

Review of Syllabuses for the Senior Phase of Learning

**Report: Consultation
October 2005 to February 2006**



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1. Introduction

The Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) is undertaking extensive consultations to review syllabuses for the senior phase of learning. The consultations seek active involvement from schools, universities, young people and the community in continuously improving the value of QSA products and services.

This report summarises the feedback from community forums and meetings with major organisations undertaken between 18 October and 2 December 2005 and written submissions received to 14 February 2006.

The basis of the consultation was the *Review of the Syllabuses for the Senior Phase of Learning: Consultation Paper* October 2005 prepared by the QSA (available at www.qsa.qld.edu.au). The consultation paper outlined five issues with specific questions for community feedback.

Community forums including four student groups were held at fifteen locations throughout Queensland. The total number of participants in this phase of the consultation was 274.

In addition to the community forums, meetings were held with seven key stakeholder organisations and briefings were provided for Education Queensland (EQ), Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC), Independent Schools, Queensland (ISQ) and QSA committees (Attachment 2). Additional meetings or briefings were conducted upon request.

Over 100 written submissions were received (Attachment 3).

2. Method

Community forums were held in schools and two sessions were scheduled for each location: 12.30 pm to 2.00 pm and 5.30 pm to 7.00 pm. Additional forums were conducted at Thursday Island and Roma from 3.30 pm to 5.00 pm.

Community forums were attended by two project officers from the Review of Syllabuses Project Team and followed the same format. A brief introduction was presented which outlined:

- context for the review
- process of the review
- issues and key questions
- contact details.

Following the presentation, one project officer guided discussion and the other took notes. While discussion tended to focus on the questions in the consultation paper, participants were also encouraged to raise issues or concerns not in the paper. The length of each session was approximately two hours. Findings from each session were documented according to the issues.

The views presented in submissions were collated by interest group and by issue. Analysis of the data, general and specific, was undertaken in preparation for this report which summarises the findings from the consultation.

3. Findings

3.1 General

A number of participants commented on the timing of the consultation and the amount of change affecting schools generally. This may have contributed to fewer than expected people attending community consultation sessions. At a number of locations, no staff from the host school attended the meetings. This occurred in state and non-state schools.

There was some scepticism about the purpose of the review. This scepticism ranged from the review being a token gesture from which little will be achieved to fears that the review represented wholesale change in a system that was 'working well'. Many commented that the review was an opportunity to build a Prep to Year 12 focus but felt this was unlikely to happen as there were two seemingly independent projects, one looking at Years 11 and 12 and the other looking at Years 1 to 10 (Queensland Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting (QCAR) Framework).

Some groups embraced the opportunity to engage in an educational discussion about possibilities, notably Toowoomba and Gold Coast; other groups were more reserved tempering comments with regard to the impact changes would mean to the Overall Position (OP). Many groups took the opportunity to comment on specific syllabuses, especially English and mathematics.

Many felt that the issue was not so much about the syllabuses as pedagogy and that comprehensive professional development must be a part of any change.

Issue 2, the structure of QSA syllabuses, and Issue 4, Year 10, generated the most interest and discussion.

3.2 Issue 1: Valued knowledge and skills

Issue 1 asked participants to comment on what young people should know and be able to do at the end of twelve years schooling.

Most participants agreed that the senior phase of learning should be a continuation of the broad and general education begun in Years 1 to 10 and a preparation or 'readiness' for the next phase in further study, work and adult life. There were reservations about locking young people into one pathway too early as this might limit future options.

When discussing the generic skills it was often observed that it was not enough to list the desired skills that all young people should have opportunities to develop, but that these skills must be taught, modelled and assessed. In response to the question whether students aspiring to different future pathways require different sets of skills, there was general agreement that all students require the same sorts of skills regardless of the pathway. Further there was general consensus that a set of agreed generic skills should be in all syllabuses.

Responses from teachers generally stressed that the learning should focus on processes and skills and that the current syllabuses have this focus. However greater emphasis could be placed on metacognition or the skills for learning to learn.

Literacy, in particular writing, reading and comprehension, and numeracy were considered the most important skills. Following is a summary of views and observations that were frequently made.

- A Prep to Year 12 focus could be developed by continuing into the Year 11 and 12 syllabuses the attributes of the lifelong learner described in the Key Learning Area (KLA) syllabuses. However, it was stressed that it is not enough to list these. Rather, they should be explained so they can guide teaching practices.
- Specific knowledge that all young people need included:
 - awareness of social issues
 - money management
 - civics and citizenship including the values of a democratic society
 - Indigenous histories, cultures, values, beliefs, languages, lifestyles and roles
 - multiculturalism.
- Many stressed the importance of reinforcing the development of 'enabling tools' and that these should be taught explicitly, for example:

- literacy, especially writing, reading and comprehension
- problem solving, reasoning, analysis and logic
- using technology to support learning
- ability to transfer skills and knowledge often associated with creativity and entrepreneurial skills
- communication skills both written and oral
- interpersonal skills such as negotiation and collaboration
- time management.
- The importance of developing attitudes or dispositions (Affective Domain) was also stressed while recognising that assessing attitudes is problematic. The following attributes were stressed:
 - work hard
 - independence and taking responsibility for own learning
 - common sense
 - resilience and adaptability
 - cooperation
 - respect.
- All responses commented on the importance of understanding ICTs and how the new technologies are used in learning. This was regarded as a necessity rather than an option.
- Content knowledge must also be valued. Teachers and higher education and training providers commented that there is subject specific knowledge that should be emphasised. The notion of ‘assumed knowledge’ requires further exploration to determine if specific subjects adequately prepare young people for different pathways. University faculties and training providers need to identify the specific knowledge required and this could guide subject development. This seems to be of particular importance in the maths and science areas where there are specific expectations about prior knowledge; in other areas skills that are more generic are required. Discussion about ‘assumed knowledge’ was also connected to the notion of mastery or the ability to repeat a performance at a later date. Participants stated that assumed knowledge and mastery should be linked to Sound achievement.
- Knowledge and understanding about post-school options is essential and this should be incorporated in how teachers talk about their subjects. Many participants added that this needs to go beyond information about the university pathway.
- When commenting on how these skills could be included, the most frequent responses were the inclusion of an opportunity to undertake an independent study, community engagement projects and work experience.
- Many felt that by Years 11 and 12 it is too late to begin to focus on generic skills and that these skills need to be developed over the whole twelve years. However, it was important that students engage with these sorts of skills as young adults with greater maturity.
- A number of lists of skills already available were suggested as a starting point for a possible list including the attributes of the lifelong learner in the KLAs, the Common Curriculum Elements (CCEs) that guide the development of the Queensland Core Skills (QCS) Test, the graduate skills used by the universities and employability skills identified by industry.

3.3 Issue 2: Structure of QSA syllabuses and syllabus design

Issue 2 asked participants to consider how syllabuses are designed including:

- length of courses
- organisation of courses
- the role of Authority and Authority-registered subjects
- the implications of any changes to the current design of syllabuses.

This issue generated a lot of discussion. A number of respondents felt there should be a common or core curriculum. In the main, the disciplinary basis for subjects was most frequently supported. It was suggested that assessment could include cross disciplinary tasks.

The flexibility in syllabuses is highly valued as it allows schools to serve different communities and meet local needs. In all discussions the importance of pedagogy was highlighted.

'I was surprised Science 21 got out in the form it's in, directing pedagogy — I would not like to see that again, it's too prescriptive in delivery style and this limits flexibility of delivery — resourcing requirements are very particular' (Head of Department).

3.3.1 Courses of different lengths

The consultation paper described the structure of the syllabuses as 'four-semester developmental courses based on 220 hours taken over two years and usually arranged as 55 hours of school time per semester.' This was generally regarded as a 'myth', especially Semester 4. Term 4 of Year 12 was described as 'a waste of time'. This meant that there was too much squeezed into what is effectively a 3½-semester program and that the assessment load in Term 3 was cause for concern.

'In Year 12 it's the volume of work not the depth that students find difficult' (Teacher).

Many asked why the number of hours drives the current course arrangements. Consequently there is considerable support for investigating courses of different lengths with greater support for year-long courses rather than semester length courses. Having different course lengths could provide opportunities to accelerate or provide longer courses that allow a three-year senior program. Shorter courses were thought to potentially offer more choice or flexibility and broaden the curriculum. The availability of some shorter courses would be consistent with the notion of 'credit' for the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) and might:

- suit students who find it difficult to sustain effort and interest over two years
- allow students to refocus and so formally recognise that students often change subjects in Year 11
- allow students to do more depth studies by adding additional extension subjects
- allow the introduction of courses that are more challenging for high-achieving students.

Some risks of varying the lengths of courses include:

- ensuring there is depth of learning
- ensuring there is increasing complexity.

While courses could vary in length, they should nevertheless be organised using the same format.

3.3.2 Developmental vs. modular or thematic approach

There was some debate about what 'developmental' means given that some syllabuses already offer a modular, unitised or thematic approach. For many of the syllabuses it was agreed that 'developmental' was more to do with the skills and processes than content - *'we're not content driven, we're process driven'* (Deputy Principal).

However, for all subjects, students had to know certain things. There was a level of frustration that some syllabuses were not specific enough about the required knowledge, for example the new Physics syllabus.

Modular organisation is a way of arranging learning that is used in Years 8–10, university and in training. It potentially offers schools greater flexibility and could make it easier for schools to offer combined or composite classes if numbers for a subject are low. Some suggestions raised included:

- develop courses that have a core with discretionary units/modules that could extend study beyond 220 hours, this could also include a tiered approach to offer units with differing degrees of challenge
- develop majors and minors along the lines of NSW and SA, for example a generic Year 11 with strands in Year 12
- develop new courses by mixing and matching related units from different existing syllabuses and develop courses similar to Aerospace or develop rules similar to those in training packages which allow some choice in the competencies that make up a qualification and allow some competencies from other training packages to be included. This could allow for the development of cross disciplinary studies, for example environmental studies, international studies and so on
- develop courses that have a broad industry focus, like Aerospace.

Risks included potential for ‘watering down’ and fragmentation. Participants also commented that with an increasingly mobile population the syllabuses would need to ensure students have the foundations regardless of where they attend school.

3.3.3 Some principles for developing courses of study

Several responses stated that syllabuses should be more than advice and that there should be greater consistency. Some principles that have been suggested include:

- make explicit links between subjects and show the overlaps
- specify companion subjects that act together and support each other, for example Maths C is the ‘gel’ between Maths B and Physics
- use plain English — ‘The Senior English syllabus is badly written with too much jargon’ (Parent)
- include clear definitions of terms and jargon, for example ‘holistic assessment’
- map content against the ‘assumed knowledge’ required for entry level university, training and industry
- ensure knowledge and skills are taught in context
- make explicit links to how the knowledge and skills are related to broad careers, not specific jobs
- ensure there are realistic expectations in terms of time for teaching, assessing and for students to achieve and demonstrate mastery of knowledge and skills
- include in every syllabus a concept map, Prep to Year12 for that subject that shows the learning journey
- provide clear statements of core expectations rather than ‘vague syllabuses’
- make sure it is a document that can be read and used by new teachers and experienced teachers; subject specialists and non-specialists, for example it should be very clear what has to be taught.

3.3.4 Two types of subject — Authority and Authority-registered

While there was considerable interest in exploring ways to develop a single suite of subjects, the educational community was clear that it needed to have access to syllabuses that were clearly academic and led to tertiary study at university. This meant that there needed to be greater clarity about what is meant by ‘academic rigour’ and ‘vocational learning’.

There was concern that Authority-registered subjects without vocational education and training (VET) qualifications do not lead anywhere. If these subjects are to continue then

there must be an explicit connection to related VET qualifications. For example, employers stated that the subjects purporting to prepare students for apprenticeships in electrical, automotive, boiler making and fitting and turning did not include the mathematics, physics and IT needed to support apprenticeships.

Risks mentioned by participants included:

- putting 'academic rigour' in Authority-registered subjects might deny some students a chance at success
- creating a single suite of syllabuses would mean that Authority-registered subjects would be included in the calculation of the OP.

3.3.5 Implications of changes to the current organisation of syllabuses

Implications for schools

The following issues were raised frequently:

- timetabling and resourcing, especially for smaller schools or schools in remote areas — although examples were given of how schools already timetable electives for Years 8, 9 and 10
- data collection
- duty of care responsibilities, especially for activities that are off campus.

Implications for professional development

The following issues were raised frequently:

- the need for better advice about program development as too much time is taken developing new courses in isolation with suggestions that templates and exemplars of work programs and specific units could be developed and made available on the internet
- the need for consistent advice — there were concerns that sometimes the advice given by panel chairs differs from that given by officers of the Authority
- the need for strategies for breaking down isolation in terms of professional conversations, especially in developing programs and sharing ideas.

Implications for tertiary entrance procedures

The following issues were raised frequently:

- OP drives student selection, therefore the number of subjects required for an OP should be reduced to four or three subjects and this would open up real options for students, for example students could do a combination of Authority and Authority-registered subjects
- there needs to be better understanding of the ranks and other pathways that use different combinations of subjects
- the OP reflects a narrow range of learning and there is a need to generate a different sort of indicator for tertiary entrance, more like the Field Positions
- if all subjects potentially contributed to tertiary entrance calculations then different weightings for different subjects could be used.

Implications for assessment and moderation procedures

While there were many critical comments regarding the amount and type of assessment required, there was no suggestion that there be a return to an external examination.

- Amount of assessment. Many participants felt there was too much assessment, especially in Term 3 of Year 12. One teacher commented that some students can have up to 24 pieces of summative assessment and the QCS Test in Term 3 of Year 12. As one participant asked, *'Just how many pieces of evidence are necessary?'* With the shift in emphasis to longer assessment items and the need to do formative tasks to practise means that time spent on assessment has increased.
- Types of assessment

- There were many comments that the syllabuses are now demanding too many extended types of assessment. So, while the number of assessment items has been reduced, individual assessment items may extend for up to 10 weeks.
- Some participants felt that the shift to long written tasks makes it very difficult for some students, especially boys. This shift was also described as ‘feminising’ the courses, for example the Biology syllabus.
- There need to be more opportunities to do applied tasks, for example science students love the practical work but do not like the assessment involving writing a journal.
- There should be more opportunities to do integrated assessment, especially in courses that overlap.
- There is an assumption that Sound Achievement means the student has achieved some mastery. However, Sound Level of Achievement is very broad so participants felt there needs to be some indication of position in the band.
- Moderation. Moderation processes would become very difficult if the syllabuses are changed to shorter courses or mix-and-match courses. Participants expressed concerns about the time allowed for panellists to review work and the perceived increase in responsibilities of the Standards and Assessment Officers.
- Employer and community participants stated that the system is overly complex and that there needs to be clear information that is readily available.

3.4 Issue 3 — The suite of syllabuses and pathways

Issue 3 asked participants to consider the suite of subjects and whether the range of subjects meets the needs of students.

Most schools offer about 20 to 25 of the nearly 80 syllabuses and specifications available from the QSA. Most agreed that schools must have a choice from which to build courses that cater to the diverse needs and capabilities of their students. It was observed that flexibilities could operate within a subject without the necessity of having more courses.

While a significant number of respondents indicated that there are too many subjects, they also noted that it would be very difficult to determine which subjects should be deleted. Some suggestions for deleting subjects ranged from removing all the Authority-registered subjects to deleting ‘wishy washy’ subjects to amalgamating subjects that are very similar.

The need for schools to provide a ‘good education’ and a Prep to Year 12 focus was again stressed.

Participants commented on the inconsistencies in the intellectual demand in subjects within the suite of Authority subjects. Many commented on the imbalance between the number of subjects that are perceived to prepare students for university as opposed to other post-school options. It was felt that there needs to be greater recognition of the diversity of students and the range of their learning needs. This may mean several streams linked to specific pathways.

‘Students who go to university are well prepared but we are letting down students entering training or work’ (Teacher).

and

‘What we think we are producing differs from what the universities believe they are getting’ (Assistant Principal).

3.4.1 Links to the pathways

- Many felt there must be greater clarity about the purpose of Authority and Authority-registered subjects and what makes them different.

- There should be a range of subjects that have explicit links to broad careers and industry; there also need to be clear links to VET.
- Advice about careers and post-school options is important. This means also educating parents about the different pathways and how this relates to subject selection.
- The learning and knowledge needs of first-year study at university or in vocational education and training courses at Certificate III and above should be investigated.
- Opportunities for adult learning approaches could be included in the syllabuses.
- Better communication about the subjects is required for parents and employers.

3.4.2 Gaps in the suite

The following sorts of courses were identified as missing from the suite:

- courses for disengaged students
- transition courses for students who continue to struggle in basic areas of learning
- courses for students planning to enter apprenticeships, especially in Maths, Physics and Business
- VET pathways for girls — currently girls are being directed to low-paid, low-skill pathways
- ‘middle courses’ — the gap between Authority and Authority-registered subjects is too great
- courses for high achieving talented students
- capacity to integrate subjects.

The following specific areas of study were identified as missing from the suite:

- a need for different English courses, for example, English A, English B and English C in the same way that there are different courses for Maths and Science that are used in the calculation for the OP
- Authority subject in English as a Second Language, such as is available in other states for international students as well as Indigenous students
- money management
- civics, citizenship and community involvement
- personal management including the practical skills needed for living away from home
- LOTE at a higher level for native speakers
- links to new and emerging industries
- fresh water marine studies for rural areas.

3.4.3 Comments on specific subjects

Some specific subjects were mentioned at the forums.

English

Many participants felt that a general restructure of English was long overdue and that the current English syllabus did not meet the needs of all students. This was considered to be an urgent equity issue as English is a requirement for entry to most post-school destinations. Specific comments about the current syllabus included:

- the syllabus is too culturally based and many students, even native speakers, are overwhelmed by the course
- the syllabus is a critical literacy course, not English
- the syllabus is very difficult to read and understand by teachers and parents
- the assessment criteria mean it is very hard to achieve a Very High Achievement (VHA). While ESL students can demonstrate their abilities in the criterion about use and

manipulation of language, it is difficult for them to achieve a VHA because of the cultural bias in Criterion 3

- many schools have significant problems with work program accreditation and verification submissions because of inconsistent interpretation and application of requirements.

Suggestions for what is needed included:

- more on language development, communication skills and reading
- an Authority English as a Second Language subject (ESL) such as is available in all other Australian states and which is more than an appendix to a syllabus
- a range of Authority English subjects that could include technical English or a 'middle' subject along with the current syllabus — many felt the gap between English Communication and English was too great and a 'middle', 'practical' subject was needed that could contribute to the OP
- English Communication should also include some aspects of critical literacy.

Maths

Some participants felt there has been a decline in standards in Maths over the last 10 years. They claimed that students with a Sound Level of Achievement in Maths B have very poor algebraic skills and poor problem-solving skills. These skills were felt to be fundamental in a course like Maths B.

The Maths courses should be renamed (not A, B and C) and repackaged. There is a need for a mathematics course targeted to the needs of apprentices.

New Physics Syllabus

Generally it was felt that the new syllabus would be great for experienced teachers but would not be helpful for inexperienced or non-specialist teachers. It has only one page devoted to content (p. 12) and this would lead to huge discrepancies across the State. There is no mathematical guidance for Physics. Only nine lines describe the mandatory aspects (p. 21). Most of the document is about assessment and the assessment is too much like social science.

Biology

Like the Physics syllabus, respondents felt that the syllabus was written by experienced Biology teachers for experienced Biology teachers. The syllabus does not specify areas of content in a logical and systemic way and there is no academic justification for the reclassification of biological knowledge. There is little advice regarding what must be treated in depth and the extended experimental investigation does not have a realistic timeframe .

Modern History

The cognitive and language demands of modern history are hard therefore fewer students are opting to do it. A rounded education needs subjects that foster decision-making. For many students the only learning about our society is being done through the English syllabus.

Physical Education

Physical Education has changed and has moved away from the sports sciences.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies needs to be 'renamed' and developed as a course that appeals to the broad range of students.

3.5 Issue 4 Year 10

Issue 4 asked participants to consider the purpose of Year 10 and how well Year 10 leads onto Year 11.

Most regarded Year 10 as the beginning of the senior phase of learning and agreed with the purposes for Year 10 described in the consultation paper. All participants felt that there needed to be some decisions made about Year 10. This would include:

- clarity about the purpose of Year 10 as an opportunity to attain Level 6 as well as undertake 'taster' or 'challenge' subjects or begin VET
- consideration of the national agenda for greater consistency
- how the learning in Year 10 (or Level 6) links to Year 11 work
- advice on approaches to Year 10 and suitable learning experiences. Many schools describe Year 10 programs structured around a core, usually English, Maths and possibly science, and electives. The electives are modelled on Year 11 and Year 12 subjects and use the same names and assessment criteria. Electives also include VET. Schools using this approach say it cuts down the 'churning' in Year 11. These courses provide background knowledge or introductory study and do not cut into Year 11 or Year 12 work. They are not prerequisites. Some schools offer these courses over semesters 1 and 2 whereas other schools offer these only in semester 2.
- accountability in Year 10 assessment
- the need for clear guidelines for those Year 11 subjects that actually do need prerequisites, for example languages.

The risks associated with making a central decision about Year 10 include:

- the need to accommodate many different types of school organisation, for example Prep to Year 10, Years 8–12, Years 10–12, Prep to Year 12, senior colleges with Years 11 and 12 only and schools using a vertical timetable
- the belief that once the Year 10 to 11 transition is worked out the problem will shift to the divide between Years 9 and 10
- fear about bringing Year 11 work into Year 10

3.5.1 Differences between Year 10 and Year 11

Students and other respondents described the following differences between Year 10 and Year 11:

- delivery in Year 11 was different with students feeling that they got one chance to 'get it', unlike in Years 1–10 when things were done several times, and this puts greater pressure on them
- higher expectations
- content load
- assessment requirements.

3.5.2 Strengthening the links between Year 10 and Year 11

Participants regarded the review as a real opportunity to develop a Prep to Year 12 focus. To do this, the following were suggested:

- alignment between Years 1 to 10 and Years 11 and 12 syllabuses by providing links which could include making clear the minimum knowledge and skill requirements for Year 11 subjects, consistent language and terminology
- map Year 10 to Year 11 using the Common Curriculum Elements (CCEs) such has been done at Cathedral College and St Mary's in Maryborough
- identify the core skills for success in Year 11 and build these in Year 10 programs
- provide students with better information through the SET plan process
- focus on skill development in Year 10 especially learning to learn skills and time management
- use semester 2 as a transition semester and offer bridging courses using beyond Level 6 outcomes.

3.6 Issue 5 Ongoing review

Issue 5 asked participants to consider the ongoing development and maintenance of the syllabuses.

3.6.1 Introducing new syllabuses

There was some concern that the six-year cycle is too long to introduce new subjects and that the process should be simplified. The development process should include business/industry and university representation. However, they should not 'drive' the process but rather provide a practical and realistic component for the subject. Representation should include those who work with students who have just done Year 12 and practising teachers from 'across the divide' that is, teachers of Year 10 students and Year 11.

Many commented that professional development for the introduction of new syllabuses was good only if the school was a trial or pilot school. For schools introducing the syllabus later there was little if no support. Many felt there should be more professional development and assistance on line, such as templates and support documents. The process should be open and transparent and without the 'secrecy' that has surrounded past syllabus development.

3.6.2 Reviewing syllabuses

Many felt that not all subjects need the same review cycle. A suitable review cycle is every three years; a six-year cycle of review is too long. Most agreed that any review process must include teacher, student, employer, VET and higher education surveys. It should also include socio-economic and demographic data about outcomes and destinations and whether students doing the subject are making a successful transition.

There was a suggestion that instead of reviewing the syllabuses periodically, there should be more regular reviews of work programs.

An overarching review committee with representation from the key stakeholder groups should be tasked with ensuring that duplication is kept to a minimum and that there is good communication between different development teams.

Ideally the syllabuses in related areas should be reviewed at the same time and this should be across Prep to Year 12.

4. Issues outside the scope of this project

Participants took the opportunity to raise other issues affecting schools, such as:

- the difficulty in changing mindsets about subjects and the primacy of the OP
- 'change-fatigue' in schools
- the aging teacher workforce
- teachers having to teach in areas for which they are not qualified
- the resourcing difficulties of small schools or remote schools
- the need for more information, guidance and support for teachers online such as templates and samples
- the importance of the relationship between teachers and the QSA
- the QSA needs to actively promote its syllabuses and play an active role in the community debates about learning through press releases, information for parents, students and schools.

5. Conclusion

From this consultation, themes that emerged included:

- the need to change teaching practices, as well as the syllabuses, and the associated need for more professional development

- the desire for a Prep to Year 12 framework that shows the learning in the syllabuses on a continuum of learning
- an urgent need to strengthen the learning links between Year 10 and Year 11 and clarify the sorts of programs that could be offered during Year 10
- flexibility is valued and this could be further enhanced by courses of varying lengths or a modular design and not necessarily by increasing the overall number of subjects
- there is a set of generic skills that all students should have opportunities to develop and that these should be included in all syllabuses and they should be taught and assessed
- consideration of one suite of subjects rather than two, if not then there must be a clear understanding of what makes Authority and Authority-registered syllabuses (and subjects) different in terms of the learning provided — not the type of student studying them
- the disciplinary basis of subjects was supported but there is also a recognition that there should also be opportunities for cross disciplinary learning
- syllabus design should include clear direction on what must be taught and assessed, make explicit links to companion subjects and where the learning overlaps, have a common structure and language and reflect the real time available for students to achieve and demonstrate mastery
- concern about the assessment load and investigation of the possibility of integrated assessment tasks especially in courses that overlap or independent assessment tasks
- the need to include in the syllabuses a description of how the learning in the different syllabuses links to broad career areas (not specific jobs)
- a perceived mismatch between new policy positions and the calculation of the OP
- the importance of advice, guidance and planning
- recognition that syllabuses have different audiences that include experienced and inexperienced teachers, specialist and non-specialist teachers, parents, and possibly students, therefore the syllabuses must be in plain English and include a glossary if jargon is used
- reduction in the time to develop and review of syllabuses
- development and review process should include: an investigation of the learning needs of first year university courses, Certificate III and above vocational education and training courses and entry level employment to determine what is the 'assumed knowledge' and map this to the syllabuses; greater collaboration between development teams and the use of socio-economic and demographic data
- technology should be used more for on-line professional development and consistent advice about program development. Support including templates, exemplars of work programs and specific units should be available online.

APPENDIX 1 Review of Syllabuses Terms of Reference

1. To review current QSA Years 11 and 12 syllabuses in terms of content, construction and scope and how these fit with new and emerging knowledge, future learning and employment pathways for young people including:
 - how well Authority and Authority-registered subjects allow for study programs that prepare students for future post-school destinations?
 - how well areas of knowledge or disciplines are represented and how adequately they are addressed?
 - whether alternative syllabus design is desirable for some subjects and some areas of knowledge?
 - whether options that suit the needs and capabilities of all students are available?
 - whether selections possible under the QCE and the options they provide for students allow for a balance between a general education, completion of Year 12 and more specific study in particular areas of knowledge?
 - how well the suite of Years 11 and 12 syllabuses connect with the KLA 1-10 syllabuses.

2. To research how knowledge and/or disciplines are 'packaged', delivered and assessed including a structure for Year 11 and 12 syllabuses that covers the areas of knowledge appropriate for inclusion in the senior phase of schooling

3. To consult with community and stakeholders on what is a syllabus and who syllabuses serve

4. To develop and recommend a senior syllabus framework for the future that enables schools to meet the needs of students and the post-school pathways they are seeking including syllabus design principles

5. To develop an implementation plan including:
 - criteria for the maintenance of Years 11 and 12 syllabuses into the future
 - an approach to the redevelopment of the current suite of syllabuses.

APPENDIX 2 — Forum schedules

Schedule of state-wide community forums

Place	Date	Venue	Times		
			12.30 to 2.00	5.30 to 7.00	Student Forum
Cairns	18 October	Cairns SHS	✓	✓	
Thursday Island	19 October	Thursday Island SHS Additional forum held 3.30 pm	✓	✓	2–3 pm
Townsville	24 October	Thuringowa SHS	✓	✓	
Mackay	25 October	St Patrick's Senior College	✓	✓	
Rockhampton	26 October	Rockhampton Girls Grammar School	✓	✓	10.30– 11.30 am
Mt Isa	31 October	Spinifex State College Student forum 1 November	✓	✓	9.30– 10.30 am
Longreach	2 November	Longreach SHS	✓	✓	9.00– 10.00 am
Brisbane North	7 November	Mount Alvernia College	✓	✓	
Roma	8–9 November	Roma Middle School Additional forum held at 10.30 am 9 November	✓	✓	
Brisbane South	14 November	San Sisto College	✓	✓	
Maryborough	15 November	Maryborough SHS	✓	✓	
Ipswich	21 November	West Moreton Anglican College	✓	✓	
Cairns (three additional forums)	21 November	Cairns International Hotel			
Toowoomba	23 November	Fairholme College	✓	✓	
Gold Coast	28 November	Palm Beach Currumbin SHS	✓	✓	
Sunshine Coast	30 November	Matthew Flinders Anglican College	✓	✓	

Schedule of key stakeholder meetings

Group	Date	Location	Time
Higher Education	Friday 4 November	8.2	10.00 am to noon
Unions	Friday 18 November	8.2	1.30–3.30 pm
Employer Groups	Tuesday 22 November	8.2	10.00 to noon
Principals' Associations	Tuesday 29 November	7.2	10.00 to noon
Queensland Catholic Parents & Friends State Committee	Saturday 3 December	North Quay	11.00 am – noon
AISQ Executive Committee Education Committee	Monday 5 December	Warren Street	Noon – 1.00 pm
Parent Organisations	Wednesday 25 January 2006	Authority Room	9.30–11.00 pm

Schedule of briefings

Organisation	Date	Location	Time
Secondary Principals Reference Group	Friday 7 October	Floor 14 Authority Room	1.00– 4.00 pm
Special Needs Principals Reference Group	Thursday 13 October	Floor 14 Authority Room	1.00– 4.00 pm
P–12 Principals Reference Group	Friday 14 October	Floor 14 Authority Room	1.00– 4.00 pm
Equity Committee Meeting	Wednesday 19 October	Floor 14 Authority Room	9.30 am to 12.30 pm
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee Meeting	Tuesday 25 October	Floor 14 Authority Room	10.00 am to 3.00 pm
Assessment, Moderation and Certification Committee Meeting	Wednesday 26 October	Floor 14 Authority Room	9.30 am to 3.00 pm
VET Committee Meeting	Monday 31 October	Floor 14 Authority Room	9.30 am to 12.30 pm
Maths Syllabus Advisory Committee	Friday 4 November	Floor 14 Authority Room	2.00 to 2.30pm
Tertiary Entrance Committee Meeting	Thursday 10 November	Floor 14 Authority Room	9.30 am to 1.00 pm
P–12 Curriculum Committee Meeting	Friday 11 November	Floor 14 Authority Room	9.30 am to 4.00 pm
Education Queensland	Wednesday 16 November	7.2	10.00 am to noon
Queensland Catholic Education Commission	Wednesday 16 November	7.2	2.30– 4.30 pm
Department of Employment and Training	Friday 25 November	8.2	12.30–2.30 pm
Association of Independent Schools Queensland	Friday 25 November	8.2	3.00– 5.00 pm
Education Queensland	Tuesday 13 December	Education House	9.30– 11.00 am

APPENDIX 3 Written submissions

52 Individual Submissions

Group Submissions

Association of Independent Schools, Queensland	Kingaroy State High School Staff
Association of Independent Schools, Queensland - ESL	Kingston College Adult Education Centre
Brisbane School of Distance Education	Miami State High School Staff
Cavendish Road State High School Staff	Nerang Consortium of Schools
Catholic Education – Archdiocese of Brisbane	Nudgee International College
Catholic Education – Diocese of Rockhampton	Pioneer State High School
Central Queensland University – Faculty of Education and Creative Arts	Queensland Catholic Education Commission
Chinese Language Teachers' Association of Queensland	Queensland Council of Parents and Citizens' Associations
Curriculum Committee All Hallows' School	Queensland Teachers' Union
Curriculum Committee Marsden State High School	QSA Science Subject Advisory Committee
Daintree Eco Lodge and Spa	QSA Visual Arts Subject Advisory Committee
Department of Education and the Arts	Rockhampton Grammar School Staff
Department of Emergency Services	Roma Teacher Induction Conference group
Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Water, Natural Resource Sciences	Runcorn State High School Council
Education Queensland	Runcorn State High School Staff
English Teachers Association of Queensland	St John Fisher College staff
Gindarra Aboriginal Corporation Board Members and Community Members	St Peter's Lutheran College
Griffith University Faculty of Education	Senior Phase of Learning Reference Group, South East Queensland Cross Sectoral Group supporting a Senior ESL Authority Subject
Indigenous Futures Working Group	Townsville District
Indooroopilly State High School	Toowong College Staff
Interest group supporting agricultural and horticultural subjects	University of Queensland – Faculty of Biological and Chemical Sciences
JDM and Sudanese students	University of Queensland – Faculties of Arts, Business Economics and Law, Engineering, Physical Sciences and Architecture, Health Sciences, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Veterinary Science, Social and Behavioural Sciences
James Cook University School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences	VET network
John Fisher College Staff	Woodridge State High School Staff