

BOARD BULLETIN

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Computers in exams: the way of the future?

Eighty education professionals came together recently to explore the future use of computers in public examinations.

The Board of Studies hosted the one-day seminar which considered a wide range of issues from scanning, onscreen marking and online testing, to the potential for computer-based exams to replace pen-and-paper exams.

The General Manager of the Office of the Board of Studies, Dr John Bennett, said the proliferation of technologies could not be ignored when planning the future of external exams.

‘The Board has already made inroads into the area of e-assessment. For example, most students now undertake the School Certificate Computing Skills Test



online and there are several trials being done around scanning student responses and marking them online,’ Dr Bennett said.

‘Today’s students have never known a world without personal computers or the internet.

‘Now, we are looking at the possibility of using computers more widely in public examinations. It is unlikely that computers would be suitable for exams in all subjects, but we anticipate that in five years we will see computers used for some parts of some exams.

‘Of course, issues such as access to the technology, equity, security and other implications for students and schools need to be thoroughly explored first.’

The seminar on 13 March 2008 included presentations from experienced e-assessment practitioners from the Office of the Board of Studies, school systems, the tertiary sector and the business world.

Attendees included principals, teachers, school sector and union representatives, academics and Board officers. ■



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Exciting young minds about Science and Technology

The draft writing brief for the revised *Science and Technology K–6 Syllabus* has been released, signalling a more user-friendly structure and organisation of the syllabus.

Under the proposed structure, students will gain knowledge, understanding and skills in investigating scientifically, in designing and in producing.

They will also learn about:

- living things and physical phenomena
- built environments, products, information and communications
- the practice of science and technology in society.

The draft writing brief also demonstrates where links can be made to other parts of the primary curriculum such as numeracy and literacy.

Among other proposals are:

- revising the Rationale to explicitly emphasise the importance of engaging students' wonder and curiosity in the world around them in order to develop a lifelong interest in science and technology
- describing staged content incorporating the knowledge, understanding and skills essential to the learning area.

Consultations on the draft writing brief are being held around the state from 5 May to 5 June. See the Board's website at <http://k6.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/go/science-and-technology> for locations and dates.

Teachers can also provide feedback on the draft writing brief by completing the survey, also at that web address, by 6 June 2008.

Contact Nicholas Perkins on 9367 8180 or email nicholas.perkins@bos.nsw.edu.au for more information. ■

News in Brief

Awards for innovation

The Board has been nationally recognised for initiatives in the use of ICT with a Highly Commended award for the Assessment Resource Centre and a finalist certificate for the version of the online Computing Skills Test for vision-impaired students. The awards were presented by the Australian Government Information Management Office on 21 May 2008.

More Oz Lit

A plan to ensure every NSW student studies more Australian books, poems and plays will soon be open to comment by teachers and education groups.

Under the proposals, the Board has recommended changing the English K–6 syllabus to include substantial experience of home-grown literature in each stage of learning. Students in both Stage 4 and Stage 5 would be required to study at least two print texts of Australian literature from different forms including fiction, non-fiction, poetry and drama. The Board is also proposing the development of a new Australian literature module for Year 11 students studying the English Extension course.

Review of HSC exams

The Board is considering a number of improvements to HSC examinations and assessment to provide greater consistency in assessment in different subject areas and to make exam expectations clearer to students and teachers.

Among the proposals are:

- incorporating 10 minutes of reading and planning time in all exams to allow students to write plans before attempting their essays
- suggesting an appropriate range for the length of answers written in exams
- making the exam length and number of questions consistent between HSC courses – for example, a three-hour exam for every 2-unit course and a 1.5 hour exam for every 1-unit course
- providing revised guidelines to schools on the maximum number of school assessments per course to help manage student workload.

If adopted, the improvements will be implemented progressively in 2009 and 2010.

For more information about these items see the media releases at <http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/media-release> ■



Stage 6 Mathematics proposals unveiled

Significant changes to Stage 6 Mathematics, including a new practical HSC course, were unveiled with the release of the draft syllabuses on 5 May 2008.

Mathematics is the most popular elective Stage 6 subject in NSW with 88% of students who obtained the HSC in 2007 completing a Maths course at least to the end of Year 11 and 82% completing a Year 12 Maths course.

The changes aim to make the senior Mathematics courses more relevant to more students and give them deeper foundations for further study and training.

Among the changes are:

- more scope for students in the 2 Unit and Extension courses to use their mathematical knowledge and skills in real-life scenarios, such as making investment decisions and understanding environmental issues, and in a range of contexts relevant to contemporary professional practice, including examples from Mathematics, Science, Engineering, Technology, Business and Finance
- adding 'Statistics' to the 2 Unit course
- a new approach to General Mathematics where students complete a common course in Year 11 and then opt for one of two streams in Year 12 – Mathematics General 2 which is modelled largely on the current General Mathematics course, and Mathematics General 1, which is a new course designed to develop students' abilities in applying mathematical knowledge and skills to a broader range of areas of interest to them
- the introduction of two focus studies in the Year 11 Mathematics General course – 'Communication' which includes mathematical problems related to mobile phone and internet access plans and digital download and file storage; and 'Driving' which includes mathematical problems related to vehicle

purchase, running costs, blood alcohol limits and stopping distances.

The Minister for Education and Training, John Della Bosca, said the Mathematics Extension

syllabuses would maintain their rigorous standard while giving students more opportunities to use their knowledge and skills to solve problems related to engineering, finance and other fields.

'However, many students are looking for different skills and schools have identified a need for an additional course relevant to the needs of these students,' Mr Della Bosca said.

'Mathematics teachers and academics have worked with the Board of Studies following consultation to create a new practical Year 12 course – Mathematics General 1. This new course gives students knowledge and skills in a broad range of areas including household finance, personal resources and the human body.

'By making this course available, it is anticipated that even more students will take mathematics study through to the end of Year 12.

'Both General courses will allow students to develop their mathematical competence and provide a foundation for vocational pathways in the workforce or further education and training in areas such as the humanities, nursing and paramedical sciences,' he said.

Secondary Mathematics teachers around NSW are being consulted on the draft Mathematics Stage 6 syllabuses, which were published on the Board's website on 5 May 2008. Meetings with teachers are also being held in a range of locations around the state from 19 May to 27 June.

Copies of the draft syllabuses and surveys to provide feedback have been sent to all schools offering Years 11 and 12 and are also available on the Board's website. The deadline for comments on the drafts is 27 June 2008. ■

Tougher measures help prevent cheating in the HSC

A new 'standard' that summarises the Board of Studies' position on academic honesty has been sent to schools for distribution to all Year 11 and Year 12 students and their teachers.

The standard is a short statement on the importance of honesty in the Higher School Certificate assessment

process. It summarises the Board's position and existing rules about original work and acknowledging the assistance of others.

A copy of the media release and the standard are available on the Board's website at www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au ■

Honesty in HSC Assessment – the Standard

This standard sets out the Board of Studies NSW requirements concerning students submitting their own work in HSC assessment. Candidates for the Higher School Certificate, as well as their teachers and others who may guide them, are required to comply with the standard.

The honesty of students in completing assessment tasks, examinations and submitted works, and of teachers and others in guiding students, underpins the integrity of the Higher School Certificate. Throughout the assessment process, the highest level of honesty is required.

Each student's mark will be determined by the quality of the work produced by the student only. To demonstrate honesty, any component of a student's work that has been written, created or developed by others must be acknowledged in accordance with the Board's subject-specific documentation. Use or inclusion of material from other sources such as books, journals and electronic sources, including the internet, must be acknowledged. General teaching and learning do not require formal acknowledgement.

Dishonest behaviour carried out for the purpose of gaining unfair advantage in the assessment process constitutes malpractice, or cheating. Malpractice in any form, including plagiarism, is unacceptable. The Board of Studies NSW treats allegations of malpractice very seriously and detected malpractice will limit a student's marks and jeopardise their HSC. Should malpractice be suspected, students will be required to demonstrate that all unacknowledged work is entirely their own. Serious and deliberate acts of malpractice amount to corrupt conduct and, where appropriate, the Board of Studies NSW will report matters to the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

These requirements should be read in conjunction with Board syllabuses and policies in related areas such as malpractice and satisfactory completion of a course.

They include:

- *Rules and Procedures for Higher School Certificate Candidates*
- *Assessment Certification and Examination Manual*
- *HSC Assessments and Submitted Works – Advice to Students*
- *HSC Assessments and Submitted Works – Advice to Parents*
- *HSC Assessments and Submitted Works – Advice to Teachers*
- *HSC: All My Own Work*
- *HSC assessment in a standards-referenced framework – A Guide to Best Practice.*

These documents are publicly available on the Board's website at www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au ■



Languages matter – in NSW!

*Through learning languages,
we learn about culture.*

*Through learning about culture,
we learn respect for others.*

*Through learning respect for others,
we can hope for peace.*

Anon



Image from Dr Silink's presentation

The slogan *Languages matter!* is an apt reminder to us to celebrate and reflect on the value of languages education. By declaring 2008 the UN International Year of Languages, the United Nations has brought the importance and profile of languages into sharp focus, thereby 'recognising that genuine multilingualism promotes unity in diversity and international understanding' (UN Resolution GA/10592).

Board of Studies Languages Inspector Dr Margaret Silink said Australia was blessed with a wealth of cultural and linguistic diversity.

'It is one of the most successful multicultural countries in the world,' Dr Silink said.

'According to census data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, more than 200 languages from around the world are spoken in our homes, including more than 60 Indigenous languages.'

Dr Silink said it was imperative that the study of languages in our schools be encouraged and supported.

'The Board's commitment to quality Languages education is evident through its provision of courses in a wide range of languages,' she said.

'With 76 courses in 35 languages, it is one of the most comprehensive languages programs anywhere in the world.'

Seventeen of these are K–10 syllabuses, including the first NSW *K–10 Aboriginal Languages Syllabus*. The remaining 59 are Stage 6 courses in 34 languages across four differentiated levels.

The Board's commitment to languages recognises the positive contribution that languages learning makes to social integration through better communication, tolerance and understanding, and through enriching the community intellectually, socially and culturally.

According to empirical research from around the world, languages learning benefits cognitive development and enhances literacy skills in one's own language as well as subsequent languages.

'Our future lies in the power of Languages education to make a positive difference, to create a peaceful and harmonious world, opening our students' minds to be receptive, tolerant and understanding,' Dr Silink said.

'The study of languages will stand our students and indeed Australia in good stead to face the challenges of the twenty-first century.'

This article is based on a presentation Dr Silink gave to the NSW Modern Language Teachers Association's 2008 Annual Conference. ■

ARC uploads

New work samples and activities supporting Kindergarten teachers in English and Mathematics have been posted on the Board's Assessment Resource Centre (ARC) website.

The new samples, which have been provided by schools, will help Kindergarten teachers to compile their half-yearly reports.

The ARC also has new work samples for Stage 2 and Stage 3 Creative Arts and Stage 3 PDHPE as well as activities for Stage 2 English and Creative Arts and Stage 3 English and Mathematics.

There has also been an upload of materials for Stage 5,

including work samples in Arabic, Australian History, Drama and Dance and activities in Australian History, Dance, Drama, Graphics Technology, Arabic, French, German, Chinese, Japanese, Music and Science.

Another new feature of the ARC is enhanced navigation for teachers viewing work samples. Once a work sample has been opened the teacher can easily view other samples in the same subject from different stages.

There are now 1752 work samples on the ARC of which 1354 are graded samples.

The ARC is located at <http://arc.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au> ■

2008 HSC timetable

This year's HSC timetable is now available on the Board's website at www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au

The 2008 HSC written exams begin with Business Studies on Thursday 16 October and end with Tourism (VET) and some languages on Thursday 13 November.

Other features of the 2008 HSC timetable:

- Students will sit for a total of 110 HSC exams over 19 days in October and November.
- The only two mandatory exams, for English, are scheduled for Friday 17 October and Monday 20 October.
- The two Mathematics courses with the largest enrolments will be examined on Thursday 23 October (General Mathematics) and Monday 27 October (Mathematics)
- The School Certificate tests will be held from 10 to 14 November. ■

Last chance to catch DesignTECH '07

The DesignTECH exhibition will wrap up for another year on Friday 20 June 2008.

There is still time to catch the works of some of the state's best young HSC Design and Technology students at:

- **TAMWORTH**
Foyer Gallery, Ray Walsh House
437 Peel Street, Tamworth
from 23 May to 4 June 2008
- **MULLUMBIMBY**
Shearwater Steiner School,
349 Left Bank Road, Mullumbimby
from 6 to 20 June 2008



designTECH



DesignTECH catalogues are on sale through eBOS Shop Online on www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au

Vocational Education and Training Update

Industry Curriculum Frameworks

- *Automotive* (approved September 2007) – delivery has commenced for the first time this year. A support document, resource list and specimen HSC examination paper will be developed and released during 2008. The first HSC examination will take place in 2009.
- *Business Services* (approved November 2001) – due to the release of a new Training Package (BSB07) this Framework has been undergoing a major review this year. The consultation period for the draft revised Framework was 5 May – 30 May 2008. Further details are available on the Vocational Education page on the Board's website www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/voc_ed
- *Construction* (approved September 2004) – the BCG03 Training Package is currently under review. Interested parties can follow the progress of this review on the Construction and Property Services Industry Skills Councils website www.cpsisc.com.au. It is anticipated that this Framework will be revised in 2009 as a result of a new Training Package.
- *Electrotechnology* (approved September 2007) – delivery has commenced for the first time this year. Once the UEE07 Training Package is available, syllabus documents will be aligned to this latest version. A support document, resource list and specimen HSC examination paper will then be developed and released. The first HSC examination will occur in 2009.
- *Entertainment Industry* (approved August 2004) – it is anticipated that an update of this Framework will occur in 2008 as a result of the release of version 3 of the CUE03 Training Package. Further details will be available on the Vocational Education page on the Board's website www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/voc_ed
- *Hospitality* (approved November 2002) – due to the release of a new Training Package (SIT07) this Framework is undergoing a major review this year. The consultation period for the draft revised Framework is 2 June – 4 July 2008. Further details will be available on the Vocational Education page on the Board's website www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/voc_ed
- *Information Technology* (approved April 2006) – a support document and resource list is available on the Board's website to aid the initial implementation of courses within this Framework. A specimen HSC examination paper is also available and the first HSC examination based on the 240-hour course from this Framework will take place this year.
- *Metal and Engineering* (approved June 2006) – a support document and resource list is available on the Board's website to aid the initial implementation of courses within this Framework. The first HSC examination based on the 240-hour courses ('regular' or school-based apprenticeship) from this Framework will take place this year.
- *Primary Industries* (approved October 2003) – the RTD02, RTE03 and RTF03 Training Packages are currently under review. Interested parties can follow the progress of this review on the Agri-Food Industry Skills Council website www.agrifoodskills.net.au. It is anticipated that this Framework will be revised in 2009 as a result of a new Training Package.
- *Retail* (approved June 1999, updated November 2002) – this Framework has been replaced by the Retail Services Curriculum Framework. Only students in Year 12, 2008 should be undertaking courses from this Framework. The final HSC examination based on this Framework is 2008.
- *Retail Services* (approved October 2007) – delivery has commenced for the first time this year. A support document and resource list is available on the Board's website to aid the initial implementation of courses within this Framework. A specimen HSC examination paper will be developed and released during 2008. The first HSC examination will take place in 2009.
- *Tourism* (approved November 2002) – due to the release of a new Training Package (SIT07) this Framework is undergoing a major review this year. The consultation period for the draft revised Framework is 2 June – 27 June 2008. Further details will be available on the Vocational Education page on the Board's website www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/voc_ed ■

Student achievements in Aboriginal Studies recognised

Two outstanding students in the 2007 HSC Aboriginal Studies course have been recognised with special awards by the Board of Studies and the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG).

Tilala Milroy, who completed Year 12 at St Scholastica's College, received the Board of Studies President's Award for the top Aboriginal student in Aboriginal Studies. Jennifer Cousemacker, of Elderslie High School, represented at the ceremony by her sister, Elizabeth, received the AECG President's Award for the top non-Aboriginal student in the course.

The awards, including a cheque for \$350, a certificate and a trophy, were presented by the General Manager of the Office of the Board of Studies, Dr John Bennett, and the President of the AECG, Carlo Svagelli, during a dinner at the AECG Annual Conference on 8 March 2008.



The Aboriginal Studies course aims to provide students with a greater understanding of historical and contemporary Aboriginal society and culture. ■

Important Dates

23 June Closing date for schools to enter the mandatory Computing Skills Test in either online or pen and paper versions.

7 July–18 July TERM 2 VACATION

HSC

18 July Deadline for applications for Board Endorsed VET courses commencing in 2009 to reach the system authority or, for independent schools, the Board of Studies.

21 July TERM 3 BEGINS

4 August Deadline for completing and handing in HSC Society and Culture PIPs

9 August HSC Language oral examinations begin

11 August HSC Dance performance exams begin
Schools online opens for assessment and VET exam estimate collection

18 August Deadline for completing and handing in Textiles and Design Projects
Deadline for completing and handing in Industrial Technology Major Works

22 August Deadline for completing and handing in English Extension 2 Major Works

25 August HSC Drama performance exams commence
Deadline for completing and handing in Drama Individual Projects

1 September Deadline for completing and handing in Visual Arts Bodies of Work

Deadline for completing and handing in Design and Technology Projects

5 September Latest date for principals to notify students of intention to issue an 'N' determination

8 September HSC Music performance exams commence
Deadline for Music Compositions and Musicology essays

Deadline for Agriculture Research Projects

9 September Latest date for student appeals against 'N' determinations to be lodged with the principal

19 September Final date for submission of school assessments and VET exam estimates.

Final date for amendments to student entries

Latest date for principals to submit 'N' determination appeal forms for Board review if requested

26 September TERM 3 ENDS

The *Board Bulletin* is a regular publication by the Board of Studies NSW. Principals are requested to circulate it among teachers and members of the School Council, P & C and parents. Schools may only photocopy this publication for use by teachers, students and parents. Contributions or suggestions for articles are welcome.

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