
Introduction
A revised Society and Culture Stage 6 Syllabus (2013), endorsed by the Board of Studies in August 2013, replaces the Society and Culture Stage 6 Syllabus (1999). The revised syllabus will be implemented for Preliminary course students commencing in 2014 and for HSC course students from late 2014. The first HSC Society and Culture examination based on the new syllabus will be in 2015.

The revised Society and Culture Stage 6 Syllabus (2013) is available on the Board of Studies website (www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_hsc).

Background
In October 2012, the Board of Studies approved a revision of the Society and Culture syllabus. To establish directions for change to the syllabus, focus groups of teachers at metropolitan and regional centres and other key educational stakeholders were consulted during December 2012. Findings from the consultation were used to determine a Key Directions Report providing information about the current syllabus and suggestions for change to the syllabus.

A Society and Culture Reference Group was formed to provide advice at key points in the development of the syllabus. Syllabus writers were contracted to develop a draft syllabus based on the Key Directions Report, plus additional submissions from the Society and Culture Association (the teacher professional association) and the Supervisor of Marking.

A draft Society and Culture syllabus was developed and published on the Board website in May 2013. The Board coordinated consultation on the draft syllabus until 14 June 2013. The consultation included:

- a survey published on the Board’s website
- meetings with teachers in metropolitan and regional centres
- a meeting with school systems representatives
- a meeting with the Society and Culture Association
- a Society and Culture Reference Group consultation meeting.

The draft syllabus received widespread endorsement. The consultation indicated that the key directions for change to the syllabus had been achieved and that the Society and Culture syllabus was much improved. The draft syllabus was amended in response to suggested changes emerging from the consultation. The Consultation Report for the revised Stage 6 Society and Culture syllabus is available on the Board of Studies website (www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_hsc).
**Key directions for change to the Stage 6 Society and Culture syllabus**

Based on the *Key Directions Report*, the main changes in the revised Stage 6 Society and Culture syllabus are the following.

**Maintain the structure and flexibility of the current syllabus and cater for the nature of the current and likely future students, their interests and learning styles.**

- The structure and student focus of the previous syllabus have been maintained. The HSC course retains its flexibility with a core study plus elective depth studies, allowing teachers to tailor their teaching to meet the needs of students and cater for their community context.

- The objectives and outcomes have been revised in line with changes to the syllabus. The objectives have been reduced from nine to seven and the outcomes have been reduced to 10.

**Enhance the contemporary nature of the syllabus and the areas of study.**

- The course has been significantly updated to reflect the contemporary nature of society. This includes a review of all content to ensure that it is current; the inclusion of a ‘contemporary context’ to be integrated within each topic; and an increased focus on technology, including communication technologies. Students are required to use specific examples from contemporary society in each topic. In the HSC core, for example, students examine continuities and changes in current society, including family life, gender roles, the legal system and political processes.

- The course maintains its focus on issues and content of interest to students and the capacity for extending more able students while maintaining accessibility for the full range of student ability. The syllabus provides for teaching and learning to be student focused and addresses skills for the 21st century.

**Extensively review the HSC core to ensure that the content is more explicit and written to support the examination structure of multiple-choice, short-answer and extended-response questions.**

- The HSC core has been written to support a wide range of assessment instruments, including multiple-choice questions. The content is more explicit, and teachers, students and examiners can now be more certain of what can be appropriately examined and assessed.

- The syllabus has been reviewed by the Chief Examiner, the Supervisor of Marking, and assessment experts at the Board and has been endorsed as an improved basis for the HSC examination and for school-based assessment.

**Revise the HSC depth studies to provide greater consistency and certainty, including the structure and the amount of content in the depth studies.**

- The content in each topic is organised in a consistent structure with a focus, outcomes, integrated course concepts, contemporary context, a ‘nature of’ study and a focus study.

**Revise aspects of section 8 of the syllabus, noting how it is valued by teachers and widely used in the development of the HSC examination. For section 8, the revision should:**

  - review the social and cultural research methodologies section to clarify the methods, remove confusion and ensure accuracy
  
  - review the social and cultural literacy section, including the diagrams, for accuracy, additions, deletions and adjustments.

- Section 8 of the syllabus has been extensively revised to provide more explicit and clear information on the fundamental, additional and related concepts in Society and Culture; social and cultural research methods, including the research process and ethical research; and social and cultural literacy. The diagrams in section 8 have been updated for accuracy and increased relevance.
Delete the Work and Leisure depth study, which has many fewer students completing it at the HSC examination than the other depth studies. It should be replaced by a new depth study.

- A new HSC depth study, Social Conformity and Nonconformity, has been developed. This depth study focuses on the formation of and influences on attitudes and behaviours of groups and their members; factors influencing conformity; and responses to nonconformity.
- The Work and Leisure HSC depth study has been deleted.

**Syllabus structure**

The revised Society and Culture Stage 6 Syllabus (2013) is organised as a Preliminary course with three depth studies and an HSC course with a core study, the Personal Interest Project, and four elective depth studies, of which students must study two.

### Preliminary course

(120 indicative hours)

- The Social and Cultural World (30% of course time)
- Personal and Social Identity (40% of course time)
- Intercultural Communication (30% of course time)

### HSC course

(120 indicative hours)

**Core**

- Personal Interest Project (30% of course time)
- Social and Cultural Continuity and Change (30% of course time)

**Depth studies**

(40% of course time)

TWO to be chosen from the following:

- Popular Culture
- Belief Systems and Ideologies
- Social Inclusion and Exclusion
- Social Conformity and Nonconformity

The revised syllabus maintains:

- a rationale and an aim that identify the importance and relevance of the Stage 6 Society and Culture syllabus in the curriculum
- objectives and outcomes that provide the intended results of teaching the syllabus – they are clear statements of the knowledge, understanding and skills
- outcomes for the Preliminary course and the HSC course, with a progression in the level of expected learning from the Preliminary to the HSC course
- values and attitudes objectives that reflect and underpin the nature of the syllabus and the content; it is anticipated that these values and attitudes will be accessed and gained by students during their study of Society and Culture.
Syllabus features

Content

The syllabus content:

- is expressed in statements that describe the knowledge, understanding and skills, including the ‘integrated concepts’ and ‘contemporary context’ that must be incorporated across the learning in each depth study; the ‘nature of’ for each depth study; a focus study; and, in the HSC course, the ‘near future (5 to 10 years)’
- facilitates the development by students of social and cultural literacy and understanding of the interaction of persons, societies, cultures, environments and time
- includes specific social and cultural research methods in both the Preliminary and HSC courses; students will study all research methods identified in the syllabus, but will study particular methods during specific sections of the course – the study of all research methods will enable students to consider which will be appropriate to apply in the Personal Interest Project
- includes cross-disciplinary concepts and social research methods from a range of disciplines
- has direct relevance to the immediate and future lives of students, enabling them to develop understanding of themselves, their own society and culture, and the societies and cultures of others
- includes a contemporary context in each depth study, which is to be applied to the content across the depth study
- provides students with knowledge and skills for independent thinking, positive behaviour, the capacity to solve problems, and engaging with and actively contributing to society
- promotes student awareness of the continuities and changes within societies and cultures
- provides students with the skills to critically analyse social theories and viewpoints about people, societies and cultures
- promotes student awareness of individuals, groups and institutions and facilitates intercultural understanding and communication
- includes adjusted outcomes in the Personal Interest Project section of the HSC course, which is largely unchanged from the current syllabus – the Personal Interest Project is still worth 40% of the final mark in Society and Culture, and the indicative time remains at 30% of course time
- provides greater clarity in relation to the nature, place and role of social theories and theorists
- includes provision for school-selected theories and theorists in the Preliminary course.

Social research methods

During the study of both the Preliminary and the HSC courses, students are required to develop knowledge and understanding of a variety of the methods used to conduct social research. Students will also develop skills in:

- planning research tasks, including developing appropriate research methods
- applying research methods ethically
- compiling and organising collected information
- analysing, synthesising and interpreting the findings
- writing up and editing their conclusions in ways appropriate to different audiences.

Social research methods exist on a continuum from quantitative to qualitative – that is, from methods that easily measure and quantify data to those that collect detailed and less measurable and, therefore, less quantifiable data. Many social research methods contain both quantitative and qualitative elements.
The process of research is important to the core and depth studies, as well as to the Personal Interest Project. Social and cultural researchers are expected to conduct research in an ethical manner.

**Concepts**

The syllabus addresses concepts that are to be integrated across the content in each depth study. The concepts are organised as *fundamental*, *additional* and *related depth study* concepts. The three forms of concepts are to be integrated as appropriate across each depth study. There is continual interaction between the concepts and none can be studied in isolation. An understanding of this interaction underpins the core and depth studies in both the Preliminary and the HSC courses.

The *fundamental* course concepts are represented in the Society and Culture logo diagram above. The five *fundamental* course concepts are:

- persons
- society
- culture
- environment
- time

The *fundamental* concepts are central to understanding the interactions in society and there is a two-way interaction between any combinations of the fundamental course concepts.

The six *additional* course concepts are:

- power
- authority
- gender
- identity
- technologies
- globalisation

The *additional* course concepts help students to understand and analyse the interactions between the *fundamental* course concepts and are important when analysing and understanding the interactions of society.

The *related depth study* concepts are specific and are to be integrated as appropriate across the depth study. They provide an explicit conceptual link to the depth study content.
Social and cultural literacy

Society and Culture is designed to facilitate the development of a student's social and cultural literacy – the idea that people should possess a body of knowledge, understanding and skills that allows them to share, communicate effectively, and respect themselves and others. Achieving social and cultural literacy is a developmental process that requires the student to synthesise personal experience and public knowledge at the micro, meso and macro levels of society. Interactions exist between the micro and meso, micro and macro, and meso and macro levels. These interactions should be viewed as two-way.

The aspects of social and cultural literacy include:

- Personal experience is the knowledge gained from reflecting on individual experiences.
- Public knowledge is general knowledge and the knowledge available to everyone. The term also refers to all the knowledge found in the public domain that is the work or research of other people.
- Micro-level interactions are personal and occur between individuals and their family, peers and individuals in the community.
- Meso-level interactions occur between the micro and macro levels of society. Meso-level structures are groups in the community, village, school, workplace, local interest club, branch, organisation and state.
- Macro-level interactions are impersonal and relate to large institutions, the media, law and government and are evident at a national and international level.

Glossary

The syllabus supplies a substantial glossary that provides definitions and meaning specific to the context of the Society and Culture Stage 6 Syllabus (2013). The glossary does not attempt to assign an absolute definition to the terms included; rather, it assists teachers in interpreting the syllabus and in assisting students in their learning.

Personal Interest Project and assessment

Advice on the Personal Interest Project and appropriate assessment practice in relation to the Society and Culture syllabus is contained in Assessment and Reporting in Society and Culture Stage 6.

This document provides general advice on assessment in Stage 6, as well as the specific requirements for the Society and Culture Preliminary and HSC courses. The document contains:

- suggested components and weightings for the internal assessment of the Preliminary course
- mandatory components and weightings for the internal assessment of the HSC course
- the HSC examination specifications, which describe the format of the external HSC examination
- advice on the Personal Interest Project requirements.

The document and other resources and advice related to the Personal Interest Project and assessment in Stage 6 Society and Culture are available on the Board of Studies website (www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_hsc).

Support to implement the revised syllabus

Many current resources may still be used to implement the revised syllabus. The Society and Culture Association will provide a range of support for the revised syllabus, including professional development activities and online materials that will contain programming and assessment advice. For details, visit the Society and Culture Association website (www.scansw.com.au).