

B O A R D O F S T U D I E S
NEW SOUTH WALES

The New Higher School Certificate

Assessment Support Document

Introduction

**Board of Studies Requirements
for Internal Assessment**

Moving to a Standards-referenced Approach

**Developing an Assessment Program
for a Standards-referenced Approach**

Designing Assessment Tasks

**Using the Examination
and Assessment Supplement**

A Glossary of Key Words



© Board of Studies NSW 1999

Published by
Board of Studies NSW
GPO Box 5300
Sydney NSW 2001
Australia

Tel: (02) 9367 8111

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

ISBN 0 7313 4329 8

99379

Introduction

The New Higher School Certificate uses a standards-referenced approach for assessing and reporting student achievement. This approach builds on the sound practices currently used in schools.

Schools already have policies and procedures in place to meet the Board's requirements for internal assessment.

This document is designed to help schools to plan their assessment practices. It:

- ❖ outlines the Board's requirements for internal assessment of student achievement in Board Developed Courses
- ❖ describes the stages in moving to a standards-referenced approach
- ❖ explains the actions to take in preparing and conducting an internal assessment program
- ❖ describes the key features of the Examination, Assessment and Reporting Supplement and its relevance to teaching and internal assessment
- ❖ provides a glossary of key words.

This document should be read in conjunction with the *Assessment, Certification and Examination (ACE) Manual*, which provides detailed information on assessment and reporting requirements. *Securing Their Future Newsletter 14* provides an overview of assessment and reporting in the New Higher School Certificate.

BOARD OF STUDIES REQUIREMENTS FOR INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

The requirements listed in this section apply to the Year 11 cohort in 2000 and the Year 12 cohort in 2001.

1 **School Internal Assessment Program**

Using the assessment requirements in the syllabus, schools must develop an internal assessment program for each course that:

- ❖ specifies the assessment tasks and the weighting for each task
- ❖ provides a schedule of the tasks for the course.

Schools must also establish procedures that will apply to the assessment programs for all courses. These procedures are detailed in the syllabus and in the ACE Manual.

2 **Assessment of Preliminary Courses**

Principals will certify that students have satisfactorily completed Preliminary courses. Satisfactory completion includes achievement of some or all of the course outcomes.

In Preliminary courses, the components, weightings and tasks in the syllabus are advisory and may be varied to suit school needs.

3 **Internal Assessment for the HSC Board Developed Courses**

For each Board Developed Course, schools will be required to provide the Board with a mark for each student. The mark must be calculated in accordance with the Board's requirements for that course.

Schools will not be required to submit descriptions of student performance or to indicate a performance band.

The internal assessment mark is to be based on the HSC course only (except in Mathematics).

The internal assessment mark must incorporate the mandatory assessment components and weightings found in the syllabus document for each subject.

The mark submitted to the Board is to indicate the rank order of students and the relative differences between them in terms of their achievement.

Board Endorsed Courses

Schools are required to submit internal assessment marks for students undertaking any HSC Board Endorsed Course, in line with the Board's endorsement of those courses.

Vocational Education and Training Courses

Schools are not required to submit internal assessment marks for these courses.

Other Procedural Requirements

The following list will help schools to check that they are meeting Board requirements for HSC internal assessment.

The school has procedures to:

- ❖ inform students in writing of the assessment requirements for each course before the commencement of the course
- ❖ ensure that students are given adequate written notice of the nature and timing of assessment tasks
- ❖ provide meaningful feedback to students on their performances in all assessment tasks
- ❖ maintain records of marks awarded to each student for all assessment tasks
- ❖ address issues relating to illness, misadventure and malpractice in assessment tasks
- ❖ address issues relating to late submission and non-completion of assessment tasks
- ❖ advise students in writing if they are not meeting the assessment requirements in a course and to indicate what is necessary to enable students to satisfy the requirements
- ❖ inform students about their entitlements to school reviews and appeals to the Board
- ❖ conduct school reviews of assessments when requested by students in accordance with Board procedures as outlined in the ACE Manual
- ❖ ensure that students are aware of the procedures the school has established for issuing the student assessment advice notices produced by the Board.

If these procedures are in place and working well there is no need for adjustments. If adjustments to assessment procedures are needed, the following Board documents will be useful:

HSC Assessment: A Guide to Developing Procedures in Schools (1996)

Preliminary and HSC Assessment under Pathways (1995)

Further advice is available from the Board of Studies Liaison Officer for your school.

MOVING TO A STANDARDS-REFERENCED APPROACH

To help explain the move to a standards-referenced approach from the norm-referenced approach used for the current Higher School Certificate, the features are compared below.

In the current norm-referenced approach

Students are assessed and reported by relating their performance to the performance of others who have taken the same course in the same year.

Marks awarded to students reflect where their achievements place them relative to other students in the group.

Comparisons can be made between students by looking at their positions in the group.

Final examination marks are based on a predetermined proportion of students in each mark range. This means standards can change over time but the proportions of students achieving each mark range will remain the same.

There is a limit on the number of students who can receive top marks.

Students can receive marks below 50 even though they have achieved the course outcomes.

Reporting is based on marks and percentile bands.

In the new standards-referenced approach

Student achievement is assessed and reported with reference to specified standards of performance.

Marks awarded to students reflect the standards they have achieved.

Comparisons can be made between students based on their achievement of the standards.

Final examination marks are determined by the proportions of students who achieve each performance standard. There is no predetermined pattern of marks. This means over time, while standards remain constant, the proportions of students achieving each standard may change from year to year.

There are no limits on the number of students who can reach the top standard.

All students who meet the minimum standard receive a mark of 50. Students who perform above the minimum standard expected receive higher marks

Reporting includes information on the knowledge, skills and understanding typically demonstrated by students who achieve a performance standard.

Under a standards-referenced approach it is still possible to make interpretations of individual performance relative to position in a group. For example, the higher a student's mark the better their achievement. This means that a standards-referenced system can still support a selection process, as well as providing much richer information about student achievement by describing what students know and can do.

Changes to internal assessment from 2001

In a standards-referenced approach, the assessment mark submitted to the Board will still need to reflect the rank order and relative differences between the achievement of students, as is the case in the current Higher School Certificate. The difference in a standards-referenced approach for the New Higher School Certificate is that:

- ❖ rank order and relative differences will come from student achievement of specified standards of performance instead of simple comparisons between students
- ❖ the standards that the differences are based on are explicit and are incorporated in the syllabus, examination tasks, performance descriptions, and other materials to be provided.

It has always been acknowledged that the introduction of standards into school-based assessment will need to occur gradually over several years. It is to be expected in the early stages that judgements about standards will differ. This will not disadvantage any students. Moderation of school assessment marks using the performance of the school course group in the examinations will still be in place. This will ensure that internal assessment marks and examination marks are aligned to the same standard.

It is expected that all schools will be able to use a standards-referenced approach to assessment for the Higher School Certificate in 2003. By then teachers will be familiar with the standards, the performance descriptions will have undergone refinement following the 2001 HSC examinations, and samples of student work exemplifying performance standards for each course will be available.

In the 2003 HSC, standards-referenced assessment will involve:

- ❖ assessing against standards
- ❖ assessment tasks designed to focus on outcomes
- ❖ the type of assessment task being appropriate for the outcomes being assessed
- ❖ students being given the opportunity to demonstrate their level of achievement of the outcomes in a range of different task types
- ❖ students knowing the assessment criteria before they begin a task
- ❖ marking schemes for each task linked to the standards by including the wording of syllabus outcomes and relevant performance descriptions
- ❖ students getting meaningful feedback about what they are able to do and what they need to do in order to improve their level of performance
- ❖ the ranking and relative difference between students resulting from different levels of achievement of the specified standards.

The following pages are a guide to assessment practice over the first years of the New Higher School Certificate.

For the 2001 Higher School Certificate

What is required

- ❖ Schools are to provide a mark only, calculated in accordance with Board requirements.
- ❖ The mark will reflect the rank order and relative differences in student achievement as is currently the case.
- ❖ Clear feedback is to be given to students on their achievement of outcomes and relative positions within the school.

Suggested features of school assessment programs

- ❖ Assessment tasks are focused on outcomes.
- ❖ A range of task types is used.
- ❖ Students know and understand the outcomes to be assessed.
- ❖ Marking schemes for tasks use words from the outcomes and, where considered appropriate, words from the draft performance descriptions.
- ❖ Feedback to students is based on the marking schemes and indicates achievement of outcomes.

Note: teachers need to be familiar with the standards in the syllabuses.

What documents are available

- ❖ Syllabuses with outcomes linked to objectives and specific descriptions of content.
- ❖ Syllabuses outlining the types of tasks appropriate for assessment.
- ❖ Draft of performance descriptions in bands.
- ❖ Specimen examination papers and marking guidelines.

For the 2002 Higher School Certificate

What is required

- ❖ Schools are to provide a mark only, calculated in accordance with Board requirements.
- ❖ The mark will reflect the rank order and relative differences in student achievement as is currently the case.
- ❖ Clear feedback to students on their achievement of outcomes and relative positions within the school.

Suggested features of school assessment programs

- ❖ Assessment tasks are focused on outcomes.
- ❖ The type of assessment task clearly reflects the outcomes being assessed.
- ❖ Students know and understand the outcomes to be assessed and the levels of performance reflected in the marking schemes.
- ❖ Marking schemes for tasks are linked to the standards by including the wording of outcomes and relevant performance descriptions.
- ❖ Feedback to students is provided using the outcomes and relevant performance descriptions.
- ❖ Ranking and relative differences come from different levels of achievement of the specified standards.

Note: teacher understanding of the standards will be further clarified by performance descriptions, samples of student responses and examination reports.

What documents are available

- ❖ Performance descriptions incorporating levels of achievement in the 2001 HSC and performance on outcomes that are not readily assessed externally.
- ❖ Examination reports on 2001 HSC.
- ❖ Work samples illustrating standards of student performance in the 2001 HSC.

An Outline for Assessment Planning

What will need to be done for assessment of Year 11 in 2000

For the first Year 11 cohort of the New Higher School Certificate, it will not be necessary to make immediate changes. The Board's requirements have remained the same.

Components and weightings for some Preliminary courses may have changed. While teachers may wish to change their assessment programs, Preliminary course components and weightings are advisory, not mandatory.

What will need to be done for the Year 12 cohort in 2001

The Board's procedural requirements for internal assessment have not changed. If the school's current policies meet the Board's requirements, they will be appropriate for the 2001 Higher School Certificate.

Preparation of the internal assessment programs for Year 12, 2001 will need to take place for each HSC course. A suggested timeframe for this is June 2000. This will provide time for schools to publish their assessment programs prior to the first HSC tasks being set.

Early in 2002 schools will receive sample materials including:

- ❖ samples of students' examination responses at the cut-off points between performance bands
- ❖ samples of student work showing levels of achievement on internal assessment tasks where appropriate.

These sample materials will help teachers understand the different levels of achievement of syllabus standards.

By the 2003 HSC, teachers will be able to :

- ❖ take account of the performance scales and use their understanding of the different levels of achievement from the band descriptions and work samples in determining their assessment marks.

DEVELOPING AN ASSESSMENT PROGRAM FOR A STANDARDS-REFERENCED APPROACH

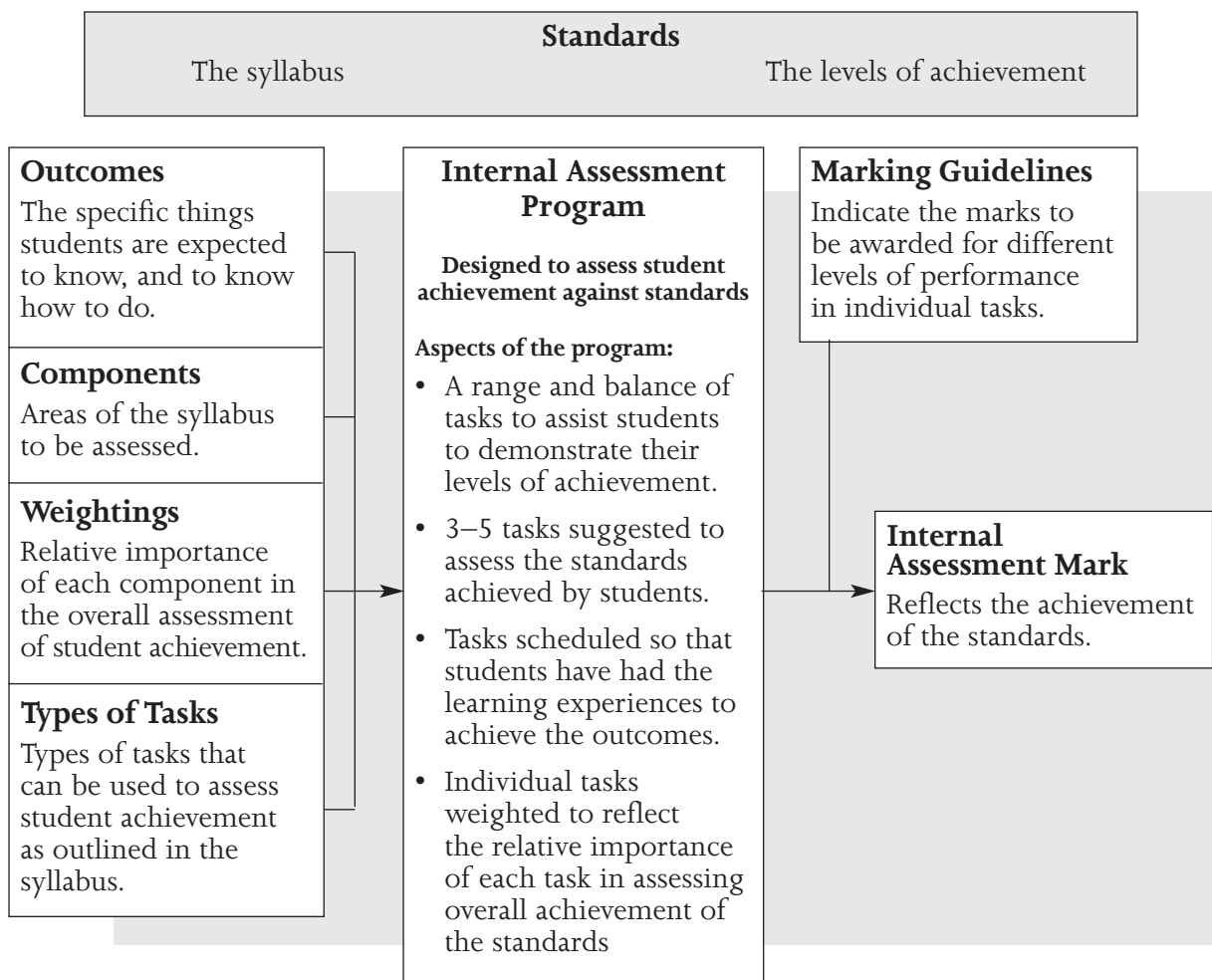
In the New Higher School Certificate:

- ❖ the syllabus demonstrates standards by specifying knowledge, skills and understanding expected to be learned by students as a result of studying a course
- ❖ the performance band descriptions (and other materials to be provided) demonstrate standards by specifying the levels of achievement of the knowledge, skills and understanding.

The diagram below shows how each of the elements of the internal assessment program plays a part in the assessment of student achievement in relation to standards.

The Board requires internal assessment programs to be developed using the mandatory components and weightings in the syllabus.

Assessing Standards: Elements of an internal assessment program



Assessment Support Document

It is also important to remember:

- ❖ the assessment mark is to be based on the HSC course only (except in Mathematics)
- ❖ there should be a balance between the assessment of knowledge and understanding outcomes and course content, and skills outcomes and content
- ❖ 3–5 tasks are probably sufficient
- ❖ a range of assessment tasks should be used as outlined in the syllabus
- ❖ individual tasks should be usually worth between 10% and 40% of the total assessment mark.

Where appropriate the types of tasks used for internal assessment should be broader than those used in the HSC examinations for the course. This gives students the opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the standards in different ways. A broader range of tasks also allows a wider range of outcomes to be assessed than may be possible in the external examination.

The following format may be a useful guide when developing an assessment program.

Outcomes H1– H12	Components (syllabus)	Weighting (syllabus)	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Task 4	Task 5
			Date: 28/2	Date: 2/4	Date: 2/5	Date: 19/6	Date: 14/8
			Structured essay	Oral	Class test	Research	Trial HSC
H1,H3, H5, H6	C1	30%	10%	10%			10%
H1,H3,H7	C2	20%			5%	10%	5%
H1,H5,H8, H7,H12	C3	20%			10%		10%
H1,H2,H3, H4,H5,H7, H8,H9,H10, H11,H12	C4	30%				20%	10%
	Marks	100%	10%	10%	15%	30%	35%

Note that:

- ❖ The same outcomes may be assessed by more than one task.
- ❖ One task can assess more than one component.
- ❖ Later tasks carry more weight.

Assessment Support Document

Such a format assists teachers to judge whether the assessment program:

- ❖ meets the mandatory requirements for components and weightings
- ❖ assesses the outcomes of the course
- ❖ has an appropriate number and range of tasks consistent with the guidance provided in the syllabus
- ❖ has an appropriate timing for the tasks
- ❖ has appropriate relative weightings for tasks.

To arrive at a student's final assessment marks the student's marks in each assessment task are combined. The marks for the tasks can be combined by using valid statistical procedures that ensure the intended weightings are applied. Software packages, such as the Board's Motorised Markbook, can make this a very simple task.

DESIGNING ASSESSMENT TASKS

Teachers can begin to use a standards-referenced approach to assessment by incorporating some key features into the design of their tasks. The following steps illustrate this, and an example from Geography is given on pages 16–17.

Designing an Assessment Task

Step 1 From the assessment program note:

- ❖ the outcomes and components to be assessed
- ❖ the task type chosen that will enable the outcomes to be assessed effectively.

Key Feature: The focus on outcomes.

Step 2 Prepare the task, including any stimulus material that will be needed.

- ❖ The task should allow each student to demonstrate his or her level of achievement.

Key Feature: Students have the opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do.

Step 3 Check the task for:

validity Will the task measure what you want it to?

reliability Will the task give consistent results?

Check that:

- ❖ the instructions are clear
- ❖ the language level is appropriate
- ❖ the task is the right length
- ❖ the level of difficulty is appropriate
- ❖ the task is free from bias.

Key Feature: Ensuring that the task is assessing what you want to assess and giving accurate information on each student's achievement.

Step 4 Develop a marking scheme.

- ❖ The wording of outcomes and the performance scale can help with developing marking criteria and deciding what marks will be allocated to different levels of performance.
- ❖ Check that students will be appropriately rewarded for the levels of knowledge, skills and understanding they demonstrate.
- ❖ Share your expectations with students so that they understand what needs to be done to gain good marks.

Key Feature: Clear expectations based on standards.

Step 5 Trial the marking scheme.

- ❖ When students have completed the task, mark the work of a sample of students. If necessary, adjust the scheme to cater for responses not covered by the marking scheme but which demonstrate achievement of the outcomes.

Key Feature: Marking scheme accommodates how students demonstrate achievement of outcomes.

Step 6 Mark the responses of the whole group.

- ❖ When more than one class does the same task, consider double or panel marking to improve consistency.

Key Feature: All students are marked consistently.

Step 7 Provide feedback to students on the strengths and weaknesses of their performances as well as their marks.

- ❖ The wording of outcomes and the band descriptions can be used where appropriate.
- ❖ The feedback should be designed to assist students to improve their performance.

Key Feature: Feedback is linked to student achievement of outcomes.

Step 8 Record individual student marks for the task.

- ❖ Brief notes on the strengths and weaknesses of each student's performance may be helpful.

Key Feature: Record of marks is maintained.

Keeping records

The Board requires schools to maintain records of marks awarded to each student for all assessment tasks. The Board will not require schools to keep student responses to tasks to illustrate standards of performance.

Sample HSC Geography Assessment Task

Outcomes to be Assessed

- Outcome H7 Justifies geographical methods applicable and useful in the workplace and relevant to a changing world
- Outcome H8 Plans geographical inquiries to analyse and synthesise information from a variety of sources
- Outcome H9 Evaluates geographical information and sources for usefulness, validity and reliability
- Outcome H12 Explains geographical patterns, processes and future trends through appropriate case studies and illustrative examples
- Outcome H13 Communicates complex geographical information, ideas and issues using appropriate written and/or oral, cartographic and graphic forms

Course components and weightings selected

Component	Weighting
❖ Fieldwork	5
❖ Geographical research	10
❖ Geographical writing	5

The type of task reflects the outcomes being assessed. This task involves: preparing a research framework for fieldwork; investigating and evaluating sources; and communicating in written and/or graphic forms.

Sample Assessment Task

Devise a written research framework for a future fieldwork investigation of an issue, process or change evident at a local scale relating to ONE of the following:

- An ecosystem at risk
- An urban place
- An economic activity.

Your research framework is to be consistent with the features outlined recently in class and should:

- Clearly and precisely state the site location of your chosen fieldwork investigation of an ecosystem at risk OR urban place OR economic activity at a local scale. Provide a location map with appropriate annotations for your chosen fieldwork investigation. (H13)
- Suggest geographical inquiry questions that are relevant for your chosen fieldwork investigation. (H8)
- State a hypothesis for ONE of the geographical inquiry questions you have suggested for your chosen fieldwork investigation. (H8) ←
- Propose and explain how at least two geographical inquiry methodologies could be implemented to investigate the questions you suggested and to test your stated hypothesis (200 words maximum). (H8)
- Suggest possible relevant secondary sources for your chosen fieldwork investigation and evaluate their likely usefulness. (200 words maximum) (H9 and H7)
- Provide details of how the various anticipated research findings of your chosen fieldwork investigation could best be presented in written and/or graphic forms (100 words maximum). (H13 and H12)

The task is linked to outcomes.

Sample HSC Geography Assessment Task

Marking Scheme Developed	
Guidelines	Mark
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans and designs a research framework in a highly organised manner. Applies detailed geographical knowledge and understanding of the chosen fieldwork investigation at a local scale. Evaluates geographical sources in an integrated format; Efficiently communicates in written form characterised by application of precise and abstract geographic terms and the use of graphic forms. 	16-20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans and designs a research framework in an organised manner. Applies geographic knowledge and understanding of the chosen fieldwork investigation at a local scale. Evaluates geographic sources in a structured format. Communicates in written form characterised by application of major technical geographic terms and the use of graphic forms. 	11-15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans a research framework by attempting to use source information descriptively. Demonstrates general geographic knowledge through selected fieldwork investigation at a local scale. Interprets the main features of the geographical sources identified. Communicates in written form characterised by use of some major geographic terms. 	6-10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follows some of the sequential steps specified for the research framework task. Recalls some general geographic knowledge of the selected fieldwork investigation at a local scale. Lists some general features and information evident in source(s) identified. Communicates in written form characterised by use of general geographic terms and brief phrases. 	1-5

The marking scheme uses words from the outcomes, eg evaluation of sources [H9]

Draft performance bands

- The draft performance bands will be most useful in providing an overall description of performance in the whole course over a range of tasks.
- For individual items or tasks, words could be drawn from some of the different bands, where helpful, to distinguish between student responses, for example, for geographical communication skills [H13]

Feedback to students

As well as giving students their marks, meaningful feedback on performance in the task can be provided by using, where appropriate, the wording from the outcomes, the draft performance bands and the marking scheme to explain what they were able to do and how they could improve their performance.

Students know what is expected by:

- providing clear descriptions of the task
- developing their understanding of the outcomes
- explaining the marking scheme.

USING THE EXAMINATION AND ASSESSMENT SUPPLEMENT

The Sample Paper

In the New Higher School Certificate, external examinations will assess students' achievement against standards of performance by:

- ❖ setting questions that are based on sampling from the course outcomes
- ❖ using marking schemes that provide a link between the course outcomes and the band descriptions in the performance scale.

There are a number of things that students should know about examination questions.

- ❖ HSC exams will use a variety of question types to measure students' levels of achievement. It is important that students know about the demands of different types of questions and how to respond to them.
- ❖ It is important that students are familiar with the way that questions will be structured to indicate what is expected in the response.

Sample examination papers illustrate the types of questions in the HSC examination and how they will be set out.

The Marking Guidelines

The marking guidelines for sample papers show what students are expected to know or do in order to receive particular marks for each question.

The Performance Descriptions

The performance scales containing performance descriptions in bands are primarily a tool for reporting at the end of the HSC course. They are based on the HSC course outcomes. However, they can have a useful place in supporting teaching and learning throughout Years 11 and 12. They can be used to provide :

- ❖ goals for the development of student learning in the course
- ❖ a common language for providing feedback
- ❖ a means for helping students chart their progress.

They become more relevant the further into the HSC course students have progressed.

Once the performance scales move from draft form after the 2001 HSC examination teachers might use the scales as a broad guide to the range of marks for their internal assessment. Schools will not be required to submit descriptions of student performance or to indicate a performance band.

A GLOSSARY OF KEY WORDS

Syllabus outcomes, objectives, performance bands and examination questions have key words that state what students are expected to be able to do. A glossary of key words has been developed to help provide a common language and consistent meaning in the Higher School Certificate documents.

Using the glossary will help teachers and students understand what is expected in responses to examinations and assessment tasks.

Account	Account for: state reasons for, report on. Give an account of: narrate a series of events or transactions
Analyse	Identify components and the relationship between them; draw out and relate implications
Apply	Use, utilise, employ in a particular situation
Appreciate	Make a judgement about the value of
Assess	Make a judgment of value, quality, outcomes, results or size
Calculate	Ascertain/determine from given facts, figures or information
Clarify	Make clear or plain
Classify	Arrange or include in classes/categories
Compare	Show how things are similar or different
Construct	Make; build; put together items or arguments
Contrast	Show how things are different or opposite
Critically (analyse/ evaluate)	Add a degree or level of accuracy depth, knowledge and understanding, logic, questioning, reflection and quality to (analysis/evaluation)
Deduce	Draw conclusions
Define	State meaning and identify essential qualities
Demonstrate	Show by example
Describe	Provide characteristics and features
Discuss	Identify issues and provide points for and/or against
Distinguish	Recognise or note/indicate as being distinct or different from; to note differences between
Evaluate	Make a judgement based on criteria; determine the value of
Examine	Inquire into
Explain	Relate cause and effect; make the relationships between things evident; provide why and/or how
Extract	Choose relevant and/or appropriate details
Extrapolate	Infer from what is known

Assessment Support Document

Identify	Recognise and name
Interpret	Draw meaning from
Investigate	Plan, inquire into and draw conclusions about
Justify	Support an argument or conclusion
Outline	Sketch in general terms; indicate the main features of
Predict	Suggest what may happen based on available information
Propose	Put forward (for example a point of view, idea, argument, suggestion) for consideration or action
Recall	Present remembered ideas, facts or experiences
Recommend	Provide reasons in favour
Recount	Retell a series of events
Summarise	Express, concisely, the relevant details
Synthesise	Putting together various elements to make a whole