Responses to the Draft K–10 Curriculum Framework – Version 2 can be made by

a) written response on the survey form to:
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b) email response to k10framework@boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au

c) online response through the Board’s website at:
   www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au

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Other copies of this document can also be found on the Board’s website:
www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au
1. Introduction

Today more than ever there are high expectations of education. Schools are expected to develop students’ personal and social skills and values, as well as the knowledge, skills, understanding, values and attitudes needed to prepare all students for a world characterised by rapid change. Students must be prepared to cope with the future by acquiring knowledge-based skills and developing confidence in understanding and using new information and communication technologies.

The K–10 Curriculum Framework establishes parameters and directions for Board of Studies NSW curriculum requirements and syllabuses. It draws on a contemporary understanding of teaching and learning that emphasises outcomes and standards. The framework’s broad learning outcomes will provide students with a sound basis for their future choices in post-compulsory schooling, employment and lifelong learning, and will prepare them to live active and fulfilling lives.

The K–10 Curriculum Framework will be used to develop a core curriculum of learning essential for all students during the compulsory years of schooling, and it will guide the evaluation and revision of individual syllabuses. By setting broad learning outcomes for all students, to which syllabuses contribute and against which all syllabuses can be measured, the Framework will assist the integration of knowledge, skills, understanding, values and attitudes for each student.

The formation of learning skills and positive attitudes to learning requires a curriculum and teaching methods that engage students and encourage their active participation in learning. The framework will ensure that students acquire both general and subject-specific knowledge through syllabuses that set realistic but challenging expectations. The syllabuses will address the needs of students in the middle years of schooling by uncrowding the curriculum and by providing greater continuity in education, particularly in the middle years between Years 5 and 8 and the transition from Year 10 to Year 11.

The framework will ensure that every K–10 syllabus has standards clearly articulated at each stage. The standards show what students are expected to know and be able to do at each of the K–10 stages. Knowing what is expected motivates and helps students to learn and enables them to reflect on their achievements and to plan their future study. Clearly articulated standards assist teachers to plan more effectively so that teaching, learning and assessment become concurrent and integrated classroom activities. Standards establish a clear basis for accountability to parents and the wider community.

The standards do not tell teachers how to teach, nor are they lesson plans. They are guidelines to assist teachers in developing teaching and learning programs that meet local community and student needs, while addressing those things that all New South Wales students should know and be able to do.

The framework guides the development of both content and performance standards for all K–10 syllabuses in the following ways:
• content standards will be described in all syllabuses through stage outcomes and content
• performance standards will be demonstrated through work samples and other support material across stages
• assessment and reporting advice will focus on improving learning and will guide the development of practical assessment and reporting strategies.

The K–10 Curriculum Framework clearly acknowledges that schools and school systems have the responsibility for the total schooling of the student, for the ways in which syllabuses
are implemented in their individual contexts, and for the education they provide beyond the Board’s syllabuses. The framework is aimed at enabling teachers, schools and school authorities to decide how to maximise student learning by providing a flexible structure within which schools and teachers can develop programs, structures and pedagogical practices that meet the educational needs of their students.
2. Curriculum K–10 Purpose Statement

The Board of Studies NSW K–10 syllabuses and curriculum requirements will be designed to provide educational opportunities that:

• engage and challenge all students to maximise their individual talents and capabilities for lifelong learning

• enable all students to develop a positive self-concept and the capacity to establish and maintain safe, healthy and rewarding lives

• prepare all students to participate effectively and responsibly in the society in which they will live, taking account of moral, ethical and spiritual considerations

• encourage and enable all students to enjoy learning and to be self-motivated, reflective and competent learners who can take part actively in further study, work or training.

2.1. The Board of Studies Statement of Values

The Board of Studies requires that syllabuses and other materials incorporate aims, objectives, outcomes, content, teaching, learning and assessment strategies that:

• support the pursuit of excellence

• support quality teaching and learning

• encourage personal growth and self-confidence

• promote a fair and just society

• value diversity.
3. Broad Learning Outcomes

The following broad learning outcomes represent knowledge, skills, understanding, values and attitudes that are essential for all students if they are to succeed in and beyond schooling. These outcomes will be achieved through the learning opportunities provided in the mandatory curriculum requirements and the Board syllabuses. These broad learning outcomes will not be measured directly. They will be measured through the assessment of student achievement in particular key learning areas and subjects.

Each Board syllabus will describe how learning in the key learning area or subject will contribute to the purpose of the K–10 curriculum and how learning will assist students to achieve the broad learning outcomes.

Students will:

• understand, develop and communicate ideas and information
• access, analyse, evaluate and use information from a variety of sources
• work collaboratively with others to achieve individual and collective goals
• possess the knowledge and skills necessary to maintain a safe and healthy lifestyle
• understand and appreciate the physical, biological and technological world and make responsible and informed decisions in relation to their world
• understand and appreciate social, cultural, geographical and historical contexts and participate as active and informed citizens
• express themselves through creative activity and engage with the artistic, cultural and intellectual work of others
• understand and apply a variety of analytical and creative techniques to solve problems
• understand, interpret and apply concepts related to numerical and spatial patterns, structures and relationships
• be productive, creative and confident in the use of technology, understanding the impact of technology on society
• understand the work environment and be equipped with the knowledge, skills and understanding to evaluate potential career options and pathways
• develop a system of personal values based on their understanding of moral, ethical and spiritual matters.
4. Principles to Guide the Development and Implementation of Syllabuses

The following principles will guide the development of Board of Studies curriculum requirements and syllabuses and will also guide the implementation of syllabuses by schools and school authorities.

The Board of Studies curriculum requirements and syllabuses will:
1. enable all students to engage in, take responsibility for, and continue their own learning, given that:

   - learning occurs at different rates and in different ways
   - learning and teaching need to take place in a context of high expectations
   - learners use their current understanding to discover, construct and incorporate new knowledge, skills and understanding
   - strategies for learning are taught, learned and refined in a range of contexts
   - students need appropriate time to explore, experiment and engage with the underpinning concepts and principles of what they are to learn
   - teacher instruction and assessment influence students’ learning and learning processes and this may involve clarification of students’ understanding of concepts and remedying of misconceptions
   - students can develop and use a range of strategies to actively monitor and evaluate their learning and their learning strategies
   - frequent feedback from teachers is critical for learners to gain insight into their learning and understanding, and to enable them to map their progress in relation to defined standards.

2. establish a core of knowledge, skills, understanding and values to which all students are entitled, given that:

   - the core will reflect the essential knowledge, skills, understanding, values and attitudes that should enable students to respond positively to the opportunities and challenges of the rapidly changing world
   - curriculum requirements and syllabuses will be designed to enable students to acquire the core knowledge, skills, understanding, values and attitudes and to acquire additional knowledge, skills, understanding, values and attitudes through which they will continue to maximise their levels of achievement.
   - the core knowledge, skills, understanding, values and attitudes will be organised within key learning areas and subjects although it will be possible for this core to be delivered in other ways
   - all students will be expected to maximise their achievement of standards along a K–10 continuum established for the core and additional curriculum.
3. **establish explicit standards that enable recognition of student achievement and planning for further learning**, given that:

- syllabus outcomes, indicators, content, stage statements, work samples and performance scales all contribute to an understanding of expected standards
- meaningful feedback to students on their achievement against standards engages and challenges students in the learning process
- assessment of the achievement of standards provides information to improve teaching and learning and to set targets for improvement
- decisions about what and how students learn should be driven by information gained from assessment and reporting of the achievement of standards.

4. **be inclusive of all students attending schools in New South Wales. This principle assumes**:

- the core knowledge, skills, understanding, values and attitudes described in Board syllabuses will take into account the diverse needs of all students
- the Board’s curriculum will provide for equitable access, participation and outcomes for all students
- the Board’s curriculum will enable schools to provide programs that challenge and engage each student according to background, needs and interests
- the Board’s curriculum will allow the full range of students to demonstrate achievement.

5. **enable teachers, schools and school authorities to decide how to maximise student learning. This will**:

- provide flexibility for schools and teachers to develop programs, structures and pedagogical practices to meet the educational needs of students
- ensure that the assessment of achievement of standards provides information to guide decisions on how learning can be improved.
5. Translating Purpose, Broad Learning Outcomes and Principles into Curriculum

The purpose, broad learning outcomes and principles described in this framework provide a student-centred basis for the development of the Board of Studies’ K–10 curriculum requirements for NSW students and schools.

In order to achieve the purpose and broad learning outcomes described in sections 2 and 3, the Board establishes curriculum requirements and syllabuses. These curriculum requirements and syllabuses should be consistent with the principles described in section 4.

The principles underpin the Board’s syllabuses and assessment process.

5.1. The Board of Studies Syllabus and Assessment Model

The Board’s syllabus and assessment document will describe in further detail the framework’s requirements that need to be met when syllabuses and support materials are developed. The model describes and explains the components of syllabuses and support documents. It elaborates the Framework’s requirements in relation to standards and provides guidance to syllabus writers on the development of syllabus outcomes and content and on the development of assessment advice and materials.

In particular, the K–10 Curriculum Framework establishes requirements for syllabuses that include:

- a K–10 perspective
- specification of content
- content and performance standards.

5.2. K–10 Perspective

Syllabus development for the compulsory years of schooling will occur in a K–10 context.

K–10 syllabus development will involve the development of K–10 scope and continuum overviews. These overviews will indicate the learning that is assumed for Years 7–10 subjects and how learning in K–6 will be built upon. The overviews will show the relationship between, and any links required across, key learning areas or subjects. They will illustrate assumptions about prior learning and indicate pathways for further learning.

Where syllabuses require that particular subject matter or content be repeated, they will explicitly require it to be dealt with at a more demanding level.

5.3. Specification of Content

Syllabuses will highlight:

- essential knowledge, skills, understanding, values and attitudes that directly contribute to the broad learning outcomes described in the K–10 Curriculum Framework and that is seen to be essential for all students to learn, and
- additional knowledge, skills, understanding, values and attitudes that will extend and broaden students’ learning.
Syllabuses will include cross-curriculum content that it is appropriate to teach in the key learning area or subject.

5.4. **Content and Performance Standards**

The Board’s syllabus outcomes are arranged in stages within subjects or key learning areas. The stages follow a conceptual sequence. The Board’s syllabuses will establish a standards framework that specifies the expected learning and quality of student achievement at a point, typically the end of a stage, when the majority of students should perform the outcomes to some level.

The focus on standards enables teachers to identify current levels of student achievement and to set realistic yet challenging goals for all students as they progress through the compulsory years of schooling.

Learning occurs at different rates and in different ways. Content and performance standards are established on the basis that the majority of students will achieve them. However, there will be variability in achievement of stage outcomes at particular years of schooling. For example, while some Year 8 students will achieve Stage 4 outcomes early during Year 8, the majority will achieve them at about the end of Year 8, and a small number might not achieve them until Year 9 or later.

The Board will continue to provide advice through syllabuses and support documents in K–10 for schools to use in assessing student achievement. It will also provide tools for reporting student achievement.

The Board’s *K–10 Curriculum Framework*:

- requires the inclusion of stage outcomes in syllabuses as the basis of a K–10 standards framework that articulates with the HSC program
- requires the establishment of clear links between syllabus content and outcomes through the development of exemplar assessment tasks, marking guidelines and annotated samples of student work in order to give greater attention to content and performance standards at each stage
- provides for the development of support materials and advice to assist teachers to monitor student progress and report the standard achieved to students, parents and other teachers.

Board syllabuses and support materials will:

- provide ways for teachers and others to understand the continuity and developmental sequence of learning in a subject or key learning area
- assist teachers to make judgements about and to report students’ performance and standard of achievement using performance standards and information from external assessments
- assist teachers to determine the next steps in learning to ensure each student’s progress.
A useful conceptual organiser for the relationship of standards and assessment and reporting is the schema used by the Board to describe content standards and performance in Stage 6. This schema is applicable, with suitable amendments for all stages. The diagram shows the integrated nature of syllabus and performance standards:

![Diagram](image)
6. Curriculum requirements

The Education Act 1990 (NSW) establishes minimum curriculum requirements for students attending New South Wales schools, and empowers the Board of Studies to establish guidelines for courses of study. In addition, the Act and the Board of Studies establish further requirements for the award of the School Certificate.

School systems may prescribe additional requirements beyond these.

6.1. Minimum Curriculum Requirements for Years K–6

The Education Act prescribes the following minimum requirements for the Years K–6 school curriculum:

(a) courses of study in each of the 6 key learning areas for primary education are to be provided for each child during each Year.
(b) courses of study relating to Australia are to be included in the key learning area of Human Society and its Environment.
(c) courses of study in both Art and Music are to be included in the key learning area of Creative and Practical Arts.
(d) courses of study in a key learning area are to be provided in accordance with any relevant guideline developed by the Board of Studies.

Proposition 1: The current Education Act requirements for the minimum Years K–6 curriculum should be maintained.

6.2. Minimum Curriculum Requirements for Years 7–10

The Education Act prescribes the following minimum requirements for the 7–10 school curriculum:

(a) courses of study in 6 out of the 8 key learning areas for secondary education are to be provided for each child
(b) courses of study in the key learning areas of English, Mathematics, Science and Human Society and its Environment are to be provided during each Year, but the courses of study in the other key learning areas need not be provided during each Year
(c) courses of study in a key learning area are to be provided in accordance with any relevant guideline developed by the Board of Studies.

Proposition 2: The current Education Act requirements for the minimum Years 7–10 curriculum should be maintained.
7. School Certificate requirements

In addition to the minimum curriculum requirements in section 6.2 above, the Education Act contains additional key learning area/subject requirements for School Certificate candidates:

(a) courses of study in each of the 8 key learning areas for secondary education are to be provided for each student.
(b) courses of study in the key learning areas of English, Mathematics, Science and Human Society and its Environment are to be provided during each Year, but the courses of study in the other key learning areas need not be provided during each Year.
(c) courses of study in a key learning area are to be taught in accordance with a syllabus developed or endorsed by the Board and approved by the Minister.

Based on the Education Act requirements, the Board of Studies establishes further requirements of students seeking to gain the School Certificate. As a result, candidates for the School Certificate are required to undertake study in each of the following subjects:
- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- History (History in Stage 4 and Australian History in Stage 5)
- Geography (Geography in Stage 4 and Australian Geography in Stage 5)
- PDHPE
- Design and Technology, with at least 50 hours devoted to learning about and using computers
- Visual Arts
- Music
- Languages including one language studied over one continuous 12-month period.

Combined with the key learning area requirements that apply for Years K–6 the mandatory subject requirements provide the basis for K–10 continuity.

Consultation feedback on the November 2000 draft of the K–10 Curriculum Framework indicated general support for the mandatory subject requirements although there were some responses that questioned:
- the requirement for the study of Languages, particularly for ESL students, with some querying the justification for Languages, some expressing concern about resourcing courses and others suggesting more time be required for serious study of a language
- the requirement for learning about and using computers within Design and Technology
- the ways in which the requirement for Creative Arts might be fulfilled through subjects beyond Visual Arts and Music.

The development of options for changes to current curriculum requirements depends on whether or not there should be changes to the subjects that students are required to study during Years 7–10.
- Should the current Years 7–10 mandatory subject list be altered?
- Should some existing mandatory requirements become optional?
- Should there be additions to the mandatory subject list?
Proposition 3: The current mandatory subject requirements for the award of the School Certificate as described in the Education Act, together with the Board’s requirement to study History and Geography, should be maintained (ie students should continue to be required to study English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, PDHPE, Design & Technology, Visual Arts, Music and Languages).

The Board should establish no other requirements in relation to subjects to be studied.

8. Specification of when subjects need to be studied

The Education Act requires that English, Mathematics, Science and Human Society and Its Environment must be studied in each of Years 7 to 10.

The Board requires that PDHPE should be studied during each of Years 7 to 10, History and Geography in Stage 4 and Australian History and Australian Geography in Stage 5. The Board also provides advice on when Visual Arts, Music and Languages should be studied.

The Board’s advice reflects judgements about the best way to deliver a teaching and learning program in each subject but this advice also results in each subject being treated in similar ways across all schools, for all students.

A key question is whether there should be some greater flexibility for schools and teachers in relation to the teaching of one or all of these subjects.

If the specifications were removed, close attention would still need to be given to specific syllabus outcomes, content and standards requirements and to the principles describe earlier in this framework.

Proposition 4: In addition to the requirements of the Education Act in relation to English, Mathematics, Science and HSIE, the Board should continue to require the study of History and Geography in Stage 4, Australian History and Geography in Stage 5 and PDHPE in each of Years 7 to 10.

The Board should establish no other requirements in relation to when subjects should be studied.

9. Indicative hours

Currently, the Board determines indicative hours that apply to the mandatory subjects and to elective courses. This specification of indicative hours provides the basis for ensuring that all students undertake an appropriate amount of study in subjects in order to be eligible for the award of the School Certificate.

The specification of standards proposed in accordance with the Board’s syllabus and assessment model (see Framework Sections 5.1 and 5.4) provides a framework against which teachers will be able to:

- identify levels of student achievement
- monitor the success of subsequent teaching and learning programs, and
- maintain or adjust the length of courses being provided to students.
This gives schools and teachers another mechanism to provide guidance and assurances about the extent and quality of student learning, rather than relying solely on the indicative number of hours of study.

The standards framework provides the opportunity to identify standards that all students are expected to achieve by the end of the compulsory years of schooling. It also provides the basis for setting expectations beyond this initial goal. Consistent with the principles described in section 4 of this draft framework, students who have achieved the initial expected standard will be encouraged and supported to work towards higher standards in some or all of the subjects that they are studying.

In this context, consultation feedback has indicated that teachers would still want the Board to provide some guidance on the number of hours of study that students might typically undertake in order to achieve syllabus outcomes and the standards described in syllabus documents.

That is, the use of indicative hours to regulate teaching and learning programs should be modified so that the use of hours in relation to Board syllabuses and courses simply suggests the time that students might typically require to learn the syllabus content and to achieve the associated standard. The current indicative hours would be an appropriate starting point for this advice. Whether individual students require more or less time is a question that schools are best placed to address.

In place of the emphasis on indicative hours, greater emphasis should be placed on the content and performance standards described for each syllabus, with the teacher’s assessment of a student’s achievement guiding subsequent learning. Then teaching programs will be able to directly reflect the prior achievements of students and provide the teaching and learning opportunities that are seen to be necessary for all students to progress towards higher standards.

**Proposition 5:** The use of indicative hours should be modified to simply provide a guide to the number of hours that students might typically require to learn the syllabus content and to achieve particular standards.

**10. Monitoring and reporting student achievement**

School authorities and schools establish requirements and procedures for reporting student achievement to students, parents and to other teachers.

To give schools the tools they need to report to their communities in consistent ways, the standards framework will assist with the communication of information about student achievement at the Year 6 / Year 7 and the Year 10 / Year 11 transition points. While the content standards described in syllabuses provide focus and direction for teaching and learning, performance standards communicate the standards to which students, teachers, schools and school systems must aspire, and they provide a common language for reporting.

The Board’s standards framework will provide graded descriptions of the standards to be achieved at the end of each stage in the form of stage statements written in 3 to 5 levels, or in the form of performance descriptions in Stage 5. These statements will represent a snapshot of various levels of student performance as they demonstrate outcomes in integrated and holistic ways.
Advice in syllabuses will concentrate assessment and recording at least at the strand level in order to discourage fragmentary or atomised learning.

The Board’s syllabuses and support materials will provide a common language of assessment and reporting so that schools within and across systems can assign a common meaning and understanding to terms in the curriculum. This common language will be accessible to students and parents.

**Consistency of Teacher Judgement**

Syllabus assessment advice will address the issue of consistency of teacher judgement and comparability across schools. It will recommend particular strategies and provide elaborations of outcomes and standards.

Over time, as exemplars of student work are developed and used, a consistent understanding of what it means to achieve a standard will develop. To aid this consistent understanding:

- the language of standards will be as free from jargon and as accessible as possible
- descriptions of standards will be elaborated with exemplar material
- strategies will stress the value of on-balance professional judgement of teachers.

**Proposition 6:** For all K–10 key learning areas and subjects, the standards framework will provide the basis for schools and teachers to monitor and report student achievement.

**11. Credentialling student achievement for the School Certificate**

The greater use of a standards framework, with reduced emphasis on indicative hours, will require reconsideration of School Certificate credentialling.

Currently students are eligible for the award of the School Certificate if they meet the mandatory study requirements and other requirements described in the Assessment Certification and Examination Manual (Section 5). This includes statewide tests in English-literacy, Mathematics, Science, Australian History and Geography and Civics and Citizenship.

The Board does not require schools to offer additional studies. However, it provides a wide range of additional courses that, if taught during Years 9 and 10 in accordance with Board developed syllabuses or Board endorsed courses and indicative time requirements, will be credentialled for the School Certificate.

A consequence of this is that the credential does not provide detail on student achievement in relation to courses studied in Years 7 and 8.

A key issue requiring consideration is whether the Board should credential standards of achievement for all of the subjects that students study during Years 7 to 10.

Another key question is whether the Board should develop syllabuses for subjects that are not currently available as Board Developed Courses, with the intention of increasing the opportunities available for study during Years 7 to 10. The alternative is to simply retain the current provision of Board developed syllabuses along with the opportunity for schools to submit courses for Board endorsement.
As discussed in the previous section the articulation of standards across Years K–10 provides the basis for improved assessing and reporting of student achievement. Given the current requirements for year-by-year study of English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography and PDHPE, and that five of these subjects have a related School Certificate test, it might be appropriate that the Board identifies a standard that all students are expected to achieve by the end of the compulsory years of schooling in these subjects.

Such a standard would reflect the knowledge, skills and understanding that are seen to be appropriate for students to learn by the end of the compulsory years of schooling and which would prepare them well for post-compulsory school opportunities. Given that many students would achieve this standard prior to their completion of Year 10, the standards framework would also describe higher standards that students would be encouraged to pursue and which would enhance their opportunities for further study in the HSC or elsewhere.

For other subjects, mandatory or otherwise, the standards framework would provide the basis for schools and teachers to monitor and report student achievement and, if desired, to establish expected standards of achievements at the school level for these subjects as well.

An alternative course of action would be for the Board to establish an expected standard for all mandatory subjects. If students could establish they had met this standard for a particular subject they would not be required to study the subject further. If they had not met the standard, they would be required to undertake further study in the subject.

- Should students be credentialled for more than Stage 5 achievements? That is, rather than merely reporting on the standards achieved by a student in the mandatory study requirements, should the School Certificate report the standards achieved in subjects such as Languages, Music etc that the student may have last studied in Year 8?
- For this to occur, what moderation methods would be required? Would up-front moderation through the provision of outcomes, standards, work samples etc be sufficient?
- Should syllabuses be developed for subjects that are not currently available as Board developed courses? Should some existing courses be removed?

**Proposition 7:** The School Certificate should continue to be awarded to all students who have fulfilled mandatory study requirements.

No additional requirements should be added.

**Proposition 8:** Students should be credentialled for the School Certificate on the basis of their standards of achievement in all subjects undertaken in Years 7–10 mandatory and additional studies.

**Proposition 9:** Using the standards framework, the Board should nominate the standards that all students would be expected to achieve by the end of Year 10 in English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography and PDHPE.