

The development and approval of syllabuses for Board subjects

R P Dudley
D A Abbey

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Information regarding this publication may be obtained from the Assistant Director (Curriculum), telephone (07) 3864 0299.

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Floor 7, 295 Ann Street, Brisbane
PO Box 307, Spring Hill Qld 4004
Telephone: (07) 3864 0299
Facsimile: (07) 3221 2553

IBSN 0 7242 3896 4

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1. OVERVIEW

A syllabus is a document that supplies a curriculum framework to a school for its preparation of a work program for a Board subject.

Each Board syllabus is reviewed by the relevant subject advisory committee every six years. For syllabuses with embedded vocational and training components a review occurs every four years. The review recommends one of the following options regarding the syllabus:

- no change needed
- minor changes needing no trialling-piloting (teachers will be able to implement the syllabus with some professional development)
- major changes needing combined trialling-piloting (teachers will probably require professional development to implement the syllabus)
- a new syllabus to be developed needing trialling and piloting.

An option is determined by the nature of the revision proposed by a subject advisory committee. A syllabus revision is either a minor revision or a major revision.

Minor revision

A minor revision of a syllabus for a Board subject can be implemented by most teachers of the subject with some support from the Office of the Board. Consequently, a minor revision is implemented in all schools at the same time.

The Office of the Board trains district review panels in the year prior to the syllabus being implemented and organises assessment and moderation meetings in the first and second years of implementation for district panellists. The meetings may be attended by teachers who are not panellists.

In the year prior to the syllabus being implemented the Office of the Board organises syllabus workshops in all districts.

Major revision

A major revision of a syllabus requires most teachers to do more than one of the following:

- gain knowledge of new subject matter
- acquire new strategies and skills to teach the subject
- develop an understanding of new criteria and standards for assessing student achievement
- assess student achievement using new techniques.

Consequently, a major revision is trialled-piloted with approved volunteer schools and, when revised, phased in over a three-year period with support from the Office of the Board.

How to propose a change

Subject advisory committees, schools, school systems, authorities and other institutions may propose a new syllabus or the revision of a syllabus to the Director of the Board. A proposal states the rationale for the change. If the proposal is for a new syllabus, it also outlines the intended scope of the subject matter. If the proposal originates from outside the Board's committee structure, the relevant subject advisory committees are asked to comment on it. In any case, such proposals are evaluated for the Board by the Curriculum Committee.

(Criteria for Board subjects are listed in appendix 2, pages 33–34.)

How to develop a proposed syllabus

If a proposal for a major revision or a new syllabus is accepted by the Board, the originators are asked to develop the syllabus. This may be done in conjunction with a subject advisory committee, or the task may be taken over by a subject advisory committee if the originators wish this to happen. The proposed syllabus has to conform to the Board's syllabus framework (appendix 1, pages 29–32) and the educational criteria (appendix 2, page 33). The syllabus developers submit evidence that comments from a wide range of sources (teachers, tertiary institutions, professional associations, parent and community groups, business organisations, industry, etc.) have been taken into account.

New syllabuses

If the Board accepts a proposed new syllabus as being potentially viable, it is advertised for trialling.

What happens at the pre-trial stage?

If at least one school, but fewer than six schools wish to participate in the trial at the time of advertising, the syllabus is held in a 'pre-trial' stage. While no formal evaluation of the syllabus occurs during this stage, school representatives meet with the chair of the state review panel to discuss standards of student achievement. Schools wishing to implement a syllabus held in the pre-trial stage contact the Office of the Board and request permission to do so.

What happens at the trial stage?

When at least six schools have undertaken the contractual arrangements required by the Board, these schools commence the trialling of the syllabus in the following year. The major purposes of trialling are to assist the subject advisory committee to develop a syllabus that communicates its educational proposals in such a way that teachers can prepare effective work programs and to develop appropriate standards of student achievement in the subject with the state review panel.

Evaluator(s) and an evaluation committee are appointed for the trial period. They provide impartial feedback to the subject advisory committee regarding the effectiveness of the trial syllabus and make recommendations for improving it.

If the evaluation of the trial discloses substantial faults with the syllabus, the revised syllabus is re-trialled. If minor alterations only are required, the revised syllabus is advertised for piloting.

What happens at the pre-pilot stage?

If fewer than twelve schools wish to participate in the pilot the syllabus is held in a pre-pilot stage. The involvement of schools during this stage is similar to that outlined under the pre-trial heading. What happens at the pilot stage?

Under normal conditions the trial schools proceed to implement the syllabus in the pilot stage. Additional schools are selected to make a complement of 15 to 25 schools for the pilot. When these schools have undertaken the required contractual arrangement with the Board, all of the schools commence the piloting of the syllabus in the following year. The main purposes of piloting are to discover what the needs of teachers are in their implementation of the syllabus and to continue the development and dissemination of the standards of student achievement with the state review panel and district review panels. If the pilot evaluation reports that teachers can implement the pilot syllabus with minor alterations only and with normally acceptable professional development and resource requirements, the revised syllabus is made available for all schools to use.

Major revisions of existing syllabuses

What happens at the combined trial-pilot stage?

If the Board accepts a proposed major revision of an existing syllabus as being potentially viable, it advertises the syllabus for combined trialling-piloting. From 15 to 25 schools inclusive are needed to implement the syllabus in a trial-pilot.

The purposes of the trial-pilot are:

- to assist the subject advisory committee to develop a syllabus that communicates its educational proposals in such a way that teachers can prepare effective work programs with confidence and efficiency
- to discover what the needs of teachers are in their implementation of the syllabus
- to develop appropriate standards of student achievement with the state review panel.

If the evaluation discloses substantial faults with the syllabus, the rewritten syllabus is put to the trial-pilot procedure again. If the evaluation reports that teachers can implement the trial-pilot syllabus with minor alterations only and with normally acceptable professional development and resource requirements, the revised syllabus is made available to all schools for general implementation.

What happens during the general implementation stage?

The old syllabus generally remains a Board syllabus for three years after the approval of the revised syllabus for general implementation.

How long does it take?

The normal period of a trial, pilot or trial-pilot evaluation is two years. However, this period may be shorter or longer depending on the decisions made about the syllabus.

For each syllabus under development, an annual decision is made in August as to whether to maintain, to speed up, or to slow down its current rate of progress. Such a decision, formally taken by the Board, is based on and accompanied by explicitly stated and specific reasons. An examination of the extent to which events turned out as expected by the Board becomes an additional task for the evaluation.

What support is available during this time?

The Board organises conferences for teachers throughout trial, pilot, and trial-pilot exercises. The Board also contributes to the support of new and revised syllabuses throughout the first three years of general implementation at least.

Figure 1. Sequence of the development of Board syllabuses

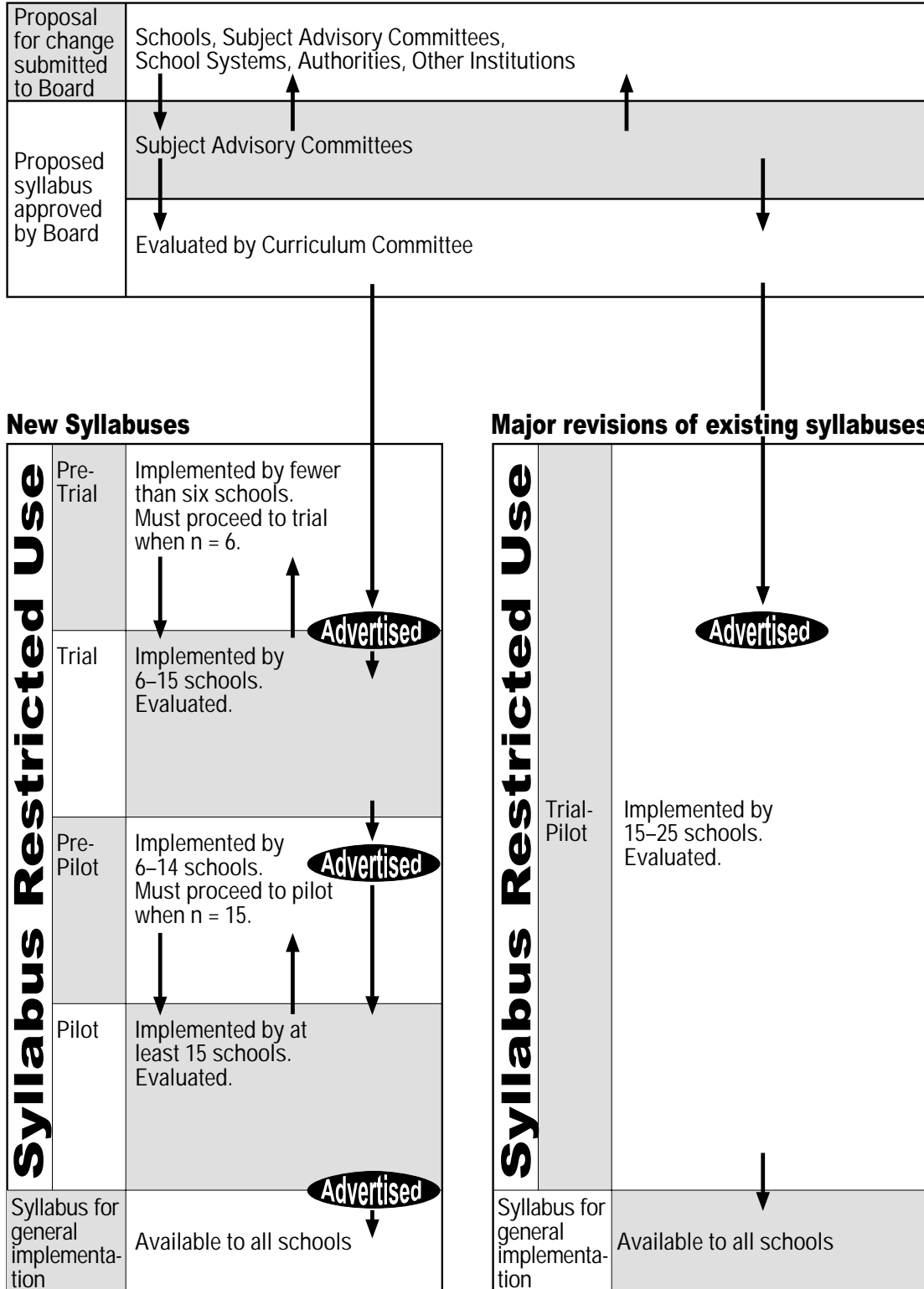


Figure 2. Interrelationships among the Board’s functions during trialling of a syllabus

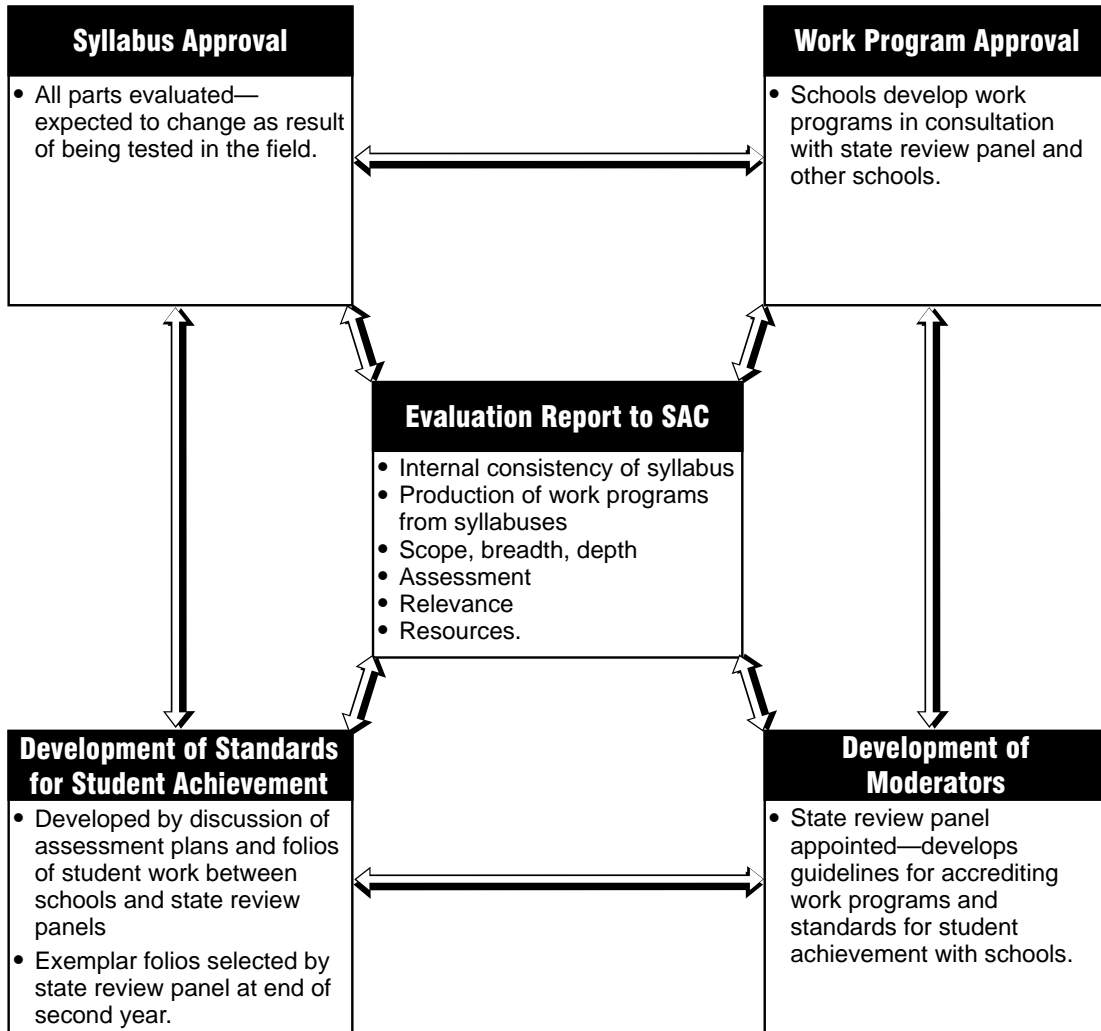
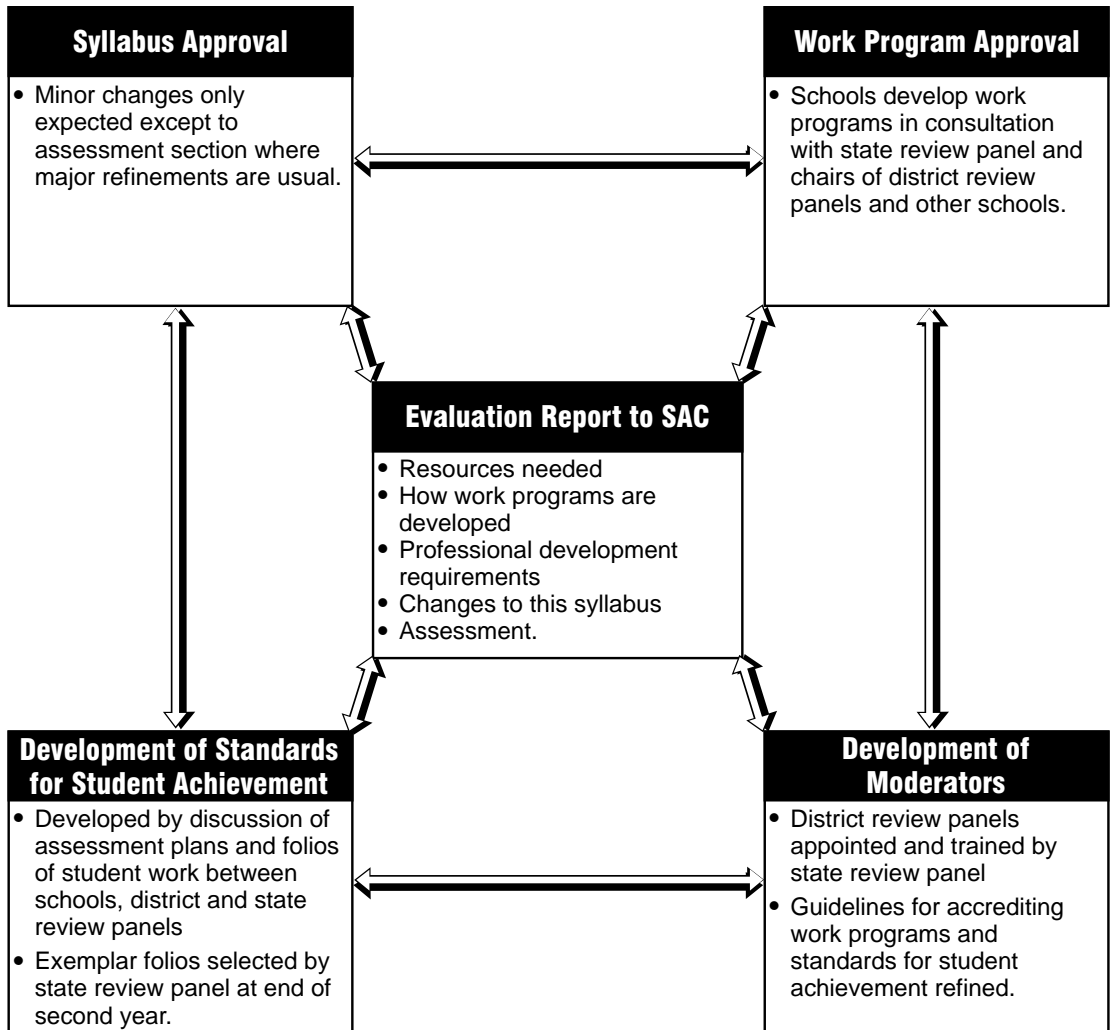


Figure 3. Interrelationships among the Board's functions during piloting of a syllabus



2. THE ROLE OF SCHOOLS

A school or a group of schools may propose a change in the syllabus offerings of the Board. This proposal includes a carefully considered, clear and comprehensive rationale for the introduction of the change. A proposal for a new syllabus also includes a statement of the intended scope of the subject matter.

If the Board accepts the proposal for change from a school (or a group of schools), the school(s) are asked to develop a proposed syllabus in consultation with the appropriate subject advisory committee. The school(s) may prefer that the subject advisory committee develop the syllabus.

What happens to a new syllabus?

A proposed new syllabus that is accepted as being potentially viable is advertised for trialling to all schools. A principal who wishes to apply to participate in the trial sends a completed Form A4 (see appendix 12) to the Director of the Board.

If fewer than six schools are prepared at the time of advertising to implement the syllabus, it will be designated as being in pre-trial stage. During this stage the school(s) in which the syllabus originated as well as other approved schools can implement it.

When six or more schools are prepared to abide by the conditions required by the Board, the syllabus is trialled.

Schools supply the following:

- the number of classes, teachers and students involved
- the qualifications and experience of the teachers involved
- details of resources available to assist in the implementation of the syllabus
- a statement by the principal in support of the school's involvement.

Schools make the following undertakings during the trial:

- to keep records and observations of the trial program
- to respond to surveys and questionnaires concerning the syllabus
- to cooperate in supplying relevant information to personnel who visit the school (after obtaining a mutually acceptable date)
- to attend all relevant conferences, workshops and meetings
- to assist in all possible ways in making the trial program an effective procedure for evaluating the syllabus
- to supply all accreditation and certification materials as and when required by the state review panel
- to maintain registration requirements for vocational education and training (where appropriate).

Table 1 (page 9) summarises the meetings to which schools are required to send a representative during the trial period and the months in which these, and submissions of accreditation, monitoring and verification materials, are likely to occur.

The usual period of trialling is two years. In the year after the trial, the approved schools continue to implement the trial syllabus. In the second semester of this year new pilot schools prepare pilot programs while the trial schools revise their trial work programs in accordance with the pilot syllabus.

Pilot schools give the same undertakings as trial schools in their role in the development of a syllabus. The period of piloting may be varied. (See *How long does it take?* page 4).

Table 2 (page 9) outlines the meetings to which schools are required to send a representative during the pilot period and months in which these, and submissions for accreditation, monitoring and verification materials, are likely to occur.

What happens to a major revision of an existing syllabus?

A proposed major revision of an existing syllabus that is accepted as being potentially viable is advertised for combined trial-pilot to all schools.

A principal who wishes to apply to participate in the trial-pilot sends a completed Form A4 to the Director of the Board.

Trial-pilot schools make the same undertakings as trial schools in their role in the development of a syllabus.

Table 1. Probable dates for teacher conferences and submissions in the trial period

Month	Year prior to trial	First year of pilot	Second year of pilot
March		Teacher conference (develop work programs)	Teacher conference (feedback from monitoring and preparation for verification)
June	Forms A4 submitted	Work programs submitted	
September	Course outlines submitted (2-3 pages)		
October		Teacher conference (finalise outstanding work programs, prepare for monitoring)	Year 12 (verification) folios submitted
November	Teacher conference (prepare work programs from course outlines) Application for registration as a registered training organisation submitted (if applicable)		Teacher conference (feedback from verification, refining the syllabus)
December		Year 11 monitoring materials submitted	Year 11 monitoring materials submitted

Table 2. Probable dates for teacher conferences and submissions in the pilot period

Month	Year prior to pilot	First year of pilot	Second year of pilot
March		Teacher conference (develop work programs)	Teacher conference (feedback from monitoring and preparation for verification)
June	Forms A4 submitted	Work programs submitted	
September	Course outlines submitted (2-3 pages)		
October	Year 12 verification folios submitted (trial schools)	Teacher conference (finalise outstanding work programs, prepare for monitoring)	Year 12 (verification) folios submitted
November	Teacher conference (prepare work programs from course outlines) Application for registration as a registered training organisation submitted (if applicable)		Teacher conference (feedback from verification, refining the syllabus)
December	Year 11 monitoring materials (trial schools) submitted	Year 11 monitoring materials submitted	Year 11 monitoring materials submitted

3. THE ROLE OF EVALUATORS

What happens during the trial stage?

When the Board has approved a new syllabus for trialling, a memorandum is sent to all Queensland tertiary and secondary institutions asking for applications to evaluate the trial of the syllabus. The successful applicant(s) liaise(s) closely with the appropriate curriculum officer and make(s) use of Board personnel and facilities throughout the evaluation exercise.

The major purpose of evaluating the trial is to assist the subject advisory committee to develop a syllabus that communicates its educational proposals in such a way that teachers can prepare effective work programs with confidence and efficiency.

While the syllabus sets parameters for the preparation of work programs, it also should enable teachers in schools to translate its requirements into effective work programs that take into account any particular school contexts.

The trial evaluation concentrates on the following aspects:

- internal consistency of the components of the syllabus
- the degree to which the syllabus communicates its intentions to teachers
- suitability of the breadth and depth of the syllabus requirements
- suitability of the sequencing of subject matter required by the syllabus (if any)
- relevance of the subject to the students
- appropriateness of the assessment requirements of the syllabus
- the resources found to be useful in trial schools
- the development of appropriate standards for student achievement.

Sources of information for the above activities include: the trial syllabus, work programs, student folios, Assistant Director (Curriculum), Assistant Director (Moderation), chair of the state review panel, the review officer, the curriculum officer, school administrators, teachers, students and parents. In the case of syllabuses with vocational education components, the Assistant Director (Vocational Education and Training) and the project officer are also sources of information.

Rapport with teachers can be established at the conferences shown in table 1 (page 9).

The evaluator(s) usually work(s) with an evaluation committee appointed by the Board. The normal composition is: the evaluator(s), two members of the subject advisory committee or sub-committee, the chair of the state review panel, two teachers from the trial schools, and others appointed by the Board because of their particular interest or skills. The committee may be used as: a group for reaction to questionnaires, sources of information, and links with the various groups involved with the development of the syllabus.

In August of each year of a trial, the Board makes a decision as to whether to maintain, to speed up or to slow down the current rate of progress of the trial. The Board will have stated auditable reasons for the proposed length of the trial. An

examination of the extent to which events turned out as expected by the Board becomes an additional task for the evaluation. This entails the submission of an interim written report **by the end of June of each year of the trial**. Reports should include a list of trial schools, numbers of classes, students and teachers, the background and experience of teachers with advice or draft recommendations (second interim) as appropriate. Each report is presented to both the relevant subject advisory committee and the Curriculum Committee in July of each year of the trial.

A progress report with data and/or findings subsequent to the second interim report is discussed with the subject advisory committee in **November of the final year of the trial**. The progress report signals the final evaluation report by including any further recommendations about the revision of the syllabus since the second interim report. This allows the relevant subcommittee or working party of the subject advisory committee to complete the redraft of the syllabus for the March meeting of the subject advisory committee in the following year.

The following format is used in presenting the final report to the relevant subject advisory committee in **February of the year following the trial**.

What information goes on the front cover?

The front cover includes the following information:

- title of the syllabus
- name of the subject advisory committee to which the evaluation report is submitted
- names(s) of the evaluator(s)
- period covered by the report
- date report is submitted.

What information does the abstract contain?

The abstract gives a brief summary of the evaluation report. It states why the evaluation was conducted and lists major conclusions and recommendations.

What are the purposes of the evaluation?

This section outlines the assignment the evaluators accepted.

How did the syllabus develop?

This section describes briefly the history of the development of the syllabus to the time of the study.

This information may be obtained from the subject advisory committee and the Assistant Director (Curriculum).

The following information is included:

- the place of origin of the syllabus
- a list of the schools involved in the trial
- the year level(s) at which the syllabus was implemented in each school
- the number of classes involved in each school

- the number of students involved in each class
- the number of teachers involved in each school
- teachers' experience and professional preparation.

What does the study consist of?

This section describes the methodology employed in the evaluation. Samples of all instruments used are included in the test or in an appendix. It also delineates when each instrument was administered.

Appropriate methods include questionnaires, interviews, observation, logs, perusal of student work.

How are the results presented?

This section includes the presentation of all the information gathered in the study. This may be in tabular, graphical, audiovisual or written form. Results of questionnaires may be summarised on a copy of the questionnaire. The results are then discussed with particular reference to the *purposes of the evaluation*.

On what information are conclusions and recommendations based?

In the conclusions and recommendations, deficiencies in the syllabus or in the ability of teachers to implement it are identified and documented.

Conclusions are drawn regarding the viability of the syllabus and associated problems. These include the extent to which events have matched the stated expectations of the Board.

Recommendations in the trial evaluation report are framed in one of the following two ways:

It is recommended that the syllabus proceed to the pilot stage.

Or

It is not recommended that the syllabus proceed to the pilot stage at this time.

In either case, specific statements are made regarding modifications that need to be made to the syllabus. A list of resources found to be useful by the trial schools is also compiled. If possible, recommendations regarding the pilot evaluation are made.

The evaluator(s) discuss(es) the report with the evaluation committee, the subject advisory committee and the Curriculum Committee.

What happens during the pilot stage?

When a pilot syllabus has been approved by the Board, applications for the evaluation are called in a manner similar to that for the trial. Applicants to evaluate the pilot of a syllabus are strongly advised to examine the trial evaluation report before submitting their proposals.

The main purpose of piloting is to disclose the needs of teachers in order to optimise their implementation of the syllabus. The pilot evaluation should therefore concentrate on the following aspects:

- an examination of the work programs from all pilot schools with particular note being taken of the teacher and material resources recorded as being available and used in the schools
- an examination of how schools go about developing work programs
- an evaluation of the actual implementation of the syllabus via the work programs devised in the various school contexts to determine what source materials, support services, professional development programs, etc. are needed to ensure effective teaching, learning and assessment in the subject
- clarification of appropriate standards for student achievement.

Nevertheless, any information gathered that can lead to the improvement of the syllabus should be presented. Sources of information and the format of the report are similar to those outlined for the trial evaluation with the addition of district review panel chairs as a source of information.

The evaluator(s) usually work(s) with an evaluation committee, appointed by the Board, whose composition is similar to that stated previously for the trial evaluation.

The evaluator(s) submit(s) written interim reports by **the end of June of each year of the pilot**, a progress report signalling the final report in **November of the second year of the pilot**, and the final report in **February of the year following the pilot**.

Conclusions show if teachers in the pilot schools can:

- translate the syllabus into effective work programs
- provide worthwhile learning experiences for students within the variety of educational contexts that existed in the pilot schools
- make valid and reliable assessments of student achievement in accordance with the requirements of the pilot syllabus. They should also state the extent to which events have matched the stated expectations of the Board.

Recommendations show the following:

- the procedures a school should adopt to enhance its translation of the syllabus into an effective work program
- resources needed to implement the subject effectively in a school
- the focus and type of professional development programs that could be initiated by the Board in the first three years of the general implementation of the syllabus.

Recommendations regarding the future of the syllabus are framed in one of the following two ways:

It is recommended that the syllabus proceed to general implementation.

Or

It is not recommended that the syllabus proceed to general implementation at this time.

In the latter case, suggestions are made regarding what appropriate action might be taken by the Board.

What happens during the trial-pilot evaluation?

When a major revision of an existing syllabus has been approved by the Board, a memorandum is sent to all Queensland secondary and tertiary institutions asking for applications to evaluate the trial-pilot of the syllabus.

The purposes of the trial-pilot evaluation are a combination of those of the trial and pilot. The evaluator(s) is (are) therefore expected to incorporate all of the aspects outlined on pages 11–15 in the exercise and in the trial-pilot evaluation reports.

The evaluator(s) usually work(s) with a committee whose composition, duties and responsibilities are similar to those outlined previously.

4. THE ROLE OF SUBJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEES

What functions does a subject advisory committee carry out?

The functions of a subject advisory committee are:

- to make recommendations to the Board concerning the broad framework of the syllabus or syllabuses in the subject or the group of subjects for which the committee is appointed
- where such matter is referred to the subject advisory committee by the Board, to make recommendations to the Board with respect to the matter of syllabuses for those subjects developed by schools, school systems, authorities, other institutions or the Board itself which are designated, or are to be designated, Board or Board-registered subjects on the Senior Certificate
- to make recommendations to the Board on such other matters as the Board refers to the committee.

A subject advisory committee has the required powers and authorities for the proper discharge of any of its functions.

Subject advisory committees therefore have the prime responsibility for advising the Board when changes are necessary to syllabuses. Subject advisory committees are also responsible for the periodic review of syllabuses. All Board syllabuses are revised every six years (see appendix 9) except those with embedded vocational education and training components which are revised every four years.

A proposal and timeline for either a minor revision or a major revision is presented to the Curriculum Committee at its **October meeting two years prior** to the final year of writing (Year 5) as designated in the following timeline for the revision of syllabuses (refer table 3).

The periodic review is conducted in such a manner that the following is disclosed:

- the changes needed to the syllabus which could be:
 - minor changes needing no trialling-piloting
 - major changes needing combined trialling-piloting
 - a new syllabus to be developed needing trialling and piloting
- professional development needs of teachers
- resource needs.

Table 3: Cycle of the revision of syllabuses

Calendar year					
year 2	year 3	year 4	year 5	year 6	year 1
<p>Syllabuses due for revision are identified (see appendix 9)</p> <p>SAC starts for each syllabus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • literature review • analysis of overseas and interstate syllabuses. <p>Subcommittees of SAC commence regular meetings for the writing of the revised syllabus.</p>	<p>Survey of schools, tertiary institutions, industry and business, subject associations and other interested bodies</p> <p>(Surveys to schools no later than Term 2.)</p> <p>Surveys collated and analysed for discussion by SAC.</p> <p>Proposed plan of action for minor revision — <i>or</i> proposal for major revision — presented by SAC at October meeting of Curriculum Committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabuses approved for minor revision proceed on this timeline. • Syllabuses approved for a major revision proceed on timeline approved by the Board (refer to trial-pilot process). 	<p>Syllabus being written by subcommittee and critiqued by SAC.</p> <p>Drafts of syllabus to schools for comment in Term 4</p> <p>Comments from schools collated and analysed for discussion by SAC in February year 5</p>	<p>SAC discusses schools' comments in February.</p> <p>SAC discusses full draft at March meeting.</p> <p>Subject workshops run in semester one.</p> <p>State Review Panel discusses full draft at May conference.</p> <p>SAC discusses the final draft at its July meeting.</p> <p>Presentation of syllabuses at August meeting of Curriculum Committee.</p> <p>Approval of syllabuses at September meeting of the Board.</p> <p>Syllabuses edited and covers printed.</p>	<p>Syllabuses printed and disks prepared in January – February.</p> <p>Syllabuses, disks and subject guides mailed to schools in March.</p> <p>Workshops in all syllabuses for teachers in Semester 2.</p>	<p>General implementation with Year 11 students for first time.</p> <p>Work programs submitted by end of Semester 1.</p> <p>Year 1 of the syllabus accreditation cycle commences.</p>
<p>Annual decisions regarding latest National Training Packages are made by Board in February.</p> <p>Changes are incorporated into a draft of a syllabus with VET for implementation in year 4</p>	<p>Annual decisions regarding latest National Training Packages are made by Board in February.</p> <p>Necessary changes to a syllabus for implementation in year 4 are made and sent to the Curriculum Committee for its June meeting.</p>	<p>Annual decisions regarding latest National Training Packages are made by Board in February.</p> <p>Changes are incorporated into a draft of a syllabus with VET for implementation in year 1</p>	<p>Annual decisions regarding latest National Training Packages are made by Board in February.</p> <p>Changes are incorporated into the draft of a syllabus with VET for implementation in year 1.</p>	<p>Annual decisions regarding latest National Training Packages are made by Board in February.</p> <p>Changes are incorporated into a draft of the syllabus for implementation in year 4.</p>	<p>Annual decisions regarding latest National Training Packages are made by Board in February.</p> <p>Changes are incorporated into a draft of a syllabus for implementation in year 4.</p>

The information for the syllabus revision, be it major or minor, is gathered from the following sources and a report compiled.

- a representative sample of schools, (all schools should be sampled in an equitable manner)
- tertiary institutions
- professional associations
- parent and community groups

- business organisations
- industry
- literature review
- syllabuses in other Australian states/territories and other countries
- other interested bodies and individuals.

The report is presented to the Curriculum Committee of the Board in October of the third year of revision of the syllabus (see timeline). The Curriculum Committee recommends to the Board that the syllabus undergo either a major or minor revision.

What happens during a minor revision?

A substantial draft of a minor revision is discussed no later than the **August meeting of the subject advisory committee** in the year prior to the final year of revision (Year 4 as per timeline). The draft is reworked by the subcommittee before being circulated for comment to schools in Term 4 of Year 4. A final draft of a minor revision, adjusted in accordance with the subject advisory committee's requirements and the comments from schools, is discussed no later than the **March meeting of the subject advisory committee in the final year of revision** (Year 5 as per timeline). If necessary, the draft is reworked by the subcommittee before being circulated for comment to review panellists at their May conferences.

The syllabus, adjusted in accordance with the subject advisory committee's requirements and comments from review panellists, is discussed again at the July meeting of the subject advisory committee. If changes are still needed, these are made. The syllabus is forwarded to the **Curriculum Committee for its August meeting** (Year 5 as per timeline).

Major revision

A subject advisory committee may make a proposal for a major revision to the Board. The proposal is accompanied by a carefully considered, clear and comprehensive rationale supported by information gathered, as listed previously, and a timeline for developing the syllabus.

A proposal for major revision should be considered at the time the periodic review of a syllabus is due in accordance with the timeline for the revision of syllabuses (see Year 3 of timeline).

If approval is given by the Board, the syllabus proposed for trial-pilot is forwarded to the **Curriculum Committee no later than its April meeting** in the year preceding the first year of the trial-pilot.

What happens to a new syllabus?

A proposal for a new syllabus is accompanied by a carefully considered, clear and comprehensive rationale supported by information gathered as stated previously. The proposal also contains an outline of the intended scope of the subject matter. If the Board accepts the proposal, the subject advisory committee is asked to submit a syllabus that conforms to the framework outlined in appendix 1, page 29.

A proposal for a new syllabus may originate with schools, school systems, authorities, or other institutions. The relevant subject advisory committees are asked

to comment on such a proposal. If the Board accepts the proposal, the proposers are asked to develop a syllabus in consultation with a subject advisory committee or to request a subject advisory committee to develop the syllabus.

A subject advisory committee forwards the proposed new syllabus to the **Curriculum Committee no later than its April meeting in the year preceding the first year of the intended trial.**

The timing of the submission to the Curriculum Committee is necessary to allow adequate time for the following to occur:

- advertising and receiving applications from schools
- schools to include the subject in their prospectuses
- schools to prepare outlines of work programs
- advertising and receiving applications from evaluators.

When proposing syllabuses for new Board subjects, subject advisory committees also submit a timeline for the development of the syllabus to the trial stage.

What happens during trialling?

Throughout the trialling of a new syllabus, the subject advisory committee (or subcommittee) members on the evaluation committee keep the subject advisory committee informed of the activities and tentative findings of the evaluation exercise.

The chair of the subject advisory committee (or nominee) attends all conferences of teachers held throughout the trialling period.

The evaluation committee presents a written interim report to the Board by the end of June of each year of the trial. The subject advisory committee discusses this report with the evaluator prior to the July meeting of the Curriculum Committee.

On receipt of the second interim evaluation report the subject advisory committee starts to re-draft the trial syllabus in preparation for the next stage of development.

The evaluator(s) discuss(es) a progress report with data and/or finding subsequent to the second interim report with the subject advisory committee in November of the second year of the trial. This allows the subject advisory committee to finalise directions to the subcommittee or working party for the preparation of the pilot syllabus.

Upon receipt of the final trial evaluation report in February of the year following the trial, the subject advisory committee takes the following action:

- examines the report and takes particular note of the conclusions and recommendations made
- discusses the report with the evaluator(s)
- makes the final changes to the trial syllabus in response to the recommendations of the report
- forwards the following to the Board through the Curriculum Committee:
 - the trial evaluation report
 - the revised syllabus
 - a list of changes made to the syllabus and an explanation of why these changes were made

- the resource list
- forwards a recommendation for:
 - *piloting of the syllabus*
- or
- *retrialling, if extensive changes have been made*
- or
- *taking whatever other action is considered necessary.*

If the recommendation is for piloting or re-trialling, only a short time is available to the subject advisory committees to forward all required materials to the Curriculum Committee **by the end of March**. However, most of the redrafting of the syllabus is completed by February as a result of the second interim evaluation report, informal feed-back received from the evaluator(s) during the final semester of the evaluation and the discussion of the progress report in November of the previous year.

If schools are to have adequate time to seek approval from their employing authorities and to prepare outlines of work programs, the Curriculum Committee has to receive such materials for its **April meeting of that year**.

What happens during piloting?

The subject advisory committee is also represented on the evaluation committee throughout the piloting exercise. The chair (or nominee) attends all teacher conferences throughout the period of the pilot.

On receipt of the second interim evaluation report, the subject advisory committee starts to re-draft the trial syllabus in preparation for the next stage of development. Directions for the pilot syllabus are established in the discussion with the evaluator(s) about the progress report in November of the second year of the pilot. Upon receipt of the final pilot evaluation report a subject advisory committee takes the following action:

- examines the report and takes particular note of the conclusions and recommendations made
- discusses the report with the evaluator(s)
- makes the final changes to the syllabus in response to the recommendations of the report
- compiles a resource list to accompany the syllabus
- forwards the following to the Board through the Curriculum Committee:
 - the pilot evaluation report
 - the revised syllabus
 - a list of changes made to the syllabus and an explanation of why these changes were made
 - the resource list

forwards a recommendation for:

- *general implementation of the syllabus*

or

- *re-trialling, if major faults in the syllabus have been detected*

or

- *re-piloting, if serious doubts exist regarding the successful general implementation of the syllabus*

or

- *taking whatever action is considered necessary.*

The evaluator(s) and chair of the subject advisory committee are invited to discuss the final report and the revised syllabus with the Curriculum Committee.

If the recommendation is for re-piloting or re-trialling, the Curriculum Committee has to receive all materials for its **April meeting**.

What happens during trialling-piloting?

In the trialling-piloting of a major revision of an existing syllabus, subject advisory committees also have representation on the trial-pilot evaluation committee as outlined in section 3. The role of the chair of the subject advisory committee is the same as that outlined for the trialling and piloting exercises.

Upon receipt of the second interim evaluation report, the progress report and the final trial-pilot evaluation report, the committee takes the action outlined in response to a pilot evaluation report.

The recommendation forwarded is for:

- general implementation of the syllabus

or

- a repeat of trial-pilot if major faults in the syllabus have been detected or if serious doubts exist regarding the successful general implementation of the syllabus

or

- any other action considered necessary.

What support is needed for syllabuses?

When subject advisory committees propose trial, pilot, or trial-pilot syllabuses they should indicate the professional development and resource support they feel is needed for the syllabuses, including the establishment of teacher networks.

When a syllabus is recommended for general implementation, the subject advisory committee proposes how the Board may contribute to its support for at least the first three years of general implementation.

5. THE ROLE OF REVIEW PANELS

The role of the state review panel throughout the trialling and piloting of a syllabus is:

- to assist schools in the development of work programs which include assessment plans, achievement criteria and standards, and procedures for awarding exit Levels of Achievement
- to supervise the development of statewide standards for work programs and assessment of student achievement
- to make recommendations to the Board about accreditation of work programs and certification of exit assessments submitted by schools.

In the pre-trial, trial, pre-pilot and trial-pilot stages of the development of a syllabus, all moderation procedures are handled by the state review panel.

For the piloting of a syllabus, district review panels may be set up. This will depend on the establishment of a viable number of schools in any particular district. Tables 4 and 5 (pages 23 and 24) state the dates during the developmental years when it can be expected that accreditation, monitoring and verification procedures will occur.

During the development of a syllabus the state review panel chair is a member of the evaluation committee. The chair of the state review panel and the district review panel chairs in a pilot attend all conferences of teachers stated in tables 4 and 5 (pages 23 and 24).

Starting in the second year of a trial or pilot, the state review panel selects folios of student work judged to be appropriate representations of the Sound and the Very High Levels of Achievement. These are distributed to schools involved in the trial or pilot and the subject advisory committee.

Table 4. Moderation procedures for trial phase

Month	Year prior to trial	First year of trial	Second year of trial
February			State review panel meets for Year 11 monitoring
March		Teacher conference (develop work programs) State review panel announced	Teacher conference (feedback from monitoring and preparations for verification)
April		Board appoints remainder of state review panel	
June	Review officer for trial assigned	Work programs submitted	
July		State review panel meets to finalise accreditation procedures	
August	Board appoints core of state review panel	Advice sent to schools about accreditation	
October	Reading and discussion of course outlines involving review officer (2-3 pages)	Teacher conference (finalise outstanding work programs, prepare for monitoring) State review panel accredits remaining work programs	State review panel meets for verification
October/ November	Teacher conference (prepare work programs from course outlines) Application forms for state panel distributed		Teacher conference (feedback from verification)

Table 5. Moderation procedures for pilot phase

Month	Year prior to pilot	First year of pilot	Second year of pilot
February	State review panel meets for monitoring (trial schools)	State review panel meets for monitoring (trial schools)	Panels meet for Year 11 monitoring (pilot schools)
March		Teacher conference (developing work programs, feedback from trial monitoring) District review panels formed where appropriate	Teacher conference (feedback from monitoring and preparations for verification)
April May		District review panel training on accreditation and monitoring	District review panel workshops
June	Review officer(s) for pilot assigned	Work programs submitted	
July		Conference of state review panels and district review panel chairs District review panel training on accreditation and monitoring	Conference of state review panels and district review panel chairs
August/ September		Advice sent to schools about accreditation	District review panel training for verification
October	State panel views course outlines and holds pre-conference meeting	Teacher conference (finalise outstanding work programs)	State or district panels meet for verification
October/ November	Teacher conference (prepare work programs from course outlines)		State panel meets for November verification Teacher conference (feedback from verification)

6. THE ROLE OF THE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

The Curriculum Committee of the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies is an advisory committee to the Board. The functions of the committee are as follows:

- to keep the Board informed of current trends in curriculum development in secondary education
- to review syllabuses and other materials submitted by subject advisory committees
- to make recommendations to the Board additional to those made by subject advisory committees about the suitability of syllabuses and other materials in the context of the senior secondary curriculum
- to assist in other matters the Board may determine from time to time.

A major function of the Curriculum Committee is the reviewing of syllabuses recommended by subject advisory committees. The Curriculum Committee forwards advice to the Board in addition to that provided by subject advisory committees at each of the crucial stages of the development of syllabuses. These are as follows:

- when proposals for changes are made
- when proposed syllabuses are recommended to the Board
- when the annual decisions regarding the rates of progress of syllabuses are made
- when trial, pilot and trial-pilot decisions resulting from evaluations are made.

The advice of the Curriculum Committee is widely based. While the advice of subject advisory committees is generally subject-specific, that offered to the Board by the Curriculum Committee is directed towards helping the Board make decisions about the relationships between subjects and the likely impact of new or revised subjects across a school curriculum or across the State.

7. THE ROLE OF THE OFFICE OF THE BOARD

The Office of the Board services the following aspects of the development of syllabuses:

- initial research to inform subject advisory committees
- writing syllabuses
- writing work programs
- accreditation of work programs
- monitoring and verification of folios of student work
- development and dissemination of appropriate standards for student achievement
- evaluations of trials, pilots, and trial-pilots by independent evaluators
- conferences of teachers for trials, pilots and trial-pilots.

The Curriculum, Moderation and Vocational Education sections of the Office of the Board provide the services appropriate to their areas of responsibility. Throughout the development of a syllabus the Assistant Director (Curriculum) and the Assistant Director (Moderation) liaise frequently to ensure that the Curriculum and Moderation sections function well together. In the case of syllabuses with embedded vocational education and training components, the Assistant Director (Vocational Education and Training) liaises with the other two assistant directors to ensure that the three sections function well together.

What are the duties of the Curriculum Section?

Research for the initial development of syllabuses and the provision of information to inform major and minor revisions is supervised by the Assistant Director (Curriculum). The research may be undertaken by one of the curriculum officers (who may be assisted by appropriate review and/or project officers), the relevant subject advisory committee (or subcommittee), or contracted to an outside agency. In all cases the research is responsive to the directions established by the subject advisory committee under whose responsibility the syllabus lies.

Syllabuses are also written under the direction of the appropriate subject advisory committee. The writer may be a curriculum officer, a member of the subject advisory committee (or subcommittee), or a person contracted to undertake the task. All writers work under the guidance of the curriculum officer who is supervised by the Assistant Director (Curriculum).

Once the Board has approved the development of a new syllabus or the major revision of an existing syllabus, the Assistant Director (Curriculum) assigns a curriculum officer to the project. The curriculum officer attends all meetings of the subcommittee, liaises with the independent evaluators and organises the five trial/pilot conferences of teachers.

What are the duties of the Moderation Section?

The Assistant Director (Moderation) is generally responsible for the moderation procedures throughout the development of a syllabus, and for supervising the activities of review officers. Once the Board has approved a syllabus for trialling, the Assistant Director (Moderation) assigns a review officer to the trial. A pilot does not proceed with more than 25 schools unless another full-time review officer can be appointed. The review officer works closely with the state review panel and, if possible, attends meetings of the subcommittee.

Throughout trials, pilots and trial-pilots the review officer is available to schools to assist with the development of work programs. The review officer liaises between schools and the state review panel on the accreditation of work programs and the monitoring and verification of student folios of work.

The review officer is uniquely positioned to suggest what support teachers and panellists need throughout the development of a syllabus and usually conducts sessions at the five conferences of teachers. Another responsibility of the review officer is to prepare the exemplar folios representing the different Levels of Achievement. These are identified by the state review panel and used in sessions at the conferences.

What are the duties of the Vocational Education Section?

Once the Board has approved the development of a new syllabus or the major revision of an existing syllabus to include embedded vocational education and training components, the Assistant Director (Vocational Education and Training) assigns a project officer to assist the relevant Curriculum Advisory Committee to review appropriate training packages from which the components for embedding (training programs) are selected. The role of a curriculum advisory committee (CAC) is to advise on the selection of competencies for Training Packages for inclusion in Board and Board-registered syllabuses.

The Assistant Director (Vocational Education and Training) is generally responsible for communicating to teachers the registration requirements stipulated in the syllabus and commencing the processes associated with registration. The Assistant Director (Vocational Education and Training) also supervises the conduct of external quality reviews of schools in the trials, pilots and trial-pilots.

The appropriate project officer attends the relevant subject advisory committee and subcommittee meetings and teacher conferences to provide advice associated with vocational education and training components.

APPENDIX 1: SYLLABUS FRAMEWORK

Syllabuses approved by the Board present broad frameworks of subjects but do not prescribe details.

Syllabuses are developed with the following framework in mind:

Rationale

The rationale provides justification for including the subject in the senior school curriculum by:

- defining the subject, thereby stating its salient characteristics or properties
- stating how these properties or characteristics contribute to the education of students (see appendix 2, page 33).

Global aims

Global aims are statements of the long-term achievements, attitudes and values that are to be developed by students in studying the subject but which are not directly assessed by the school.

General objectives

General objectives are those which the school is intended to pursue directly and student achievement of these is assessed by the school.

General objectives should be set out under the following headings (as appropriate to the subject):

Process objectives (the cognitive skills to be developed in relation to the discipline)

Content objectives (relating to the body of factual knowledge to be acquired)

Skill objectives (the practical skills required by the discipline)

Affective objectives (the attitudes, values and feelings) the subject aims to develop which may be manifested in overt performances. Affective objectives are not assessed for the award of exit Levels of Achievement.

A syllabus may state general objectives in categories other than process, content, skill and affect provided that:

- a readily discernible balance of practical skills, cognitive skills, factual knowledge and affective behaviour is presented in the totality of the categories
- the attitudes and values to be developed by students are clearly stated in the global aims
- the categories of objectives are consistent with the salient properties or characteristics of the subject identified in the rationale of the syllabus.

Organisation

The syllabus contains the following information:

- the subject matter, units, topics, themes etc. into or around which the subject may be organised
- core requirements
- the minimum number of hours (55 hours per semester) of timetabled school time including assessment that a course of study entails
- organisational principles for, or ways of, constructing work programs.

Learning experiences

Learning experiences are activities and/or tasks conducted within appropriate contexts which contribute to student development as outlined in the global aims and general objectives.

Assessment

The Board's policy on assessment is stated in appendix 4, page 39.

The following components of assessment are stated in the syllabus:

- assessment techniques that are suited to the judgment of student achievement in the subject
- summative assessment criteria and standards for each exit Level of Achievement¹
- ways of deriving exit Levels of Achievement including allowable trade-offs (if any)
- requirements for verification folios. These state the appropriate mix of assessment techniques and the minimum and maximum number of assessment instruments. (See appendix 5, page 40 for principles for verification folios.)

Work program requirements

This is the stipulation of the organisational principles for, or ways of, constructing work programs that reflect all sections of the syllabus document.

Language education

The Board's policy on language education is stated in appendix 6 page 41. This is integrated in all aspects of a syllabus.

¹In considering the syllabuses for which they are responsible for making recommendations to the Board, subject advisory committees should ensure that identically worded sections, especially those concerning the specification of standards required for the award of exit levels of achievement, are intended to be read as having the same meaning across all the syllabuses in which they appear. Where this is not the intention, the wording of the sections concerned should be varied as much as is required to make plain the different intended meanings.

Quantitative Concepts and Skills

The Board's policy on quantitative concepts and skills is stated in appendix 7 page 42. This is integrated in all aspects of a syllabus.

Educational Equity

The statement in appendix 8 page 43 is included with that part of the syllabus which gives guidance on writing work programs.

Resource material

A list of resource material accompanies the syllabus. This is refined throughout the trialling and piloting phases of the development of the syllabus.

For those syllabuses with embedded vocational education components, advice concerning registration requirements is also included.

Extension senior subjects

Extension subjects cater for students with specific aptitudes and abilities.

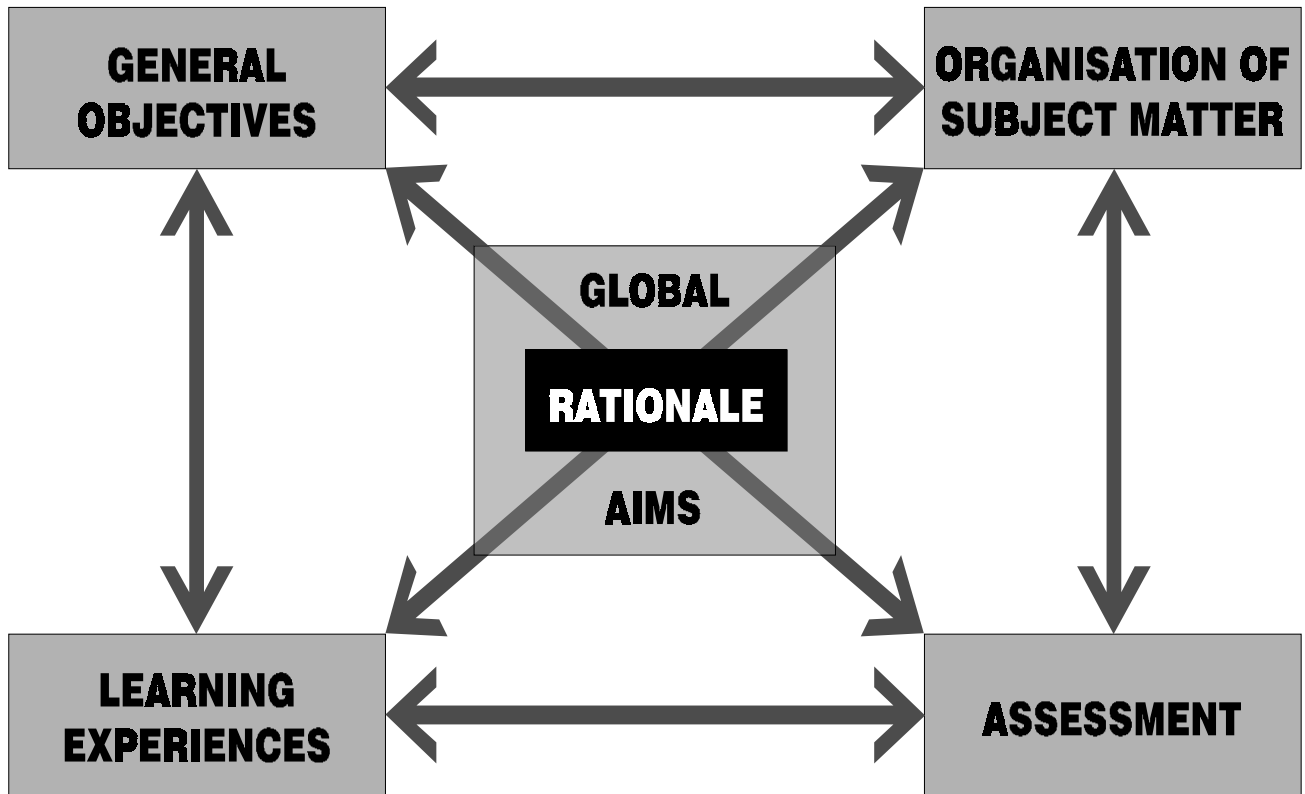
Syllabuses for extension subjects are developed to meet the following criteria:

- extension subjects are studied in Year 12
- extension subjects of senior Board subjects comprise two semester units of study
- extension subjects are more challenging than their parent subjects. Therefore, the standards used to assess student achievement in extension subjects are higher than those used in the parent subjects
- extension subjects have names which are derived from the names of their parent subjects.

The Senior Certificate may show a semester unit of an extension subject if it also shows four semester units of the parent subject or the equivalent. The Senior Certificate may show a maximum of four semester units of extension subjects.

Syllabuses for extension senior subjects conform to the normal syllabus framework. But in all parts of the framework they demonstrate how they are derived from the parent subject and how they present a more exacting level of challenge to students in the relevant aspects of the subject. In particular, the standards used to assess student achievement in extension subjects are more exacting than those used in the relevant aspects of the parent subject.

Figure 4. Syllabus design



APPENDIX 2:

CRITERIA FOR BOARD SUBJECTS

Educational criteria

The following criteria are to be addressed during the stages of syllabus development. All committees use this checklist in their recommendation of syllabuses for general or trial-pilot implementation.

A Board subject should contribute to the education of students by providing:

- opportunities to develop a range of intellectual, technological and operational skills, including the Key Competencies²
- the best possible balance of practical experience, abstraction and reflection appropriate to the subject
- opportunities to acquire the specific knowledge and skills in the subject
- a sound basis for developing values and attitudes appropriate to students' future participation in a democratic and pluralistic society, of which the work environment is a significant component
- challenges appropriate to the developmental level of the students for whom the subject is designed
- opportunities for students to develop the highest level of literacy and numeracy skills in the context of the subject³
- opportunities which encourage the development of, and understanding and respect for, our heritage and cultural diversity, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and ethnic communities
- scope for critical thinking and the generation of questions, ideas, goals and visions of the future
- access for a range of students, including those with disabilities, while maintaining the integrity of the subject and the Senior Certificate⁴
- appropriate articulation with P–10 syllabuses and post-school environments (higher education, further education, work and leisure).

² The Key Competencies are: collecting, analysing and organising information; communicating ideas and information; planning and organising activities; working with others and in teams; using mathematical ideas and techniques; solving problems; and using technology.

³ See also the Board's statements on Language Education and Quantitative Concepts and Skills

⁴ See also the Board's statement on Educational Equity

Operational criteria

Operational criteria are as follows:

- The syllabus conforms to the framework used by the Board to develop syllabuses and is readily distinguishable from any other Senior Board syllabuses in terms of its rationale and global aims.
- The time allocation is not less than the minimum time stated by the Board.
- Work programs are subject to the accreditation procedures of the Board.
- Assessments of student achievement are subject to the full moderation procedures of the Board.
- No two Board subjects have the same name.

Criteria for developing syllabuses

Syllabuses for Board subjects may be initiated by schools, school systems, subject advisory committees, authorities or other institutions and developed by or through subject advisory committees or by special committees appointed by the Board (refer section 1).

Syllabuses are approved by the Board for formal trialling in schools.

Approval is given to newly developed syllabuses in carefully monitored stages as follows:

Either

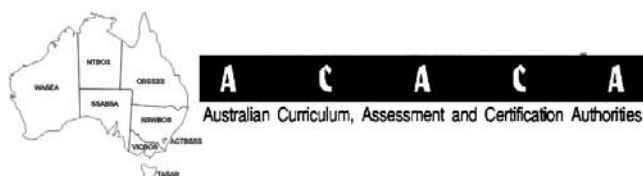
- approval for trialling according to Board guidelines

or

- approval for use in school(s) of origin or other approved schools, then as demand arises moving to trial stage
- approval for piloting according to Board guidelines
- approval for general implementation.

Until a syllabus has been approved for general implementation, it is described as a Board syllabus (restricted use).

APPENDIX 3



Guidelines for Assessment Quality and Equity

Context and scope of these guidelines

ACACA agencies are responsible, directly or indirectly, for enormous amounts of assessment—hundreds of examinations, thousands of questions, tens of thousands of assessment items set in schools—in the high stakes area of senior secondary assessment.

Senior secondary assessment has a significant impact on the lives of the students involved. Accordingly, they each deserve a fair go—the same opportunity to show what they know and can do, regardless of factors such as gender. Fairness—equity—and quality are closely related, not least in the sense that reasonable quality is a prerequisite for the deliberate achievement of equity. Low-quality assessment will almost certainly lead to inequitable outcomes.

There is, of course, always room for improvement in the quality of assessment. Each year sees an increase in the sophistication of educational assessment.

The adoption and implementation of these guidelines represent a step forward in improving the quality, and hence the fairness, of assessment. They do not represent a definitive, final or complete position. They should be read as representing a commitment by ACACA agencies to moving forward by setting down some principles and adopting nationwide an agreed position. The guidelines are intended to be a starting point and so should be read as being deliberately both provisional and incomplete. Experience with, and evaluation of, the effect of their adoption will lead to their further development and enhancement.

ACACA agencies are responsible for assessment, not for how schools operate. The need to be fair to all students means that ACACA assessment practices should not seek to adjust for missed opportunities to learn by saying that students have demonstrated achievement that they

have not in fact demonstrated. In this sense the equity issues connected with ideas of Opportunity to Learn are not, therefore, part of these guidelines.

These guidelines are concerned with the practice of assessment. Syllabuses specify the knowledge and skills that should be assessed. The task of assessment is to assess in terms of these specifications, not to redefine the syllabus. However, the guidelines include the need for systematic and regular evaluation and review of assessment: its methods, its materials and its results. The systematic evaluation and review of assessment in a subject provides information about the syllabus: information that should be fed back into the syllabus review and development process.

Fundamental to equity in assessment is the recognition that the construction of the knowledge and skills to be assessed should involve a critical evaluation of the extent to which the choice of a particular set of knowledge and skills is likely to privilege certain groups of students and exclude others by virtue of gender, socioeconomic, cultural or linguistic background. A concern with equity also leads to adopting a proactive stance on the appropriate representation in the curriculum of different kinds of cultural knowledge and experience as valued knowledge and skills.

ACACA agencies have a job to do, practical tasks to complete within tight timelines and stringent resource constraints. In this role, their concerns are pragmatic: more about the achievable than the ideal, the practical more than the theoretical, and the present more than the remote future. The adoption by ACACA of this set of national guidelines is intended to promote change through review of existing practices and a proactive stance on equity.

Guidelines for assessment quality and equity

(Note: Bold text indicates references to the guidelines.)

These guidelines are about the quality of assessment - methods, materials and results - and hence implicitly and explicitly about equity. The principal touchstone of quality in assessment is the extent to which it gives students a fair go.

To **certify**¹ achievement in a subject requires **assessment** of **students'** command of the **knowledge and skills** defined and required by the syllabus. This assessment occurs through a **set** of assessment instruments. **Assessment instruments** include such devices as supervised examinations, assignments, projects, practicals, orals, aurals, observational schedules and portfolios. Assessment occurs under various **conditions** - supervision, notice, access to resources, times, dates, handing-in procedures and acceptance of late submissions. Each assessment instrument comprises one or more **assessment items**. An assessment item requires a response from students in one or more of a variety of **modes** such as multiple choice, short answer, paragraph, extended written response, oral, graphical, diagrammatic and so on. As well as the knowledge and skills that are the direct focus, assessment items draw on **assumed knowledge** and often make use of **background material** contextualising the task presented. **Cues** and the **layout** of assessment items provide guides to students about the requirements of the task set by the item. Assessment items are devised by **item writers** and selected and combined into assessment instruments by **test designers**².

1 Agencies may need to replace some or all of the highlighted terms with the terms they currently use.

2 Frequently, of course, the test designer is also the item writer.

These guidelines were endorsed at the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities (ACACA) meeting in August 1995.

The development of the guidelines was funded by the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training.

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**For more information contact the Secretary of ACACA,
Reg Allen, at (07) 3864 0259 or fax (07) 3221 2553.**

For quality, and hence equity—

Each assessment item should:

- actually assess what the item writer intends it to assess
- assess what on face value it purports to assess
- only require for its successful completion the decoding of a subtext after critical examination of the necessity and appropriateness of this requirement
- use specialist language or jargon as an aid to clarity and accuracy and not as an irrelevant obstacle to successful demonstration of the required knowledge or skill
- only involve the reproduction of gender, socioeconomic, ethnic or other cultural stereotypes after careful consideration of the necessity of such reproduction
- in order to avoid being itself a barrier to students' demonstrating their command of the characteristic the item is supposed to assess:
 - be clearly presented through appropriate choice of layout, cues, visual design, format and choice of words
 - state its requirements explicitly and directly
 - use as background material and require as assumed knowledge only that to which students may reasonably be presumed to have had ready access
- be marked by explicit, clear, unambiguous, criteria declared in advance that:
 - allow the student to identify appropriate ways to demonstrate command of the required knowledge and skills
 - allow the marker to recognise, where appropriate, different ways in which a student may demonstrate command of the required knowledge and skills

Each assessment instrument should:

- give students clear and definite instructions
- be used under clear, definite and specified conditions that are substantially the same for all
- be used under conditions that do not present an inappropriate barrier to the equal participation of all

Each set of assessment instruments used to assess a student's achievement in a subject should:

- involve the use of a range and balance of background contexts in which assessment items are presented
- involve a range and balance of types of assessment instruments and modes of response, including a balance and range of visual and linguistic material
- involve a range and balance of conditions

Each agency should endeavour to improve assessment practices for which it bears responsibility:

- by regular review of the methods, materials and results of assessment
- by including an examination of equity in quality control and quality assurance procedures such as research and data analysis
- by training item writers, test designers and markers directly employed by the agency
- by communicating its quality requirements to suppliers of assessment items and instruments
- by promoting the adoption of these guidelines by teachers responsible for school-based assessment contributing to results certified by the agency.

An illustrative list of strategies for developing improved practices in assessment emphasising quality, equity and gender equity

Agencies can:

- distribute summaries of relevant research findings to item writers and test designers
- conduct reviews of the representation of gender in assessment instruments
- evaluate the occurrence in assessment instruments of reproductions of gender, socioeconomic, ethnic or other cultural stereotypes
- evaluate the consistency of the syllabus and the total set of assessment instruments by identifying the relative importance given by each to particular knowledge and skills
- review the extent to which the set of assessment instruments in a subject are, to the full extent permitted by the syllabus, inclusive of the experience and achievements of women as well as of men
- provide item writers and test designers with examples showing the full extent to which the construction of knowledge and skills to be assessed allows assessment incorporating references to human contexts
- conduct equity scanning of assessment instruments before use
- promote research into the validity and fairness of assessment items for which the agency is responsible
- scrutinise assessment instruments to eliminate material that may prove an unnecessary and irrelevant distracter for some students
- employ specialist editors to examine the language of assessment instruments in terms of possible barriers to equal opportunity for all students
- involve students in critical examination of the quality of assessment instruments they have experienced
- involve teachers in critical examination of the quality of assessment instruments their students experience
- involve parents and the wider community in reviews of assessment practices
- review marker recruitment, selection and training procedures
- evaluate the weighting of assessment items and instruments in terms of analyses of gender differences in student performances.

APPENDIX 4: ASSESSMENT POLICY

Below are the underlying principles of the Board's policy on assessment promulgated to schools:

- Exit assessment be devised to provide the fullest and latest information on a student's achievement in the course of study.
- Assessment of a student's achievement be in the significant aspects of the course of study identified in the syllabus and the school's work program.
- Information be gathered through a process of continuous assessment.
- Selective updating of a student's profile of achievement be undertaken over the course of study.
- Exit achievement levels be devised from student achievement in all areas identified in the syllabus as being mandatory.
- Balance of assessments is a balance over the course of study and not necessarily a balance within a semester or between semesters.

APPENDIX 5:

PRINCIPLES FOR VERIFICATION FOLIOS

Principles for Verification Folios

The following principles apply to verification folios:

- Verification folios are natural extensions of folios compiled by students with their teachers.
- Verification folios are compiled in accordance with the Board's assessment policy.
- Particular requirements for verification folios are stated in syllabuses.
- Verification folios represent the quality of student achievement rather than attempt to demonstrate the quantity of work done.

In support of the above principles the statement below will appear in the introductory paragraph on verification folio requirements in each syllabus.

Verification folio requirements

In the verification folio requirements for the subject, the minimum and maximum number of assessment instruments are stipulated. Schools must ensure that the verification folios presented in October contain all summative assessment instruments and corresponding student responses upon which judgments about interim levels of achievement have been made to that point in time.

APPENDIX 6: LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Teachers of Senior English have a special responsibility for language education. However, it is the responsibility of all teachers to develop and monitor students' abilities to use the forms of language appropriate to their own subject areas. This responsibility entails developing the following skills:

- ability in the selection and sequencing of information required in the various forms (such as reports, essays, interviews and seminar presentations)
- the use of technical terms and their definitions
- the use of correct grammar, spelling, punctuation and layout.

Assessment in all subjects needs to take into consideration appropriate use of language.

APPENDIX 7:

QUANTITATIVE CONCEPTS AND SKILLS

Success in dealing with issues and situations in life and work depends on the development and integration of a range of abilities, such as being able to:

- comprehend basic concepts and terms underpinning the areas of number, space, probability and statistics, measurement and algebra
- extract, convert or translate information given in numerical or algebraic forms, diagrams, maps, graphs or tables
- calculate, apply algebraic procedures, implement algorithms
- make use of calculators and computers
- use skills or apply concepts from one problem or one subject domain to another.

Some subjects focus on the development and application of numerical and other mathematical concepts and skills. These subjects may provide a basis for the general development of such quantitative skills or have a distinct aim, such as to prepare students to cope with the quantitative demands of their personal lives or to participate in a specific workplace environment.

Nevertheless, in all subjects students are to be encouraged to develop their understanding and to learn through the incorporation—to varying degrees—of mathematical strategies and approaches to tasks. Similarly, students should be presented with experiences that stimulate their mathematical interest and hone those quantitative skills that contribute to operating successfully within each of their subject domains.

The distinctive nature of a subject may require that new mathematical concepts be introduced and new skills be developed. In many cases, however, it will be a matter for teachers, in the context of their own subjects, having to encourage the use of quantitative skills and understandings that were developed previously by their students. Within appropriate learning contexts and experiences in the subject, opportunities are to be provided for the revision, maintenance, and extension of such skills and understandings.

APPENDIX 8: EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

Equity means fair treatment of all. In developing work programs from this syllabus, schools are urged to consider the most appropriate means of incorporating the following notions of equity.

Schools need to provide opportunities for all students to demonstrate what they know and what they can do. All students, therefore, should have equitable access to educational programs and human and material resources. Teachers should ensure that the particular needs of the following groups of students are met: female students; male students; Aboriginal students; Torres Strait Islander students; students from non-English-speaking backgrounds; students with disabilities; students with gifts and talents; geographically isolated students; and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

The subject matter chosen should include, where appropriate, the contributions and experiences of all groups of people. Learning contexts and community needs and aspirations should also be considered when selecting subject matter.

In choosing appropriate learning experiences teachers can introduce and reinforce non-racist, non-sexist, culturally sensitive and unprejudiced attitudes and behaviour. Learning experiences should encourage the participation of students with disabilities and accommodate different learning styles.

It is desirable that the resource materials chosen recognise and value the contributions of both females and males to society and include the social experiences of both sexes. Resource materials should also reflect the cultural diversity within the community and draw from the experiences of the range of cultural groups in the community.

Efforts should be made to identify, investigate and remove barriers to equal opportunity to demonstrate achievement. This may involve being proactive in finding out about the best ways to meet the special needs, in terms of learning and assessment, of particular students.

The variety of assessment techniques in the work program should allow students of *all* backgrounds to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in a subject in relation to the criteria and standards stated in this syllabus. The syllabus criteria and standards should be applied in the same way to all students.

Teachers may find the following useful for devising an inclusive work program.

A Fair Deal. Equity Guidelines for Developing and Reviewing Educational Resources 1991, Education Queensland (Department of Education), Brisbane.

Policy Statement on Special Consideration 1994, Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, Brisbane, 30 May.

Guidelines for Assessment Quality and Equity 1996, Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities, Queensland.

Language and Equity: A discussion paper for writers of school-based assessment instruments 1995, Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, Brisbane, November.

Studying Assessment Practices: A resource for teachers in schools 1995, Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, Brisbane, September.

APPENDIX 9: TIMELINES FOR THE PERIODIC REVISIONS OF SYLLABUSES

Group 1	Group 2
Syllabuses revised 1997 for implementation with Year 11 in 1999. (Next revision by May 2003 for implementation with Year 11 in 2005.)	Syllabuses revised by May 2000 for implementation with Year 11 in 2002. (Next revision by May 2006 for implementation with Year 11 in 2008.)
	<p>Revised by English SAC</p> <p>English</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> major revision with an extension subject (Literature) in trial-pilot starting with Year 11—1997 first year of general implementation in 2000* all schools implementing with Year 11 in 2002* Literature (extension subject) available for Year 12—2001*
<p>Revised by Social Sciences SAC</p> <p>Economics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> major revision, first year of trial-pilot with Year 11—1996 first year of general implementation with Year 11—1999 all schools implementing with Year 11 in 2001 <p>Political Studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> first year of pre-pilot with Year 11—1995 <p>Futures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> first year of pre-pilot with Year 11—1999 	<p>Revised by Social Sciences SAC</p> <p>Study of Society</p> <p>Geography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> major revision, first year of trial-pilot with Year 11—1997 first year of general implementation with Year 11—2000* all schools implementing with Year 11 in 2002* <p>Modern History</p> <p>Ancient History</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> major revisions, first year of trial-pilots with Year 11—2001* first year of general implementation with Year 11—2004* all schools implementing with Year 11 in 2006*
	<p>Revised by Languages Other Than English SAC</p> <p>All syllabuses to be revised</p>
<p>Revised by Mathematics SAC</p> <p>Logic</p>	<p>Revised by Mathematics SAC</p> <p>Mathematics A</p> <p>Mathematics B</p> <p>Mathematics C</p>
<p>Revised by Science SAC</p> <p>Earth Science</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> first year of trial-pilot with year 11—1998 first year of general implementation with all schools—2001 <p>Biological Science</p> <p>Multi-Strand Science</p>	<p>Revised by Science SAC</p> <p>Chemistry</p> <p>Physics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> major revisions, first year of trial-pilots with Year 11—2001* first year of general implementation with Year 11—2004*

Group 1	Group 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • first year of general implementation—2000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all schools implementing with Year 11 in 2006*
Revised by Business Education SAC Accounting	Revised by Business Education SAC Legal Studies
Revised by Industrial Technology SAC Engineering Technology	Revised by Industrial Technology SAC Graphics
Revised by Home Economics SAC Home Economics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • first year of trial-pilot with year 11—1999 • first year of general implementation—2002* • all schools implementing with year 11 in 2004* 	Revised by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies SAC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • first year of trial with Year 11—1996 • first year of pilot with Year 11—1999 • first year of general implementation with Year 11—2002*
Revised by The Arts SAC Dance Film and Television <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all schools implementing with Year 11—1999 Music Music Performance (extension subject) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • revised by May 2004 for implementation with Year 12—2006 	Revised by The Arts SAC Art Drama
Revised by Health & Physical Education SAC Health Education Physical Education (major revision of Health and Physical Education) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • first year of general implementation with Year 11—1999 • all schools implementing with Year 11—2001 	
Revised by Computer Studies SAC Information Processing & Technology	Revised by Religious and Ethical Studies SAC Study of Religion

* These timelines are based on the syllabus being written by the deadline and a normal progression through trial, pilot or trial-pilot processes.

Group 3—Syllabuses with embedded vocational education

With the embedding of vocational education components in syllabuses, the revisions of syllabuses in this group will be undertaken in accordance with the updating of vocational training packages relevant to each document. Schools will be notified of the revision periods.

<p>Revised by Agriculture SAC</p> <p>Agricultural Science</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • major revision, first year of trial-pilot with Year 11—1996 • first year of general implementation with Year 11—2000* • all schools implementing with Year 11 in 2002* 	<p>Revised by Home Economics SAC</p> <p>Hospitality Studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • first year of trial with year 11- 1996 • first year of pilot with year 11—1999 • first year of general implementation 2002*
<p>Revised by Industrial Technology SAC</p> <p>Technology Studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • major revision, first year of trial-pilot with Year 11—1996 • first year of general implementation with Year 11—2000* • all schools implementing with Year 11 in 2002* 	<p>Revised by Business Education SAC</p> <p>Business Organisation and Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • first year of trial-pilot with Year 11—1996 • first year of general implementation—1999 <p>Business Communication and Technologies (major revision of Secretarial Studies)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • first year of trial-pilot with Year 11—1996 • first year of general implementation—1999 • all schools implementing with Year 11—2001
<p>Revised by Science SAC</p> <p>Marine Studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • first year of trial-pilot with Year 11—2001 • first year of general implementation—2004 • all schools implementing with Year 11—2006* 	

* These timelines are based on the syllabus being written by the deadline and a normal progression through trial, pilot or trial-pilot processes.

APPENDIX 10: MODIFIED TIMELINE FOR A TRIAL UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES

It may be possible to shorten the time line for approving syllabuses under the following circumstances:

- A group of schools with common interests have developed a subject addressing a perceived need in the schools.
- A group of schools have implemented a syllabus or curriculum framework developed by a school system, authority or institution.
- After implementing the subject for a time it is perceived that it may be of benefit to the students to have the subject become a Board subject.

The following shortened time line for a trial may be implemented provided the decisions made at each point are favourable:

Year 1

June

A group of schools (6–15) submits syllabus, sample work program from one of the schools, and a case for the subject including the development to that point. (Board seeks advice from subject advisory committees and Curriculum Committee.)

August

Board receives advice from its committees and decides whether the syllabus meets its criteria. (If positive, a state review panel is set up and evaluators are advertised for.)

September

Schools submit current work programs.

November

Board approves all schools (6–15) which have submitted work programs for a trial with Years 11 and 12 students in the following year and appoints evaluators.

December

Approved schools submit monitoring folios.

Year 2

February

State review panel monitors folios and selects exemplars.

March

Conference of teachers, SAC (sub-committee), state review panel members, evaluators.

August

First interim evaluation report received by Board.

October

Schools submit verification folios, exemplar folios selected by state review panel.

November

Conference of teachers, members of subcommittees of subject advisory committees, state review panel members, evaluators.

December

Students receive Senior Certificates.

Year 3

February

Final evaluation report submitted.

May

Board approves rewritten syllabus for pilot.

APPENDIX 11:

SYLLABUSES FOR THE EXTERNAL SENIOR EXAMINATION

Syllabuses for the external senior examination are derived from internal syllabuses which are approved for general implementation.

The syllabus framework below is a modification of that in appendix 1, page 29. It provides for syllabuses which incorporate examinations as the only means of assessing levels of achievement to be recorded on the Senior Certificate.

Syllabus framework (external examination)

External syllabuses approved by the Board describe courses of study which culminate in examinations of candidates. These syllabuses are developed using the following framework:

Rationale

The rationale defines the subject, thereby stating its salient characteristics or properties. It also contains a statement which shows how the subject may contribute to the education of candidates who undertake Senior studies other than by full-time schooling.

Global aims

Global aims are statements of the long term achievements, attitudes and values which may be developed by candidates in studying the subject but which are not directly assessed by the examination.

General objectives

General objectives are those which the candidate is intended to pursue directly. Achievement of these is assessed by the examination.

The objectives should be set out under the following headings (as appropriate to the subject):

- **process objectives** (the cognitive skills to be developed in relation to the discipline)
- **content objectives** (relating to the body of factual knowledge to be acquired)
- **skill objectives** (the practical skills required by the discipline)
- **affective objectives** (the attitudes, values and feelings the subject aims to develop which may be manifested in overt performances).

Provided that the corresponding internal syllabus does so, an external syllabus may state general objectives in categories other than process, content, skill and affect provided that:

- a readily discernible balance of practical skills, cognitive skills, factual knowledge and affective behaviour is presented in the totality of the categories
- the attitudes and values to be developed by candidates are clearly stated in the global aims
- the categories of objectives are consistent with the salient properties or characteristics of the subject identified in the rationale of the syllabus.

Organisation

The syllabus contains the subject matter, topics, units or themes into or around which the subject is organised.

Learning experiences

Learning experiences are activities and/or tasks conducted within appropriate contexts likely to contribute to the candidate's development as outlined in the global aims and general objectives.

Practical work

In syllabuses which require practical work the following statement is to be made:

It would be to the advantage of candidates to complete the practical work as specified in this syllabus.

Assessment

The following components of assessment are contained in the syllabus:

- the format of the examination, which includes:
 - the length of the paper(s) or other examining techniques
 - perusal time (if allowed, to be 10 minutes)
 - materials to be supplied by the candidate
 - materials to be supplied by the Board
 - rules relating to the use of calculating devices (if applicable)
- summative assessment criteria for each Level of Achievement, including statements of the appropriate use of language.

Resource material

The resource material section includes required texts and/or recommended resources.

APPENDIX 12: FORM A4



Queensland
Board of Senior Secondary School Studies

Form A4

Application to participate in a trial/pilot program for the development of a syllabus

Applicants must complete all sections of this form.

1. Name of school:

School code

2. Trial/pilot senior syllabus in:

3. Numbers to be involved:

Teachers

Classes

Students

4. Rationale for the introduction of the subject into the school

(The rationale should address issues of relevance, i.e. nature of the student cohort, challenges to curriculum design, potential contribution to the trial etc.)

5. Vocational education interface

(Complete only for syllabuses with vocational education components.)

5.1 Registration requirements

Will your school be able to meet the minimum human and physical resource requirements listed in the Registration section of the syllabus and be able to implement the appropriate quality review procedures during the trial/pilot?

Yes

No

04/27

5.2 Additional information

(Please indicate, if relevant, any optional structured work experience and/or other industry, workplace or community links that the school may have to assist the implementation of the subject.)

6. Infrastructure to support the new syllabus implementation

(This should address how financial allocations will enable resources to be acquired/improved.)

6.1 Human resources

(Provide details of the teachers who will teach the subject. If more than two teachers are involved, relevant details are to be attached as necessary.)

Teacher A

Name:

Academic qualifications:

Relevant teaching/other experience:

Teacher B

Name:

Academic qualifications:

Relevant teaching/other experience:

Other staffing arrangements (if applicable)

6.2 Physical resources

(Indicate access to and details of plant, equipment and materials appropriate to subject.)

Existing:

Proposed (with timeline):

6.3 Time resources

(Provide information on proposed release of teachers for work program writing/professional development in the subject and attendance at teacher conferences.)

7. Level of school support for implementation

7.1 Level of support (Rate by circling one X.)

X-----X-----X-----X-----X-----X
very high low

7.2 Rationale for level of support (this should summarise 3–6 above.)

8. Additional data/arguments to support the application

9. The school will:

- (a) Submit course outline by September of the year prior to introduction. Yes No
- (b) Submit the work program for accreditation by June of the first year of introduction. Yes No
- (c) Obtain registration to offer the vocational components (if any) by the end of November of the year prior to introduction. Yes No

10. If this application is approved, the school undertakes:

- to provide adequate release time for the writing of work programs
- to collect and maintain records and observations of the trial/pilot program
- to respond to surveys or questionnaires concerning the syllabus
- to cooperate in supplying relevant information to personnel who visit the school (after obtaining a mutually acceptable time and date)
- to attend all relevant teacher conferences, workshops and meetings (in keeping with the scheduled program)
- to assist in all possible ways in making the trial/pilot program an effective procedure for evaluation of the syllabus
- to supply all accreditation and certification materials as and when required by the State Review Panel
- to maintain registration requirements (where appropriate).

Please note:

It is assumed that a school approved to participate in the trial stage of the development of a syllabus will continue to participate in the pilot stage. No application to continue to the pilot stage is required. Should a school wish not to proceed to the pilot stage the Director of the Board should be notified in writing when applications for pilot schools are called.

Date day month year

Signature of Principal

Send to:

**The Director
Attention: Assistant Director (Curriculum)
Board of Senior Secondary School Studies
PO Box 307
Spring Hill Qld 4004**

For noting:

In instances where the number of applications exceeds the number of places available in a trial/pilot, it is necessary to apply criteria additional to those relating to the quality of the application in order to achieve a balanced group for the evaluation of the syllabus, e.g. geographical location, a school's current trial/pilot involvement.