F, J)
- Outcomes seen as too demanding (F, S)
- Call for prescription of sub-topics (F, J)
- Undue emphasis on productive skills (F, MG)
- Demand for fewer text types (F, J, MG)
- Concerns re assessment of Special Study (F, J)
- Concern re extended responses in language for Listening and Responding Part B (F, J)
- Too much writing in language (F, J)
- Short items requested in Listening (F, S)
- Need for greater specificity re expectations (F, J)
- Concerns re oral examination - role of examiner/marker (F, J, MG, S)
- Prescription of texts seen as desirable (F, J, MG, S)
- Call for uniform weighting of components in internal and external assessment (J, MG, S)
- Limited time frame for implementation of revised syllabuses (F, J, MG, S)
- Need for work samples (F, J)
- Attention drawn to significance of time constraints relevant to demands of syllabuses (F, MG, S)
- Sample tasks for oral required (J, S)

As indicated, in all languages frequent reference was made to issues which impinge upon the reception of the syllabuses. The first of these was the limited face-to-face teaching hours encountered by many teachers, the second was the limited time-frame available before implementation of the syllabuses and the third was the call for more support through in-servicing and the provision of additional resources, sample tasks and work samples.

DET Position

Issues raised relative to the 11 Continuers syllabuses, including those which formed part of the first of the Continuers consultation reports and submitted to the Board at its May 18 meeting:

- 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 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 advice about the language in which texts may be discussed.

Number and range of text types have been rationalised in all syllabuses and made comparable across the Continuers languages 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 in language, and short writing tasks, graded in difficulty, have been included in specifications for Section III (Writing).

AHISA Position

Issues raised relative to the 11 Continuers syllabuses, including those which formed part of the first of the Continuers consultation reports and submitted to the Board at its May 18 meeting:

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 shift 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 most severely criticised 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 2 unit General students are to be catered for and more able students extended. This is deemed the area which needs to be urgently addressed.

Summary of proposed changes in response to AHISA position:

Outcomes have been revised with aspects indicated as requiring higher order skills amended, particularly with regard to objective 3.

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

Number and range of text types have been rationalised in all syllabuses and made comparable across the Continuers languages syllabuses.

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

- indicating in the content those aspects of topics and texts 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 is not a language-specific issue. However this issue was considered in the revision of the external examination specifications and in relation to the perceived prominence of productive use of the language by specifying short writing tasks which are graded in difficulty in Section III, Writing, of the external assessment.