State Review Panel Reports

2008

(Report of the 2007 state review panels)
FOREWORD

The Queensland system of moderated school-based assessment in senior secondary schools involves review panels established at two levels — state and district. In 2007, review panels again performed crucial tasks central to the operation of our system.

The roles of state review panels are to:
- help district review panels and schools develop procedures that are consistent with the processes of moderated school-based assessment in senior secondary schooling in Queensland
- supervise the maintenance of statewide standards in senior subjects across all districts
- recommend approval of work programs and levels of achievement in senior subjects offered by schools across the state.

This document is a collation of reports of the moderation processes for senior secondary subjects in general implementation. Each state review panel chair prepares a report in consultation with an officer of the Queensland Studies Authority.

The document will help schools implement procedures that are consistent with the processes of moderated school-based assessment in Queensland senior secondary schooling.

Kim Bannikoff
Director
CONTENTS

Foreword....................................................................................................................................................... 1
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies — B31................................................................. 1
Accounting — B12................................................................. 3
Agricultural Science — A21................................................................................................................... 5
Ancient History — B38.......................................................................................................................... 6
Biology — A06................................................................................................................................. 9
Business Communication and Technologies — B28.......................................................... 11
Business Organisation and Management — B25.............................................................................. 12
Chemistry — A04............................................................................................................................... 14
Chemistry (extended trial-pilot) — A34......................................................................................... 16
Chinese — B23.................................................................................................................................... 18
Dance — B19...................................................................................................................................... 21
Drama — B22..................................................................................................................................... 23
Earth Science — A07.......................................................................................................................... 25
Economics — B29............................................................................................................................. 26
Engineering Technology — A18....................................................................................................... 29
English — B35...................................................................................................................................... 31
English Extension (Literature) — B37........................................................................................... 34
Film, Television and New Media — B40......................................................................................... 39
French and French Extension — B02............................................................................................. 42
Geography — B34............................................................................................................................. 45
German and German Extension — B03.......................................................................................... 49
Graphics — A13................................................................................................................................... 52
Health Education — A19.................................................................................................................... 55
Home Economics — A25................................................................................................................... 58
Hospitality Studies — A22.................................................................................................................. 62
Indonesian — B06.............................................................................................................................. 65
Information Processing and Technology — A16................................................................................. 68
Information Technology Systems — A26......................................................................................... 70
Italian — B04........................................................................................................................................ 72
Japanese — B05.................................................................................................................................... 75
Legal Studies — B21........................................................................................................................... 78
Marine Studies — A27.......................................................................................................................... 81
Mathematics A — A36.......................................................................................................................... 83
Mathematics B — A37.......................................................................................................................... 85
Mathematics C — A38.......................................................................................................................... 86
Modern History — B39.......................................................................................................................... 87
Multi-Strand Science — A08.............................................................................................................. 90
Music — B26......................................................................................................................................... 91
Music Extension — B36...................................................................................................................... 94
Other Languages — B32..................................................................................................................... 97
Philosophy and Reason — A14......................................................................................................... 99
Physical Education — A24.................................................................................................................. 101
Physics — A05................................................................................................................................. 104
Physics (extended trial-pilot) — A35.................................................................................................... 106
Study of Religion — B20..................................................................................................................... 109
Study of Society — B11....................................................................................................................... 111
Technology Studies — A23................................................................................................................ 113
Tourism — B41.................................................................................................................................... 115
Visual Art — B14............................................................................................................................... 118
Syllabus

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies syllabus is in its seventh year of general implementation and is currently under revision. This review will be finalised in 2008 and has been informed by key stakeholders, members of the community and teachers of the subject. The revised syllabus will be in general implementation in 2009.

The state panel encourages teachers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies to take the opportunity to consider the current program and actively feedback any ideas/concerns regarding assessment and other aspects of the syllabus. Ultimately it is the teachers who have worked with the current syllabus who will be working with the new syllabus, so feedback from this important group is essential. Feedback can be directed to Mayrah.Dreise@qsa.qld.edu.au.

Statewide comparability

In Queensland, the major form of moderation is more properly called social moderation where groups of teachers assure the quality of assessment instruments and meet together in order to ensure that judgments of standards across schools are comparable to the syllabus standards.

There has been an improvement in statewide comparability of standards. Another improvement noted is the percentage of students receiving a level of achievement of Sound Achievement or above. Panel acknowledges the support schools are providing to their cohorts to assist in the improvement of standards; such support is evident in the quality of assessment tasks and the use of scaffolding and other support strategies.

Course coverage

In general, schools have developed some unique learning experiences for the distinct needs of the students in the cohort and the school’s geographic locations. One of the strengths of such a syllabus is the flexibility it offers to schools to be able to do this. There has been a good coverage of the foundation topics Identity, Culture and Origins and Change from school to school.

It is important to consider when planning and implementing the school’s course coverage:
1. Have I provided a balance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content?
2. Does the content and assessment task reflect the depth required in the exit standards?

The syllabus clearly states that the general objectives of the course are divided into five categories: Knowing & understanding, Managing, Processing, Communicating, and Affective. The four assessable exit criteria are derived from the general objectives and are reflected in the exit criteria and standards matrix. To allow students the opportunity to demonstrate appropriate depth, teachers are to be guided by the syllabus. Across the verification folio of work it is expected that the review panel will see that students can:

- know the facts, key ideas and concepts of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
- identify and define a variety of ideas and Indigenous perspectives
- show understanding of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
- observe protocols
- access and record information
- demonstrate control of the purposes and practices of time management
- analyse and process information
- apply concepts
- decide about hypotheses
evaluate the quality and validity of information.

**Quality of assessment**

In general, assessment instruments assess what they intend to assess. The state panel recommends that to avoid being an obstacle to student achievement, 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, and be used under conditions that do not present an inappropriate barrier to the equal participation of all.

Given the nature of most cohorts enrolled in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, it is crucial that the items be clearly presented through appropriate choice of layout, cues, visual design, format and choice of words, state their requirements explicitly and directly, and only use background material and assumed knowledge that students may reasonably be presumed to have had ready access to.

Balance of assessment is balance over a course of study within the two-year course of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. This includes a suitable balance in the general objectives, assessment tasks, conditions and criteria. The state panel would like to highlight that by the conclusion of the course, students should have acquired knowledge and understanding of the histories, societies and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Panel noted an improvement in the emphasis placed on the research process, the scaffolding of tasks and presentation of notes, drafts etc., in helping to authenticate student work and to capture the processes involved in the research tasks. It is these pieces of evidence that in the end help to support the school’s judgments about student achievement.

**Subject support**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies has only a state panel. This panel moderates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Future Studies, and Political Studies. Panel training occurs yearly at annual conference. The website is currently under review. In 2008, there will be annotated assessment tasks and sample tasks available for schools to access. Schools are also invited to subscribe to QSA memorandums and to regularly check the website for details of workshops. A series of consultation meetings in relation to the revision of the syllabus are currently being held across the state. Please be aware that the teacher survey for gathering information about the syllabus will be in schools early in 2008.

Shane Curley  
State Review Panel Chair

Lucie Sorensen  
Senior Education Officer
Syllabus

The Accounting syllabus has entered into the fourth year of implementation.

Feedback from districts

Work programs were approved by the end of Term 4, 2006. After verification, two submissions were unresolved. Both of these were successfully finalised before exit.

Feedback from district review panel chairs identified the following:

- Evidence of high-quality Knowledge, interpretation & evaluation (KIE) responses from students, particularly in higher-order thinking skills, lacking in submissions.
- Language not being clearly indicated in student scripts.
- Balance between “knowledge” and “interpretation and evaluation” in the KIE criterion.
- Use of a 15-point scale to determine global standards rather than basing this decision on the match between the evidence in the folio and the stated syllabus standards.

Statewide comparability

A trend towards including the calculation of ratios in the KIE criterion in topic RD3, Financial reports, was noticed in a number of districts. The calculation of ratios would usually be regarded as appropriate for an instrument assessing Routine practical procedures (RPP) rather than KIE. When assessing RD3 as KIE the ratios and end-of-period reports can be given to students. The emphasis should be on the analysis and interpretation not the calculation of ratios. Calculation of ratios needs to be taught no matter how the topic is being assessed. Students need to understand how the ratios and end-of-period reports have been calculated as this informs their interpretation and evaluation. Consideration needs to be given to the “knowledge” component when assessing RD3.

The state panel was satisfied that comparability existed across the state for most levels of achievement. A small number of threshold VHA folios did not demonstrate evidence to substantiate their level of achievement placement. Principally this was due either to a lack of opportunity in the instrument for students to demonstrate their processing skills or, in some cases, a lack of emphasis on the criteria sheet to the higher-order thinking skills.

Verification submissions need to include atypical (not completing all semesters of work) folios only if this is the only sample within this level of achievement.

Course coverage

To ensure that the assessment instruments allow students to meet the exit criteria it is important to focus on the complete syllabus document. Two areas that are of some concern are the interpretation and evaluation element of the Knowledge, interpretation & evaluation criterion and also the Challenging practical application criterion. The advice offered to schools from panel at monitoring should be used to ensure that syllabus requirements are addressed before verification.

This impacts on the VHA and HA students as the exit criteria specifies that the student must be able to apply their knowledge of accounting concepts and principles to analyse and interpret information and to solve problems and make valid decisions and recommendations. If instruments do not provide these opportunities, the student is unable to demonstrate their ability and the panel is unable to find evidence to substantiate the level of achievement awarded. The reduced number of opportunities for assessment outlined in the 2003 (amended 2006) syllabus mean that this is more crucial than in the past.

An issue with the course coverage of the Challenging practical application criterion is similar but generally not as widespread. Schools must ensure that all elements of the syllabus are considered in
this criterion and not just a heavy reliance on ensuring that the list of “usual but complicated elements” is met. The exit criteria, Standard A, for CPA has four elements to it: schools should ensure that all CPA instruments allow students to demonstrate a quality of work which matches these descriptors.

**Quality of assessment**

Generally the quality of assessment was of a good standard. Of particular note is the improvement in the quality of assessment instruments for R6, “E-Business”. It was pleasing to see a number of schools who have revised their assessment in this topic to ensure students are able to show higher-order processing skills. On occasions the question may be quite effective but, because so much scaffolding is given, the question does not allow the student to do the processing/higher-order thinking. At other times too little information is provided and the student cannot be expected to make the leap that is required to answer the questions posed. Schools should develop questions that allow students to compare and contrast, weigh up alternatives, apply theory to a real business, or provide information that students have to synthesise and then apply to a situation and make a recommendation.

It was also pleasing to note that the issues with instruments testing RD4, “Managerial Accounting” and RC3, “Inventories” were generally of a sufficient substance to award a standard when assessed independently.

When developing instruments that assess the challenging elements or higher-order processing skills, it is necessary to ensure that the correct emphasis on these elements is afforded in the task-specific criteria sheet. Sometimes criteria sheets do not match the task being assessed. A criteria sheet needs to be written to match the specific task. When using task-specific criteria sheets, standard schemas must also be included that give the correct balance to the dimensions and do not over emphasise the language component.

**Subject support**

No workshops or panel training are expected in 2008. The secure subject support material of the QSA will have more assessment instruments uploaded regularly.

Phillipa Greig          Tammy Hope
State Review Panel Chair  Senior Education Officer
AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE — A21

Syllabus

The syllabus has undergone a minor revision. The 2007 Agricultural Science syllabus is to be implemented with Year 11 students in 2008.

Feedback from districts

All students exited the course in 2007 under approved work programs.

At monitoring, panels provide professional advice to schools about implementation of the course and the standards of assessment. It is important for schools to consider this advice carefully. The senior education officer is available to assist schools in implementing this advice.

The four district panels are to be commended on their efficient operation, highlighted most notably by the lack of unresolved submissions again this year.

Statewide comparability

District samples displayed a high degree of comparability of standards across the state.

Course coverage

The evidence provided indicates that schools are implementing courses that satisfy syllabus requirements in terms of coverage of the course.

Quality of assessment

The panel found that most tasks were of an appropriate standard to allow students to demonstrate their achievement across the three exit criteria.

Schools are continuing their development of integrated tasks to better elicit evidence of the “interpretation and analysis” and “evaluation and synthesis” aspects of the problem-solving criterion.

In some cases, assessment of the Problem solving and Communication criteria was simplistic, not allowing students the opportunity to demonstrate the full range of standards in these criteria.

Schools should use the “Minimum standards associated with exit criteria” on page 40 of the syllabus to inform the design of assessment tasks and associated task-specific criteria sheets.

Subject support

Syllabus implementation workshops for the 2007 Agricultural Science syllabus were held during the year. These workshops highlighted key features of the revised syllabus and the requirements for work programs.

Panel training of all Agricultural Science panels occurred throughout the year.

Adam Burke  Natalie Konecki
State Review Panel Chair  Acting Principal Education Officer
ANCIENT HISTORY — B38

Syllabus

All students studying Ancient History are working from the 2004 syllabus. The Ancient History syllabus will enter Year 4 in 2008.

Feedback from districts

Work programs were approved by the deadline of the September holidays, with one being approved before exit. All schools presently offering Ancient History in Queensland now have approved work programs.

Statewide comparability

Each year, state panels engage in an activity where samples from each of the 13 districts are reviewed, to consider whether work in our subject is comparable to the syllabus standards, on a statewide basis. It should be noted that these samples are not exemplars but samples of work typically approved within a district. The focus of this comparability meeting was “samples of threshold achievement levels”.

This meeting also provides the opportunity for submissions that have been unresolved at verification to be resolved. Three submissions were unresolved after verification. Each of these was finalised either during, or immediately after comparability meetings.

Schools and district panels are still coming to grips with the standards required by the 2004 syllabus and, as such, there was evidence of a range of interpretations. In most instances, the state panel was able to match the evidence in the sample folios with the standards described within the exit criteria in the syllabus.

As with 2006, state panel saw the most consistency in the assessment and verification of standards for Criterion 3. There was some significant variance in the application and assessment of Criterion 1. Additionally, there was significant variance in the application and assessment of Criterion 2, most notably with the enabling criteria which deal with evaluative processes. The variance usually came in sample folios in the VHA and HA ranges, unsurprisingly, given the greater complexity required to achieve these standards.

Course coverage

During the comparability meeting, it remains clear that schools have continued to offer diverse and engaging courses to their students. It is evident that schools are showing an increased connectedness to the themes outlined in the syllabus, with most enquiries observed in sample work suggesting a clear engagement with the purpose statements in the syllabus.

Quality of assessment

The panel recognises that many schools have enhanced their understanding of each of the categories of assessment and hope that the following may be useful in revisions and rewrites.

Schools appear to be having difficulty demonstrating the elements of Criterion 1, which appears to have been an ongoing issue. Within this criterion, the issues that were evident were as follows:

- Questions for investigation are often not being devised. In these instances, there is often little connection to the inquiry or to the aspects of inquiry.
- Critical reflection is more often than not a record of activity rather than thinking. Reflection should be directed at historiographical issues and the development of the argument.
- Some submissions had no evidence of research, yet standards were still being awarded. In this
situation, it becomes problematic for panels trying to verify results. Unannotated photocopying is not evidence of research.

- Students must make explicit references to the specific sources in their research notes. Schools must not allow broad, sweeping or unsubstantiated statements to be acknowledged as evidence of high-level reflection. Students should be required to consider the qualifications of the authors they are using.
- On the whole, schools provided significantly better evidence of the process of inquiry, with the process of revising the hypothesis being more clearly evident.
- Panels are looking for evidence of engagement with the process of inquiry, as made specific in the aspects of inquiry, described within the syllabus. The sample folios provided at comparability suggest that schools need to continue to focus on this. Many schools are presenting evidence of Criterion 1 where there is a great amount of research and reflection, but in many cases depth was not evident, even in folios at VHA and HA level.

**Criterion 2 is often subject to** inflated estimates of the standards. This area is the second most commonly noted concern.

- Most notably this is evident in areas involving students being able to “perceptively interpret values and motives and identify perspectives, while acknowledging the time period and context of the source” “corroborate primary and secondary sources” “evaluate the relevance, representativeness, likely accuracy and likely reliability of sources” [derived from standards associated with exit criteria]
- Significant improvement was noted in the assessment of this criterion in Category 4 tasks.

**Marking schemas must take** the form of a marking rubric which is derived from the standards in the syllabus; not “tick boxes”.

- Where the standards have been “translated”, these must not represent an omission or simplification of the elements outlined in the exit criteria. Schools which omit specific indicators from the syllabus significantly disadvantage their students at verification and exit.
- Appropriate feedback would necessitate a breaking down of the student’s achievement in each of the various enabling criteria, not a broad global mark.

**Category 1 assessment items** are well constructed on the whole. Schools should clearly note which sources are seen and which sources are unseen, and ensure that they are clear on what is meant by these terms in this context. Schools should try to ensure that:

- students structure their essays in a manner that responds directly to their set questions, rather than in a “source-by-source” manner: this approach is simplistic and would not achieve the cohesion necessary to achieve standards A or B in Criterion 2
- Category 1 tasks also require students to demonstrate their knowledge
- students demonstrate an engagement with seen and unseen sources, where applicable
- there is a clear question or contention within the task.

**Analytical expository genre** is often not always being demonstrated adequately. Essay and paragraph structures and the misuse of acceptable referencing standards are the key issues, although it was noted that there was less emphasis on narrative and more on argument in the sample folios this year.

**There was a trend for sample folios** to fail to demonstrate the use of an acknowledged system of referencing. This is a syllabus requirement, and one which students will need to acquire should they go on to further studies.

**Category 3 tasks represent** an opportunity for students to demonstrate their prowess in an alternative mode. Schools should remember that this type of assessment is not a “simplified” version of a Category 2 task type. It is expected that the process of inquiry is applied as rigorously to a Category 3 task as it is to a Category 2 task.
Few schools seem to be experiencing success in writing Category 2 tasks in which the stipulated genre is historical novel chapters. Students continue to struggle to appropriately demonstrate the requirements of Criterion 2. If tasks of this sort are chosen, the school must ensure that it is structured in such a way as to ensure the effective incorporation of primary and secondary sources. The use of extensive endnotes or footnotes is recommended. In general, the state panel advises that all schools should use genres of writing with which their teachers are very comfortable. Indeed, the use of “other genres” such as feature articles should involve the explicit teaching and instruction in these genres.

Subject support

Panel training is scheduled for Semester 1, 2008, for all districts. Year 4 panel training will focus on reinforcing QSA policies and procedures as well as addressing issues emerging from monitoring and/or verification.

Jason Sharland          Mary-Anne Vale
State Review Panel Chair   Senior Education Officer
BIOLOGY — A06

Syllabus

The Biology syllabus is now in its third year of implementation. The syllabus has been reprinted to include the 2006 amendments. This update includes explanation of the assessment categories and clarifies the expectations of the three instruments for moderation purposes.

Feedback from districts

After exiting their first cohort of students on the new syllabus, quite a few schools amended their work programs. Amendments often involved changing topic sequence and modifying the assessment plan.

Monitoring this year attempted to develop a shared understanding of some of the issues that arose during syllabus implementation. As a result of this, state panel has seen an improvement in the quality of EEI tasks and criteria sheets.

Verification revealed a major problem, with tasks lacking a range of complexity in all three criteria. As the current syllabus no longer has separate CRP criteria, it requires each criterion to address a range of complexity in each task. When designing tasks, schools must consider all components of each criterion (i.e. UB 1–3, IB 1–5 and EBI 1–4) to ensure a range of complexity.

Verification reviews were made more difficult when schools failed to indicate, on the student profiles, which tasks were included in the submission. Schools should either create a new folio showing only the tasks included, or copy the profiles, or highlight those tasks. Schools should not include all tasks for the two years — some submissions were unacceptably large and heavy.

Feedback about the assessment package given on the R3 and R6 forms should be considered as applying to the whole assessment plan for the course, not just the current cohort.

Statewide comparability

State panel reviewed VHA, HA and SA folios.

In most cases, state panel was able to find evidence to support level of achievement decisions. In some cases, where tasks lacked a range of complexity, the panel noted student placement within the band was too high.

Course coverage

Many schools have embraced the intent of the syllabus and have developed units that engage and challenge students with a good variety of learning experiences. The assessment tasks are embedded in these learning experiences and assessment task requirements are well aligned with syllabus expectations. However, significant problems still exist with the interpretation of the syllabus requirements for each of the assessment criteria (UB, IB & EBI). Many IB and EBI elements of tasks are UB.

The consequence of incorrect classification of task components results in some schools having difficulty in meeting the mandatory aspects of the course.

Quality of assessment

Task design has continued to improve as schools respond to R3 and R6 feedback from district panels.

The key areas for improvement are:

- Including a range of complexity in each criterion. Students must be given opportunities to demonstrate higher-order thinking in all criteria.
• Ensuring that task elements meet the requirements for each criterion (e.g. IB must meet the requirements described in IB 1–5).

• Ensuring that EBI refers to a biological issue and that discussion of this issue has occurred in class before completion of the assessment task. By definition, an issue has differing viewpoints that can be discussed, justified and evaluated. Students need to be clear about what they are required to do in EBI task elements. Building task requirements around the EBI 1–4 criteria is an effective technique.

• Developing criteria sheets that are task-specific and avoiding the inclusion of criteria not required by the syllabus (e.g. presentation, formatting, spelling and time management) for determining levels of achievement.

• Reviewing how LOA decisions are made from profile information.

**Subject support**

Subject support material continues to be placed on the QSA website. Year 4 panel training will be conducted across all districts in Term 2. The focus of this training will be on evidentiary-based feedback to schools to ensure continual improvement of the assessment packages. Assessment ideas for Evaluating biological issues should be available by mid-2008.

It is envisaged that supplementary assessment workshops for targeted districts will be held in Term 3. These workshops will focus on issues arising from the application of criteria and corresponding standards, to ensure student cohorts are provided opportunities to demonstrate all levels of achievement.

Keith Prideaux
State Review Panel Chair

Maurice Ware
Senior Education Officer
BUSINESS COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGIES — B28

Syllabus

The Business Communication and Technologies syllabus went into its fifth year of implementation in 2007. The release of the new BSB07 training package will be reflected in the revised syllabus due for general implementation in 2009.

Feedback from districts

A number of schools are not using task-specific criteria sheets for their assessment instruments. These criteria sheets need to reflect the objectives of the assessment instrument and not simply replicate the exit standards from the syllabus. Conventions of communication are still creating some difficulties within some districts, including the over-inflating of overall standards.

Assessment instruments need to allow students the opportunity to demonstrate higher-order thinking.

Statewide comparability

Overall, our BCT teachers need to be congratulated on the work they are doing with our students and should be proud of the outcomes. Generally there was comparability across most of the districts in each of the levels of achievement.

There was a lack of clarity as to how Knowledge & understanding and Reasoning processes are being assessed when combined into one research task. When this was the case, there was also generally one communication dimension for both criteria and it was unclear how communication was separated and allocated to the two criteria.

Some of the VHA students were generously placed (this is also due to the fact that some assessment instruments do not allow students to demonstrate higher-order thinking).

Course coverage

Most schools are successfully implementing the requirements of the 2002 syllabus.

Quality of assessment

The standard of extended written responses has improved and overall presentation of student work and school submissions has also improved.

There are some schools in districts who are not assessing Knowledge & understanding as an extended written response in one task.

Some assessment instruments in Semester 3 and 4 included matching exercises, cloze exercises — these types of tasks are far too easy at this level. It is important that instruments meet syllabus requirements, e.g. response of minimum 400 words in both KU and RP criteria.

Subject support

There are various assessment items currently within the subject support material area of the QSA website. Panel training will be conducted in Semester 2 2008.

Leigh Schuch    Tammy Hope
State Review Panel Chair    Senior Education Officer
BUSINESS ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT — B25

Syllabus

This was the ninth and final year of general implementation of the current syllabus, with the 2007 syllabus ready for implementation in 2008. This new syllabus has only minor changes from the previous syllabus. Workshops for the mandatory requirement of task-specific criteria sheets will be conducted throughout Term 1 2008. There has been an increase in the number of schools planning to offer BOM in 2008.

Feedback from districts

Monitoring

All districts have found that schools need to have more evidence/documentation for awarding a standard for Action skills in submissions. Alignment between assessment tasks and criteria being assessed is not always clearly defined.

Verification

Schools need to provide more documentation to support awarding of standards for Action skills. Enabling criteria (within a task-specific criteria sheet) used to award standards for Reflection processes and Action skills require more detail.

Statewide comparability

There were no unresolved submissions presented to the state panel. Chairs are to be congratulated for successfully negotiating with schools.

The state panel is pleased to report that overall comparability between all six districts was very high in terms of application of criteria and standards throughout all levels of achievement.

The assessment of language was inconsistent across the sample submissions reviewed by state panel.

Course coverage

There were no apparent issues arising in regards to the mandatory aspects within the syllabus with all schools showing very good coverage of the mandatory aspects.

Sample schools have shown that they are covering interesting and relevant subject matter as suggested and recommended in the syllabus.

Schools continued to take the opportunity to provide relevant and interesting electives for their students. Most samples tended to follow the main ones such as International Business as listed in the syllabus and then to develop them to suit their particular situations. A small number of samples still take the option of a Small Business Venture. Most schools seem to prefer to study the elective as the last topic in Year 12 so state panel does not see assessment instruments or student work in this area, which is a pity. It has been noted that some schools are looking at wider/differing options in their new work programs that are coming through the system.

Quality of assessment

Most tasks seen by state panel are very well designed and meet all syllabus requirements. They are interesting and challenging for students and clearly establish requirements. The Business Plan assessment tasks, in particular, are being very well designed and implemented. The only concern is the depth of the Financial Plan and what should be in it — this perhaps needs a statement of clarification.
It is pleasing to see most schools producing task-specific criteria sheets which clearly identify task requirements and how standards are to be assessed. It certainly makes it easier to see what schools are trying to achieve and how standards are awarded for items.

It must be remembered that evidence/documentation needs to be collected and submitted when assessing *Action skills*.

**Subject support**

Subject support material will be available shortly on the QSA website within the restricted access section. Teachers/schools are encouraged to look over these items if in need of a new idea.

Workshops for the creation of task-specific criteria sheets will be held early in 2008.

Phil Ward          Tammy Hope
State Review Panel Chair   Senior Education Officer
CHEMISTRY — A04

The role of the A04 panels at the state and district level continues to play a vital role, not only in the maintenance of current standards but also in the development of new pedagogies that are essential for the success of the new syllabus. This is an exciting time for the teachers of Chemistry and we are proud of the dedication and commitment of the teachers who go that “extra mile” for students by being a panel member.

Syllabus

The 1995 Chemistry syllabus is in its third-last year of operation with next year being the last cohort of Year 11 who will exit under its requirements. Syllabus orientation workshops were held in Term 3 for schools transitioning into the A44 syllabus. These will be repeated in Term 2 of 2008 for the schools implementing in 2009.

Schools are encouraged to examine the new assessment categories and consider trialling aspects that would facilitate a smooth transition to the 2007 syllabus. Please be aware, though, that changes should not affect the range and balance of assessment instruments, coverage of the general objectives or the assessment plan in your current work programs.

Feedback from districts

Following their deliberations at monitoring and verification, the district panel chairs have included the following issues in their feedback to state panel:

- CRP questions. It is appropriate to scaffold this category of assessment in Year 11 while allowing Year 12 students to illustrate their knowledge and understanding by attempting open-ended items.
- Errors on profiles. Schools are asked to take all steps possible to ensure that students’ profiles and placements on the R3/6 are correct. This will allow panellists to complete the review appropriately.
- Generous/inappropriate use of “trade offs” (1/3 band rule) and then rung placement of students once “trade offs” has occurred.
- Deviations from approved work programs. Even at this time in the life of the A04 syllabus, schools must seek approval from the panel for changes to current work programs, no matter how trivial in nature, if such changes affect the range and balance of assessment instruments, coverage of the general objectives or the assessment plan.
- QSA policy regarding non-submission of assessment not implemented by some schools.
- A number of districts have indicated that some schools appear to be very generous with their placement of students. Schools are reminded of their obligation to all students with regard to appropriate rung placement.
- Scaling of marks. This concept is discouraged as it can have significant impact on a student’s results and LOA.

Statewide comparability

The professional attitude and commitment of district chairs and their panels to the monitoring and verification process ensures that the comparability process proceeded efficiently and smoothly. Two submissions were forwarded to state panel for resolution. Overall the state panel confirmed the judgments made by the schools.

Course coverage

Discussions at conference and feedback from district panel chairs indicated that nearly all district submissions conformed to the syllabus. Some of the discussions mirrored the comments made in past state panel reports. Areas of concern that continued to be noted are: lack of rigour in the Complex
reasoning processes questions, application of Knowledge of subject matter questions and devise and design element in the Scientific process questions. The absence of Part A (Application of theoretical knowledge) in formal testing of the core topics continues to be noted. It must be emphasised that “closed” and algorithmic applications of learned material do not represent the full set of Complex reasoning processes described in the syllabus.

It must be again emphasised to schools that it is a requirement of the syllabus that all of the general objectives must be sampled in the assessment package (both formative and summative). Greater effort needs to be made to scaffold the early Year 11 tasks with a significant decrease in leading or small part questions in Year 12 so that students are given the opportunity to practise open-ended questions.

**Quality of assessment**

The state panel was pleased with the number of schools trialling different forms of assessment in preparation for the implementation of the new syllabus. The increased use of task–specific criteria sheets for many non-exam items was pleasing to see and shows the commitment of Chemistry teachers to providing positive learning experiences to their students. Most of the assessment reviewed was of the appropriate state standard. The assessment instruments appeared to allow students to demonstrate the criteria and standards of the syllabus.

One note of concern by some state panellists was the number of errors of chemistry in a small number of the marking schemes and, in a very few cases, the lack of consistency in the marking of some student work.

**Subject support**

Subject support material continues to be placed on the QSA website.

Teachers might consider the professional development opportunity for context-based learning as demonstrated at the brewery at Milton. State review panel members and district review panel chairs participated in an industrial chemistry workshop. This is an excellent venue of “real world and hands on” chemistry.

Syllabus orientation workshops were held in Term 3 for schools implementing the new A44 course in 2008. Syllabus orientation workshops will also be held in Term 2, 2008, for schools implementing in 2009. The focus of these sessions is to examine syllabus variations in general objectives, standards and assessment types. Schools have been briefed on work program requirements necessary for approval to be granted.

For schools implementing the A44 syllabus in 2008, assessment workshops will be held in Term 2, 2008. The aim of this session is to facilitate the development of a high-quality assessment package that will provide opportunity for students to demonstrate understanding of all the general objectives at the various levels of achievement.

Ian P. Buchan Maurice Ware
State Review Panel Chair Senior Education Officer
Syllabus

The syllabus is in the third year of the extended trial-pilot. The syllabus was revised June 2007 and general implementation is to be staged over the next two years starting with Year 11 students in 2008.

Feedback from districts

It was pleasing to note many strengths and positives of the submissions at verification. Of particular note were the:

• contextualisation of assessment
• use of visual profiles
• use of stages and/or phases to build high-quality assessment tasks
• production of creative assessment tasks
• creation of task-specific criteria sheets which reflect the exit standards, tailored to suit the assessment categories of EEIs, ERTs and WT.

The holistic intent of the syllabus is to encourage the formation of a depth of understanding of chemical concepts and their relationship with other concepts within a context. This has been achieved through the engagement of students in substantial, meaningful tasks that can capture the depth, relationships and relevance of the whole experience. These tasks then provide the opportunity for students to demonstrate across the criteria and at sufficient depth to meet the full range of standards.

Students demonstrating in the higher levels of achievement invariably showed excellent skills in designing, implementing and evaluating in their extended experimental investigations.

Statewide comparability

Sample folios presented to state panel support the decisions made by the schools and the district review panels. The decisions match the exit criteria as described in the syllabus.

Course coverage

In general, the assessment packages demonstrated alignment between the general objectives and the learning experiences to show the scope, depth and challenge of the learning experiences. Holistic judgments and the use of criteria and standards has been displayed by extended trial-pilot schools.

Quality of assessment

Overall, schools are developing appropriate assessment tasks. Concerns relate to:

• **Extended response tasks**: These tended to be no more than “information gathering” or “cut-and-paste” exercises, rather than showing evidence of analysis and decision-making processes with support via logical arguments. The “hunter-gatherer” approach may be a necessary first step but a requirement for students to demonstrate their understanding and their ability to engage in critical and creative thinking is also needed.

• **Annotations**: Irrespective of the manner in which teachers arrive at a grade for an assessment task, they need to provide evidence of how and where the student met particular standards through annotation of the student scripts. For example, if an “A” grade is awarded for an extended-response task, it must show clear evidence of indicating where the higher-order thinking skills have been successfully applied. This provides a clear link to the exit standards and the qualities that distinguish one standard from another.

• **Holistic judgments**: Teachers are to make a holistic judgment of students’ responses to tasks. This
judgment is informed and validated by matching the students’ responses to the stated task-specific criteria. While all the task-specific criteria are taken into consideration in this process, it is not acceptable to add up results on individual criteria. The process of arriving at an overall holistic judgment on a student response to a task requires that teachers:

− familiarise themselves thoroughly with the exit criteria and standards
− use task-specific standard schemas/criteria sheets, derived from and consistent with the exit criteria and standards
− review the entire student response for the task and make an informed holistic judgment, annotating the task-specific schema/criteria sheets to indicate student achievement
− re-examine this judgment of student achievement to finalise a result for the task.

• **Criteria sheets:** In particular for written tests, these need to more fully reflect what the task is able to assess, and should be tailored to suit the individual task. For example, if we are asking students to critically evaluate ideas, statements, proposals, etc., the criteria sheet must show this. Further, the students’ responses should indicate that they are aware of this and have attempted to do so. Marks are not a suitable feed-forward or feedback device.

**Subject support**

Subject support material has been placed on the QSA website. Assessment items have been annotated to demonstrate which criteria are covered by the various items, and what standard could be exposed by the task. Annotated examples of each assessment category will also be posted in early 2008.

QSA presented assessment workshops in Term 2, 2007. These one-day workshops consisted of a generic introductory section on tasks and criteria before critiquing specific tasks and sample responses. Samples of tasks and responses were used to develop common understandings of assessment.

Syllabus orientation workshops introducing the new Chemistry 2007 syllabus were run in all districts in Term 3, 2007. In addition, panel training occurred in October for the new A44 panels which have been established in all districts.

There will be further support for Chemistry in 2008 with a second round of syllabus orientation workshop in Term 1, 2008, for schools electing to introduce the new Chemistry syllabus in Year 11 in 2009. In addition, assessment workshops will be offered in all districts in Semester 1, 2008. This workshop will focus on developing assessment tasks that enable the revised criteria and standards to be demonstrated.

Peter Moulds
State Review Panel Chair

Maurice Ware
Senior Education Officer
Syllabus

507 students in 46 schools undertook and completed studies in senior Chinese in 2007. There were seven large groups (14 or more OP-eligible students) and one intermediate group (10–13 OP-eligible students), and a number of students completed their studies through the Chinese after-hours ethnic school.

Due to the syllabus being in the final stage of its cycle, there are few new work programs being submitted for approval.

Feedback from districts

There are three districts for Chinese: Brisbane Central (which includes Brisbane Ipswich, Toowoomba, Rockhampton and Mackay), Brisbane South (which includes Gold Coast, Brisbane East, Townsville and Cairns), and Sunshine Coast (which includes Brisbane North and Wide Bay).

All districts reported that, at monitoring, schools were successfully implementing courses of study in Chinese, judgments about student work in the sample folios matched syllabus standards, and assessment tasks provided opportunities for students to demonstrate the criteria and standards.

Verification meetings were conducted successfully and, although there were a number of disagreements, all were resolved by district panels. There were some issues that arose during the monitoring and verification processes.

The use of complex characters in student writing does not meet syllabus requirements for accurate and appropriate character use. Judgments about grading of student work that has these characteristics should be based on the frequency of use of those complex characters in relation to the extent to which meaning is conveyed in the student’s text.

Students should be given the opportunity to demonstrate: comprehension of gist, detail, main and subsidiary points; deduction of meaning from context including ideas as well as information; and recognition and appreciation of intention, purpose, register and sociocultural references (reading only). A high-quality assessment task will, by design, provide this opportunity. Demonstrating understanding of a text only is not sufficient for the awarding of an “A” standard. Syllabus standards describe more than this and a task that does not allow for a demonstration of higher-order thinking skills cannot provide sufficient evidence for a panel to substantiate school decisions regarding the grading of student work and the awarding of levels of achievement.

Under the system of school-based, externally moderated assessment, schools design a course of study that recognises the particular needs and interests of learners within that school. Assessment must align learning experiences, the general objectives, and the criteria and exit standards of the syllabus. As each cohort of students is unique, learning experiences and assessment may change from year to year. Where a cohort has a target language background, learning experiences and resources may go beyond the requirements of the syllabus which was designed for continuing learners. While assessment would reflect those learning experiences, judgment of student performance would match syllabus exit descriptors, the requirements of the syllabus and the course organisation as outlined in the school’s work program. Where background and non-background speakers are in a single cohort, assessment should be equitable for both groups of learners.

Panellists and district review panel chairs are to be complimented for their contributions to the process of moderation and their support of schools in the development of high-quality assessment and the facilitation of judgments that reflect syllabus standards.
**Statewide comparability**

Decision-making regarding the awarding of levels of achievements was comparable across the districts. A range of topics was covered and most assessment tasks were suitable. Judgment of standards was comparable across the state.

Submissions were presented in a clear and comprehensive way which contributed to the ease of review.

Schools should note that, to meet the requirements for verification, where there are insufficient students in a cohort to make up the required number of sample folios, and there are students who have exited the course with fewer than four semesters, those students’ folios should be sent to verification.

**Course coverage**

Course coverage was generally achieved. There was sufficient coverage of content and a variety of topics were assessed. There was a concern about the practice of assessing a single topic using a number of macroskills. This may limit demonstration of course coverage.

At verification, students should be given opportunities to demonstrate the development of their knowledge, understanding and skills over the two-year course of study. In listening and reading, this can be achieved through questions that assess higher-order thinking.

**Quality of assessment**

Most assessment tasks were very good. However, there is a continuing concern over tasks that do not provide sufficient opportunities for students to demonstrate all aspects of the standards descriptors.

Questions in the receptive skills tended to address the content aspects of the standards and did not give adequate opportunities for the demonstration of higher-order thinking skills and, in particular, the recognition and appreciation of register, tone, intention, attitude and sociocultural references.

Assessment tasks should be appropriate to the cohort of students. Schools may choose to adapt their learning experiences to, for example, recognise the presence of background speakers in classes. However, assessment tasks still need to reflect the intent of the syllabus and teachers need to be mindful of applying the typical standards appropriately; standards must be applied equitably for all students, regardless of the extent of prior learning.

Quality assessment tasks should start with sourcing texts that have depth and richness which allow for the testing of higher-order thinking skills. In particular, reading tasks should be more challenging to reflect the fact that students are able to comprehend more than they can write.

The state panel would welcome future submissions that incorporate ICTs in assessment tasks. Schools may wish to start submitting this type of assessment in future monitoring submissions.

**Subject support**

The revision of the syllabus was completed this year and the new syllabus will be available on the QSA website in 2008. The revision was conducted by Syllabus Revision Unit of the Teaching and Learning Division. The Chinese Syllabus Committee was convened to consider changes to enhance the quality of the syllabus.

The introduction of the 2008 Chinese syllabus will be supported through a range of syllabus orientation workshops in Term 2, 2008. These will be conducted across the state, and information about these can be found on the QSA website, www.qsa.qld.edu.au, under: Schools & teachers > PD & events > Years 11 & 12 > Workshops > Languages.

Panellists will be supported through the introduction of the new syllabus with panel training conducted throughout the state in Term 3, 2008.

Year 11 students will commence courses of study under the new syllabus in 2009 and Year 12
students in 2010. The first monitoring and verification meetings to review submissions developed to meet the requirements of the revised syllabus will be conducted in 2010.

Work program requirements will change to reflect new syllabus requirements. These will be on the QSA website in 2008 or available by email from sao.languages@qsa.qld.edu.au

These requirements will be presented and explained in the syllabus orientation workshops.

For the first time, all languages work programs will be submitted online. A work program is the school’s intention to implement a course of study that meets syllabus requirements. Consequently, new work programs will not provide all the detail that they previously have. Course organisation, sample units of work, and completed student profiles will be required. Work programs will need to show breadth of learning through the course organisation and completed sample profiles, and depth of learning through the sample units. Evidence of coverage of all mandatory aspects of the syllabus is not required; syllabus requirements are mandatory regardless of their inclusion in a school document.

The QSA website is being redeveloped and, from 2008, there will be a range of materials such as sample work programs, annotated assessment tasks, annotated student assessment, and other relevant documentation. A number of schools, teachers, panellists and review panel chairs have contributed their resources and valuable time to this project and thanks is extended to all contributors.

There will be a period when materials for the 2001 and 2008 syllabuses will be online. As the implementation of the new syllabus is completed, a full range of support materials will become available and 2001 materials will be superseded. Materials will be continually improved and consequently resources may be enhanced or replaced as practice develops and is refined.

The state panel would like to recognise the efforts of the teachers of Chinese throughout the state. The system of externally moderated, school-based assessment is dependent on the contributions and efforts of this dedicated group. Their professionalism was evident in the high standard of assessment and the high-quality decision making presented in Moderation submissions in 2007.

Winnie Edwards-Davis  Terry McPherson  
State Review Panel Chair  Senior Education Officer
In 2007 the second cohort of students exited under the 2004 Dance syllabus. Once again, district review panel chairs and the state review panel would like to congratulate schools on their continuing successful implementation of the syllabus.

Feedback from districts

There was a very high level of consistency of teacher judgments evidenced in district review submissions at both monitoring and verification, and there were no unresolved submissions forwarded to the state review panel.

Teachers are reminded to familiarise themselves thoroughly with the exit standards statements, and to ensure that all student responses reflect the standards awarded.

There were some issues in the software compatibility for video documentation. Please ensure that samples are easily navigable on generic hardware devices.

Statewide comparability

Overall, there was comparability across the state in the application of standards and differentiation between levels of achievement. This indicated that teachers have engaged well with the standards descriptors and, for the most part, are making appropriate decisions about student achievement. The state review panel noted some outstanding student responses in the district samples.

To ensure statewide comparability, teachers should ensure that they apply standards in an “on-balance” way. This is an important aspect of the 2004 syllabus, and teachers should take the entire work into consideration and apply the standard that best fits the whole response. Clarification of the student’s overall achievement in relation to the standards statements may then be provided using written feedback.

Course coverage

For the most part, sample folios demonstrated that the requirements for verification folios were well understood by schools. The state review panel congratulates teachers on their choices regarding sequencing of learning and units of work that allowed students to demonstrate a wide variety of high-quality responses.

Quality of assessment

Performance

The syllabus states that:

Performance is the dancer’s interpretation of choreographic intent through the demonstration of dance skills and components.

Students should be able to demonstrate dance components and skills to realise the choreographic intent in danceworks in a variety of styles. (Syllabus page 4). For this reason, where students were given opportunities to explore contemporary performances in one extended piece, there was greater scope for them to demonstrate the criteria and standards. This was not always the case where there was a series of shorter contemporary technique sequences. Teachers are urged to consider how the 2–4 minute requirement for these performances may be best used to allow students to demonstrate the full range of standards in Performance.

Teachers are reminded to include a brief statement outlining the choreographic intent for Performance.
tasks. This statement assists students to understand the expressive and stylistic aspects of the task, and clearly outlines the task requirements or parameters or intent for panellists in review folios.

Teachers are reminded that for verification folios, one task must be performed individually. This is to be a solo and not performed in pairs or small groups. (Syllabus pages 44 and 45.)

**Choreography**

There was an exciting range of choreographic responses, involving innovative practice and a broad range of styles.

The emphasis of choreographic tasks is the manipulation of dance components and skills, including movement and non-movement components. Teachers should ensure that aspects of media and multimedia manipulation are considered in balance with movement and body manipulation, so that media is not over-emphasised.

This need for balance between movement and non-movement components is outlined in the syllabus Rationale. It states: “As an aesthetic means of ordering movement into an expressive code, Dance involves structuring gesture and motion to capture and convey ideas, images and feelings and uses the human body as the instrument of communication.” (Syllabus page 1.)

In addition, the syllabus describes the creative process of *Choreography* as students learning “how patterns of movement are combined and structured in space with dynamics to create meaning…” (Syllabus page 1.)

Teachers should ensure that *Choreography* tasks incorporating media and multimedia allow students to consider these aspects highlighted in the syllabus.

Documentation of choreographic intent should not exceed 300 words, as per the statement on page 45 of the syllabus. Journals and choreographic folios are not required for verification, but may be used as learning experiences. For monitoring and verification there should be one succinct statement of choreographic intent in sample folios.

**Appreciation**

*Appreciation* tasks that focused on one succinct question demonstrated greater depth in student response. These allowed students to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills such as evaluation. Please refer to syllabus page 40.

Video samples should be clearly labelled, with sample students identified, especially where there are several samples within the same level of achievement. Teachers should ensure that video documentation is from the students within the submission.

**Subject support**

Panel training will be conducted in Semester 1 in all host districts of combined Dance panels and districts with stand-alone panels. Notification of these meetings will be forwarded to panellists early in 2008.

Support materials for Dance should become available with the launch of the redeveloped QSA website early in 2008. This will include revised “advice for teachers”.

Sue Fox  Andrew Reid  
State Review Panel Chair  Senior Education Officer
Syllabus

2008 will be a transition year in which students studying semesters 3 and 4 will complete their course of study on the Senior Drama 2001 syllabus, and students in semesters 1 and 2 will be beginning their two-year course of study on the Senior Drama 2007 syllabus.

The deadline for the submission of all new work programs for approval is the end of Term 1, 2008. The reduced requirements for QSA approval are with the expectation that each teacher of the subject will have a copy of the syllabus for reference at all times. As a working document in the school, the work program will become complete as each unit is developed in detail, and as schools reflect on their practices and assessment.

Feedback from districts

It is the school’s responsibility to make decisions in regard to the course coverage or adequacy of assessment, and the school may negotiate any final placements with the district panel chair on the R7 before or at exit. All students who exit the course that year should be on the R6 at verification, irrespective of the decisions about course coverage or non-submission. At verification, it may be possible for a panel to verify samples that are atypical, with further information about the sample from the school on the R6. Please ensure that the Presenting documentation is clear and audible, and accompanied with scripts, criteria and descriptions to identify each sample.

Statewide comparability

Overall across each district, samples were comparable with statewide standards in relation to the exit criteria and standards. While it is important to plan for a strongly aesthetic environment for drama, we must also establish a climate of trust and “ensure students’ emotional and physical security” (p. 15 of both syllabuses).

Course coverage

Knowledge of the syllabus, and dramatic knowledge and researching appropriately before tackling a new unit of study, can only contribute to the teaching and learning process and improved outcomes for students. It is also expected that teachers model correct communication skills.

The new syllabus provides opportunities for topics such as political theatre and comedy to be considered beyond Brecht and Commedia.

The Forming dimension provides our students with opportunities to connect with a range of roles and pathways in the performing arts such as playwriting, dramaturgy, directing, designing, process drama or applied theatre leader. The demands of these kinds of roles and conventions of practice in the fields need to be covered in the learning experiences, and students need to demonstrate real-world aspects of this practice. The focus needs to be on what about the practice makes it drama-specific.

Quality of assessment

There was a range of complex and challenging tasks across the three objectives. Some teachers are designing assessment in areas such as cyberdrama, film acting and cinematic theatre.

Panel noted some problems with management of tasks: syllabus conditions have not been met; documentation not included (stimulus material for practical forming tasks); teachers have used group forming tasks other than improvisation; students have not been asked to respond to dramatic action.

In their attempts to support their students, teachers have sometimes provided too much “scaffolding” for their tasks. This could be valid in Year 11, but for Year 12 students, this practice has the potential
to limit the opportunities for students to respond in a range of ways, or restrict the higher-achieving students from demonstrating what they really know and can do.

Some students are also still given the benefit of an “E” grade when they have not submitted work. There must be some evidence that the task has been attempted, and the qualities in the response match the minimum “E” standard before any grade can be awarded. Please refer the QSA policy on late and non-submission of work.

We encourage teachers to model the conventions of professionally published scripts as formats and templates for scriptwriting tasks. In scripted performance, we ask schools to offer more maturity of role, complexity of style, and more challenge of purpose and context in Year 12.

In schemas we have seen examples of English and Film & Television criteria. Students in our subject, for example, act for particular shot types — they do not set up and manipulate the camera shots. Panel encourages schools to ensure comments on the schema feed logically and directly into the syllabus exit statements.

**Subject support: 2007 syllabus**

In new works for the 2007 syllabus, schools have met the challenge, including a balance of heritage and contemporary styles, honouring Australian Indigenous drama and by including skills of performance such as dramaturgy and theatre technology. Schools have been patient when they have been asked to take another look at their programs in regard to the balance in assessment across the general objectives in Year 11. If schools elect to have only five assessment items in Year 11, it is important that there is a balance across all three objectives in the teaching and learning experiences, and that this is evident in the unit features in the two-year course overview.

The general objectives in the new syllabus have direct reference to dramatic action and meaning, and assessment should enable students to address the criteria, to incorporate a wider range of skills of performance across their course of study. There is an expectation that schools will develop task-specific criteria for the benefit of students, although for Year 12, where there is the possibility of only one assessment in an objective, it may be relevant to use them directly from the syllabus.

For approval of the work program, the inclusion of the exit matrix was to ensure that schools were using the 2007 standard descriptors. As the criteria and standards become more familiar, schools will develop them in a way that is more helpful for students. The standards are already in the syllabus, so the specificity will relate to the dramatic languages and dramatic perspectives rather than creating different standards when schools introduce new or different descriptors. The adjectives across each standard in the exit descriptors describe the characteristics in the student work. Changing or adding to these alter the standard. Where the school may have certain conditions, these would be placed on the task sheet as conditions of the task, not part of the standards for assessing the objective. Language of the 2007 syllabus descriptors are “typical” and written in a positive way, about what a student can do, not what they cannot do. Not all aspects in the A, B, C or D are elaborated in the standard E, and task-specific criteria sheets should reflect this model.

All support material for the 2001 syllabus will be removed from the QSA website at the end of 2007. This will coincide with the redevelopment of the site. The 2008 Drama website page will have electronic versions of the 2008 syllabus, work program requirements and review notes. To accompany the current work program samples in the syllabus, a new complete sample work program (including sample tasks) will be the first of continuing support material available on the QSA website.

Drama Queensland will continue to support the key changes in the new syllabus through their professional development and conference in 2008.

Shay Ryan  
Acting State Review Panel Chair

Susan Hollindale  
Acting Principal Education Officer
Earth Science — A07

Syllabus

The Earth Science (2000) syllabus is in its seventh year of implementation. Although a minor revision is overdue, the design of the syllabus is generally consistent with the significant innovations more recently implemented in Biology, Chemistry, and Physics syllabuses.

Feedback

The continuing professionalism of the teachers of Earth Science is recognised by the panel. In general terms, monitoring and verification packages presented for panel’s consideration were appropriately organised and provided substantive evidence to support teacher judgments. Decisions about levels of achievement on Forms R6 are typically consistent with the exit levels of achievement as defined by the syllabus. For a limited number of schools, however, the evidence provided in folios did not support the relative placements within levels of achievement. Schools are advised to reaffirm that students are given opportunities to demonstrate achievement relative all facets of the standards associated with exit criteria (refer to page 31 of the syllabus). Post-verification negotiations and November consultations, where required, have been positive and productive.

Course coverage

Course design and implementation is now quite mature in most schools. It is clear that a number of schools have continued to refine their courses to better use opportunities afforded by local conditions. A number of schools have implemented learning opportunities made available by the mining boom, specifically, excursions to mines and/or visits by industry personnel. While these opportunities are not available to all schools, the panel commends Earth Science teachers who have made the most of them.

Quality of assessment

The design of assessment tasks was typically in accordance with the requirements of the syllabus. All four mandatory task types were implemented and used consistent with the syllabus intent. In most instances, student responses provided panel with substantial identifiable evidence to ascertain relative levels of achievement.

However, a significant number of schools need to refine two aspects of their assessment.

Firstly, in the Knowledge, conceptual understanding & application objective, the criteria “recognise and explain relationships amongst straightforward and complex concepts, comparing and contrasting them where appropriate” and “apply knowledge and concepts in most situations, including many that are novel and/or complex” are not being assessed to the same degree or rigour as others in this objective. This needs to be addressed as these criteria, although poorly covered, are being used to discriminate between VHA and HA.

Secondly, as part of the Working scientifically dimension, it is important students are given significant opportunities to “recognise and identify investigation questions” and “plan a range of scientific investigations”. Teacher-directed investigations only provide limited opportunities to engage with these processes. In order to provide more substantive evidence, schools are advised to implement opportunities for students to design and implement their own investigations.

Subject support

Subject support material has been identified and should be available on the QSA website early in 2008. No panel training or workshops are expected for Earth Science in 2008.

Chris Blundell
State Review Panel Chair

Maurice Ware
Senior Education Officer
ECONOMICS — B29

Syllabus

The Economics syllabus enters its fourth year of implementation in 2008. Schools appear to have taken on the new inquiry-based learning focus in their teaching, learning and assessment practices.

Feedback from districts

All Queensland schools offering Economics as a senior course of study are currently operating with an approved work program.

All schools and panels reached agreement for all submissions before the end of the verification phase. Congratulations must be extended to the district review panellists, district review panel chairs and school representatives for their dedication and professionalism throughout verification and the subsequent negotiation processes.

District panel feedback indicates that a majority of schools are effectively implementing the current syllabus. Core issues that do exist relate primarily to task design. These issues will be discussed further in the “Quality of assessment” section.

Statewide comparability

As no unresolved submissions were received by the state panel, the 2007 meeting focused solely on examining the level of comparability of standards across the state. District sample folios reflected appropriateness and consistency in the application of standards in Economics across the state.

There are, however, some differences in expectations between schools in the areas of word length and evidence of student involvement in the inquiry process. It is important to remember that these components of the assessment response form part of the conditions of the task but are not explicitly represented in the exit standards. As such, decisions about the quality of student responses must be made with on-balance judgments against the exit criteria, and penalties should not be applied for exceeded word length or lack of support material for the assessment response.

In consideration of this, schools should remember that conditions of assessment must be satisfied for the requirements of the syllabus to have been met.

Word length

It is possible that excessively long responses are the result of poor task design and schools should consider the redevelopment of tasks that allow students to produce responses that meet “A” standards within the word limits. In some cases, lengthy student responses may also be the result of lack of conciseness in the response and in this case be reflected in the standard awarded for the Research & communication criterion.

Authentication of student tasks

Evidence of student involvement in the inquiry process is a condition of assessment for the written response to inquiry and nonwritten response to inquiry tasks. Syllabus guidelines (p. 68) indicate that teachers should monitor the development of the task and students should prepare and submit a draft and acknowledge all resources used. Thus, a teacher checklist, student draft and bibliography of resources, and detailed teacher comments for the NWR item, will be sufficient evidence of student involvement in the inquiry. The evidence of student involvement in inquiry should be a measure of quality of involvement rather than quantity or evidence or a collection of source material. Schools are advised to avoid submitting countless pages of printed material as this does not serve to show student involvement in the inquiry process, merely ability to access, retrieve and print such material.
Course coverage

Economics courses across the state are offering a flexible range of learning experiences, which effectively use current economic issues and information as their foundation. Schools are using the wealth of online economic information to develop individual, interesting and engaging economic learning experiences and assessment tasks. Many schools are enhancing the inquiry process with the increased level of primary data used within their course.

Quality of assessment

There is an outstanding range of current and interesting assessment tasks being produced by Economics teachers. The current syllabus allows flexibility in topic selection and task design and this opportunity is being embraced by teachers to enable the economic learning of our students to be topical, valid, challenging and interesting.

Feedback from district panels indicates the need for continued support for teachers in the area of task design and use of task-specific criteria sheets. The updated QSA website should go some way to addressing this.

Task design includes the effective development of tasks that enable students to produce responses that meet the exit standards of the relevant criteria. These tasks must also meet the syllabus conditions of assessment, including use of referencing and bibliographic techniques.

Interpretive processes

Schools currently using primary data within the interpretive processes aspects of assessment tasks are to be commended. The use of such information in conjunction with written materials effectively allows students to interpret, apply and analyse economic information.

Decision-making processes

Decision-making processes continues to be the main area of task design to be developed. The tasks examined by state panel that are challenging and interesting tend to use the Criterion 3 element as the focus of the task rather than the final thought of the task. Decision-making processes requires a decision to be developed throughout the response. Responses that simply arrive at a decision at the conclusion of the task are demonstrating the ability to make a decision; however, they do not necessarily demonstrate the process of making the decision. To engage students in the Criterion 3 element throughout the task, it is important to state it as the focus of the task. As such, including the words “using established decision-making criteria” and the decision-making skill to be used, i.e. prioritise, evaluate, determine the extent, identifies these elements as core components of the task.

Scaffolding

Whilst not a requirement of the syllabus, scaffolding can be used to support effective task design. The purpose of scaffolding within the assessment task is to reinforce the dimensions of the objectives that students should demonstrate within their responses, not provide a step-by-step guide to the completion of the task. Oversimplified scaffolding merely serves to limit a student’s ability to produce individual work, potentially removes the capacity for critical selection and use of information, and may prevent that task from discriminating between standards.

Task-specific criteria sheets

The current syllabus requires that task-specific criteria sheets are provided for all assessment categories including short-response items. It is recommended that schools make on-balance judgments about the standard of evidence in a student’s response rather than the use of a mathematical calculation. Task-specific criteria sheets should reflect the standards of the exit matrix. Whilst specifying the context of the task within the criteria sheet is encouraged, manipulation of the wording of the standard is not recommended.
Conditions of assessment

Schools should ensure that the conditions of implementation are clearly stated on the task sheet. This is particularly relevant for the extended written response to economic stimulus items where details concerning the amount of time and access students have had to the information, the seen/unseen nature of the question and the level of acceptability of highlighting and annotation that is permitted by the school should be clarified.

Referencing and bibliography

Referencing and use of bibliography that adheres to conventions is required for written response to inquiry tasks. The flexibility in the implementation of the 2004 Economics syllabus allows for referencing systems other than Harvard to be used if desired.

Subject support

In early 2008, the QSA will launch its updated website. The new Economics page will include sample work programs and assessment tasks, as well as guidelines for developing task-specific criteria-and-standards sheets. These materials should provide support for Economics teachers throughout the state in constructing tasks and criteria sheets.

In Semester 2, 2008, all Economics state and district panellists will be involved in panel training. Panellists will discuss on-balance judgments and ways of providing advice to schools at monitoring and verification meetings about their assessment packages and judgments of student achievement.

The state review panel encourages teachers not currently on a panel to consider joining, as participation provides invaluable professional development and networking opportunities in the continued development of the teaching of Economics under the 2004 syllabus. Teachers are encouraged to contact their local QSA district coordinator or visit the QSA website for an application form.

Karen Swift Jo Genders
State Review Panel Chair Senior Education Officer

State Review Panel Reports 2008 (report of the 2007 state review panels) 28
ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY — A18

Syllabus

The 2004 Engineering Technology syllabus is in the third year of implementation. Under the current cycle of review the syllabus is due for review in 2010. The popularity of the subject continues to grow with over 30 schools offering Engineering Technology in 2007. The newly refined work program requirements have given extra focus to schools about what the new syllabus is intending. The state review panel continues to contribute to the shared understanding across the state regarding the objectives of the Engineering Technology course. The challenge for 2008 will be with maintaining standards, as there will be three district panels.

Monitoring and verification

School submissions for monitoring and verification in 2007 were generally well planned and presented. Organised submissions assist review meetings considerably, allowing panellists to devote time constructively to reviewing student portfolios and the relationship between student responses and the assessment instruments. Panellists were instructed to look for evidence to support the placement of sample folios. Advice offered to schools at the time of monitoring was well received and most schools acted upon this advice as evidenced by their verification submissions. One of the problems still identified and commented on at verification was projects that did not evidence extended reasoning (hypothesising, synthesising and evaluating).

Course coverage

Generally, schools are covering the mandatory materials and mechanics content to a satisfactory standard.

Quality of assessment

Some tasks did not provide for, or elicit from students, an in-depth response to the Reasoning criterion and it was suggested that tasks should be scaffolded to assist students’ understanding of the task components.

Quality Engineering Technology assessment tasks should offer students challenging opportunities that require investigation and the demonstration of the facility to apply acquired knowledge to problem-solving situations. Some of the most effective types of tasks require students to perform some exciting hypothesising and construction in solving engineering briefs with specifications clearly documented. In this respect, projects that require students to investigate, analyse, synthesise, hypothesise then evaluate the hypothesis and the proposed solution have proved very successful. This provides students the opportunity to clearly demonstrate their achievement in the Reasoning criterion. Conversely, tasks that merely require students to gather large quantities of data and do not encourage students to interpret and apply the data constructively fail to provide adequate opportunity for students to demonstrate their achievement in the Reasoning criterion.

Continued care should be exercised to ensure that students receive clear direction about the processes they are to perform, the content to cover, and the criteria they must address. Hypothesis, Synthesis & evaluation must be given adequate emphasis and tasks need to be suitably challenging to support level of achievement decisions, particularly at VHA and HA.

Subject support

Due to the growth in popularity of Engineering Technology, three district review panels have been appointed for 2008. This will benefit the subject as it continues to grow and will provide a comprehensive moderation process to support schools. The moderation processes for Engineering
Technology in 2008 will now include:

- district panels undertaking work program review, monitoring, verification, random sampling
- state panel undertaking work program approval, comparability, unresolved submissions, and state panel report.

Panel training will be conducted in Term 1 for all panellists before monitoring in 2008.

The challenge for 2008 will be to:

- maintain an exciting and practically oriented engineering course for students
- maintain the academic rigour in the areas of materials and mechanics
- continue to give support to schools, particularly new schools offering the subject
- manage the transition from a single state panel to a comprehensive moderation process with three district panels.

Many thanks to all Engineering Technology teachers throughout the state for their ongoing commitment to high standards and high-quality teaching and to the members of the state review panel for their outstanding levels of professionalism and continuing hard work. The state review panel encourages teachers not currently on a panel to consider joining, as participation provides invaluable professional development and networking opportunities in the continued development of Engineering Technology. Teachers are encouraged to contact their local QSA district coordinator or visit the QSA website for an application form.

Danny Arrow
State Review Panel Chair

Roy Barnes
Senior Education Officer
ENGLISH — B35

Syllabus

The current Senior English syllabus completed its fifth year of general implementation in 2007. This 2002 syllabus will be in review in 2008.

The syllabus in English Extension (Literature) 2003 is available for schools which have implemented the 2002 English syllabus and wish to offer the subject to their Year 12 students. Extension subjects are an extension of a parent syllabus and students must be concurrently enrolled in English (2002).

Feedback from districts

The state panel is pleased to report that 2007 monitoring and verification for over 375 schools in Queensland under the 2002 syllabus demonstrated successful uptake of the syllabus. Verification proceeded smoothly with state sampling across the districts confirming standards and noting the diversity and range of appropriate and interesting tasks with sufficient challenge.

Statewide comparability

The state panel looked at student folios from agreed district samples from across the state and is pleased to report that there was general agreement with both the schools’ and the district panels’ application of the syllabus standards to these folios.

Issues arising from verification and approvals meetings are discussed below.

Course coverage

Meeting verification requirements

Schools are reminded to revisit s. 6.6 of the syllabus document for verification requirements. These include two written tasks completed under supervised conditions. One of these is in response to an unseen question. An unseen question is

- one that students have not previously cited, and
- the task is to be completed in one uninterrupted session.

“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 up to that time” (syllabus, s. 6.6). In relation to these summative assessment instruments schools are reminded that s. 6.3 of the syllabus, “Characteristics of assessment tasks”, requires that assessment tasks provide:

- clear and realistic contexts, including purpose and audience
- sufficient challenge for students, taking account of the need for increasing complexity of challenges and increasing independence
- task-specific criteria and standards for each task (s. 6.3.2), derived from the exit criteria and standards matrix (s. 6.7.3).

It is also worth noting that task-specific criteria-and-standards descriptors matrices need to be in a format to emphasise the holistic nature of judgments: it is not appropriate to judge each criterion separately. “Teachers are to use task-specific criteria and standards to make an informed holistic judgment of a student’s level of achievement on each given task” (s. 6.4).

Teachers are reminded that the syllabus advises, in judging a folio, to take into account a student’s achievement on assessment items in terms of:

- land extent of peer and teacher assistance, as well as access to resources, human and material
- task demands (over the two years of the course, tasks should be designed to satisfy the syllabus requirements for increasing complexity of challenge)
• timing of the task (over the two years of the course, student work should demonstrate increasing linguistic maturity as students gain experience and expertise; it should also demonstrate that students are able to independently undertake revision and editing of text, demonstrating increasing independence (syllabus p. 30).

In meeting the syllabus verification requirements, schools enable their students to demonstrate these aspects in their verification folios. To not meet verification requirements would be to weaken the evidence base on which a judgment can be made and this would have implications for awarding students levels of achievement.

Quality of assessment

Task design

Tasks should be of sufficient depth and complexity to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate the exit criteria. Among written tasks, letters to the editor, personal letters, diary or journal entries, résumés, job applications and similar, tend to provide insufficient challenge.

Nor should tasks demand that students produce readings that are identified as being from reader, text, author or world-context centred approaches; theoretical approaches to reading and the practices they generate are the territory of the 2003 English Extension (Literature) Syllabus. The 2002 English Syllabus (s. 3, General objectives) refers to students “considering ways that readers, viewers or listeners are invited to take up positions in relation to texts”, not identifying or applying the specific reading practices. Students are asked to make choices to invite readers to take up positions in relation to texts — not to explain these positions in terms of theoretical approaches that might inform them. To do this would be to add a level of difficulty to the implementation of the syllabus that is not required.

Schools are reminded that “there is no expectation that students produce explications to accompany texts that they construct” (s. 6.3.2), whether these tasks be written or spoken, analytical, imaginative, persuasive or reflective.

Task-specific criteria-and-standards-based assessment sheets

In designing task-specific criteria-and-standards sheets (s. 6.3.2), teachers need to “select and derive” from the exit criteria and standards matrix (s. 6.7.3) those descriptors that are specific to the particular task, use the standards words from that descriptor that align to the 2002 syllabus document and add the task words that make the criteria and standards task-specific. The syllabus standards words and stems are not to be altered or changed in making criteria and standards task-specific, nor should standards and descriptors beyond those in the syllabus be added. Not all exit criteria will apply to every task, but all exit criteria will be addressed across the course of study and evidenced in the sample folio.

The use of well-designed task-specific criteria-and-standards sheets links teaching, learning and assessing. However, when these sheets are too general, too brief, insufficiently related to the task they are applied to, or couched in terms that make their meaning inaccessible, they provide minimal guidance and feedback to students and are equally unhelpful to reviewers. Schools should develop criteria sheets that:
• are specifically related to the tasks in question
• provide students with specific information about what the task requires
• provide clear, accessible descriptions of what students need to do to demonstrate the criteria.

Holistic judgment

Holistic judgment is mandatory in Senior English (s. 6.4 and s. 6.7.1). Schools are reminded that each criterion is not to be assessed discretely, but rather as part of the whole. The syllabus states that “even though the folio is a collection of individual components, it is to be judged as a whole, rather than the sum of the parts”. The syllabus further states it is “not appropriate to ‘add up’ or total grades to arrive at an overall judgment about the level of student achievement”. (p. 33.)
Representative samples
When compiling submissions for verification, schools should select folios of student work that show clearly their application of the syllabus criteria and standards. A careful review of responses in each of the selected folios, in terms of the exit criteria, is needed to ensure that the submission is comprised of representative folios. It is difficult for review panels to find evidence in folios to support the judgments made by schools if the only examples they see at a particular level are not representative. Schools are reminded of the QSA’s policy on late and non-submissions, dated June 2004.

Minimum Sound Achievement
Teachers are reminded that to award Sound Achievement, the student’s folio must meet the descriptors in both modes, i.e. in writing and in speaking/signing. To determine this, the responses to the modes are to be examined separately. Syllabus s. 6.7.4 “Minimum requirements for Sound Achievement” (p. 39) states: “The predominantly written responses, when taken together, must for the most part meet the minimum standard in table 7; the predominantly spoken/signed responses, when taken together, must for the most part meet the minimum standard in table 7. Higher achievement in spoken/signed responses cannot compensate for weaknesses in written responses or vice versa. Once the standard has been determined for each mode, the judgment for the folio follows.”

For example, at verification, a spoken/signed result comprising grades of a C and a D does not yet indicate that the student has achieved a minimum Sound Achievement in speaking/signing. Similarly, a folio which contains written results comprising two Cs and two Ds does not yet indicate that the student has achieved a minimum Sound Achievement in writing. To make an exit decision, further assessment information is required. This may occur after verification when another spoken/signed task or another written task is completed as part of the approved program, or when selective updating occurs. Such folios, where a clear pattern of performance has not yet been established in either writing or speaking/signing, should not be included in the panel submission as threshold Sound Achievement folios. Students who have not yet achieved minimum Sound requirements in both modes cannot be placed any higher than LA10 on the verification R6.

Subject support
In 2008, the QSA will launch its updated website. It is planned that the new senior English page will include sample course overviews and assessment tasks. These materials should provide support for senior English teachers throughout the state.

In 2007 subject workshops that provided support for teachers in developing effectively designed assessment tasks were conducted across the state.

The state review panel for English thanks all teachers involved in the process of moderation. We are particularly grateful for the dedication of those teachers who give their time and expertise to ensure the best outcomes for their students and, by extension, for students throughout Queensland. The panel is generally pleased with the stability of standards in the subject, and the level of comparability it sees in the samples from districts.

The state review panel also thanks all of the teachers who participate on various panels and subcommittees for their tireless commitment to the system of moderated school-based assessment. Their efforts and professionalism are widely valued and appreciated. The state review panel encourages teachers not currently on a panel to consider joining, as participation provides invaluable professional development and networking opportunities in the continued development of the teaching of English under the 2002 syllabus. Teachers are encouraged to contact their local QSA district coordinator or visit the QSA website for an application form.

Kerry Baumanis
State Review Panel Chair

Jo Genders and Ellen Connolly
Senior Education Officers
Syllabus

The current English Extension (Literature) syllabus completed its fourth year of general implementation in 2007. The syllabus in English Extension (Literature) 2003 is available for schools that have implemented the 2002 English syllabus and wish to offer the subject to their Year 12 students. Extension subjects are an extension of a parent syllabus and students should be concurrently enrolled in English (2002).

The matters raised in this report are relevant to teachers of English Extension (Literature) and have particular implications for work and assessment programs being implemented under the 2003 syllabus for Year 12 students in 2008.

Feedback from districts

The state panel is pleased to report that 2007 monitoring and verification for 55 schools in Queensland under the 2003 syllabus continues to demonstrate successful uptake of the syllabus across a range of sites. Verification proceeded smoothly, with state sampling across the five districts generally confirming standards and noting the diversity and range of appropriate and interesting tasks with sufficient challenge.

Statewide comparability

The state panel examined student folios at threshold levels of achievement from across the state as well as student folios in the mid to high bands of Very High level of achievement, and is pleased to report that there was general agreement with the schools’ and the district panels’ application of the syllabus standards to these folios.

Course coverage

The syllabus is generally being implemented by teachers in ways that are congruent with its underpinning principles and conform to its mandated aspects. However, teachers should note the following issues arising from the work program approval process, verification and comparability meetings. Attention was drawn to a number of these matters in the State Panel Chair’s Report of 2006; they remain noteworthy in 2007.

Need to problematise reading approaches, to demonstrate self-reflexivity in reading

The 2003 syllabus requires students to engage with and problematise reading practices by means of a range of relevant theories. This means students need to understand why older concepts of, for example, text-centred reading practices, are inadequate, given other theoretical insights. And they need ultimately to grasp the point that all theorised readings are both illuminating and partial. This is central to the governing rationale of the syllabus, that literature, however defined, “is dependent on how, when, where, by whom, and for what purposes, it is read” (p. 1). Students need to show an awareness of the implications of such a problematisation when discussing and applying theoretical understandings to the work(s) of specific authors, in all three tasks. This will enable them to demonstrate the self-reflexivity that is at the heart of the syllabus, and meet Criterion 2, descriptor 4, which requires students to reflect critically on the reading practices they have used, and how they have produced different readings (Tables 5 to 8 in s. 8.5.2 “Mid-range standards associated with exit criteria”).

Need to demonstrate understanding of the interrelatedness of theories

By the end of the course, in Task 3, students should be exploring bodies of theory that offer more
sophisticated understandings of texts and reading than do the four approaches to reading practices outlined in the syllabus. However, the students’ investigations of such theories must be founded on a knowledge and understanding of “the four approaches to reading practices and how they overlap, and the relationships between contemporary and historical approaches”, and “the range of culturally produced reading practices that are generated by the reading approaches” (syllabus s. 4.1). That is, students need to show their understanding of the family and generational relationships among theories. This will enable students to avoid listing a series of theorists (in a “Cooks tour” approach) without showing they understand how a theorist reacts against, or derives from, or supplements, a previous body of theory. Where students do develop such understanding, they are more likely to be able to situate their own theorised understandings and reading practices relative to those of others, and to enter into a conversation with those understandings and practices.

**Need to integrate theoretical understandings of reading practices and their application**

Teachers are reminded that “the focus of this subject is on student understanding and application of reading strategies or practices that are informed by a range of literary theories” (syllabus p. 1). Syllabus criteria can only be fully demonstrated by detailed and sustained application of a knowledge and understanding of reading practices in analysis of a range of selected texts. See in particular Criterion 1, descriptor 4, which requires students to demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of “a wide range of canonical and popular texts … and the contexts in which they were produced” and Criterion 2, descriptor 3 which requires that students, in analysing, interpreting and constructing texts, “demonstrate how different generic conventions, structures and textual features of texts support different readings”. Throughout the course, the emphasis is on integrating the theory and its application, whether across the parts of a task (Tasks 1 and 2) or in the one demonstration (Task 3). It should be noted that students are unlikely to demonstrate “application” in Task 3 by explicating the selected theorists’ ideas in Part 3 (a), then having them only implicitly inform discussion in Part 3 (b).

**Need for appropriate text selection and examination**

Teachers are reminded of the advice in the syllabus, s. 6.2.4, concerning the appropriate level of demand of the texts selected for close study. In particular, it should be noted that “resources are to be generally more complex … than those used for the parent syllabus” (p. 30). The suggestions listed under the Approaches Framework for activities appropriate for earlier and later in the course offer examples of a range of appropriately challenging texts and focuses for examination. It is evident from some schools’ submissions of folios that a more narrow choice of “safe” and sometimes undemanding texts is being encouraged, with the risk that this can limit opportunities for students to demonstrate the assessment criteria in their readings and interventions. There is no provision in the course for students to study extracts of texts.

**Quality of assessment**

**Framing and responding to Task 1**

As the syllabus makes clear (pp. 39–40), for each of the approaches the reading and the defense are both interrelated and distinct. While both are forms of application of theory, the reading is a demonstration, the defense a theorised analysis. The defense needs to go beyond a description of the reading to offer an analysis of it if the student’s response to the task is to demonstrate syllabus criteria. Teachers are advised to consider the limitations of a simple formulaic approach to assessment tasks in this subject. In relation to Task 1, for example, reliance on a structure that simply steps through the varieties of reader-response theorists, one per paragraph, is unlikely to encourage an overarching unity of analysis or argument and is likely to work to limit opportunities for a sustained, coherent, individual response.
Framing and responding to Task 2

Teachers are reminded of the advice concerning Task 2 in the syllabus, pp. 41–42. Students need to carefully and explicitly set out the relationship of the intervention to the base text, to ensure that the transformation is both a transformation and a complex one that entails a discursive shift that makes possible a change in the invited reading. Mere transpositions, such as reversals of gender or plot outcome, or simple transformations, such as modernisations, do not themselves amount to complex transformations. Since the invited reading of the base text provides the springboard for the intervention, students need to think carefully about their choice of the point at which they will make this intervention, since this is crucial to their justification.

Framing and responding to Task 3 (a) and (b)

Schools are strongly advised to refer closely to the syllabus both in framing the task description for 3 (a) and (b) and in guiding students as to the choices they might make about topics, texts and theoretical emphases as tools of exploration. The syllabus provides extensive support for teachers and students in:
- task descriptions, Task 3: Exploration and application (s. 8.2.2)
- activities suitable for later in the course — parts of ss. 5.3.3, 5.4.3, 5.5.3, and 5.6.3
- selected specific learning experiences generated from reading practices (s. 7.2).

Topic focus for Task 3 (a) and (b)

Task 3 requires students to choose a closely focused topic for investigation of their selected texts. In order to explore this issue, they must select an appropriate theory or set of theories to apply. Teachers are reminded that these topics need to be specific, substantial and very well focused. Students will need guidance in defining and refining their investigation and ensuring that the topic is not confused or contradictory. Some topics, for example an exploration of “literariness”, are too broad. A well-framed inquiry will implicitly address that wider question of literariness by demonstrating very precisely some of the ways in which the selected theories “generate different sets of culturally produced reading practices” (Criterion 1, descriptor 2).

Equally over-broad is a survey coverage of the syllabus framework of approaches or a diffuse exposition of an eclectic array of theorists. The syllabus notes on p. 42 that reference to the four approaches is only necessary “in so far as these complement or contrast with the chosen focus”. By Task 3 it is expected that students will have advanced beyond the four approaches into more sophisticated theoretical territory, if they are to demonstrate their achievement against Criterion 1, descriptor 1, which requires students to recognise and explain similarities and differences across and within the four approaches.

On the other hand, teachers need to ensure that the task focus is not determined too narrowly. The choice of texts, topic and theories for Task 3 is crucial if it is to provide students with sufficient opportunity to demonstrate the criteria at syllabus standards for higher levels of achievement. That is, teachers need to encourage students to recognise and explain “subtle similarities and differences across and within” the selected theoretical approaches in constructing “multiple readings across and within a range of texts” in order to demonstrate “subtle and discriminating analysis, evaluation and application” of relevant theory. The selected theories need to be appropriate to the student’s focus and offer a coherent approach to investigation. To this end students need to undertake their own in-depth research into their chosen theories.

It should be noted that students may find it a useful strategy to bring a second (body of) theory into conversation with the first in order to provide a new perspective on their topic (cf. Criterion 1, descriptors 1 and 2).

Close reading of texts in applying theoretical understandings in 3 (b)

Students need to demonstrate that they can apply theoretical understandings about reading practices to their selected texts by producing close, detailed readings which necessarily include quotations from...
the text(s), if they are to demonstrate the criterion Application of knowledge & understanding of reading practices. The syllabus is very clear that in order for students to achieve an “A” standard they must construct multiple readings of texts by “thoroughly and systematically analysing, interpreting and applying appropriate contemporary interpretations of the reading approaches”; that they must “demonstrate through subtle and discriminating analysis, evaluation and application, their detailed understanding of reading practices”; and that they must “thoroughly analyse and explicitly evaluate how different generic conventions, structures and textual features of texts support different readings.” That is, the student’s response to Task 3 (b) needs to keep the balance between theory and its application in an illuminating reading of the text(s). Such application is very different from a conventional literary-critical analysis. The crucial distinction lies in the student’s self-reflexive awareness of reading practices. The student needs to show an understanding that there is no reading that does not assume or explicitly demonstrate a theory (cf. Criterion 2, descriptor 4).

Increasing complexity of challenge

“This refers to the increasing conceptual demands made on the student over the one-year course through learning experiences and task requirements” (syllabus p. 26). Schools are reminded that students should be given opportunities to demonstrate more complex development of their understanding and application of theories of reading as they advance from Tasks 1 and 2 to Task 3. This entails, among other things, students’ building on and moving beyond the broad outlines of the four approaches of the syllabus.

Increasing independence

Review panels expect to see evidence that a school is meeting the syllabus requirement of increasing independence. “This refers to opportunities for students to be increasingly self-directed and independent in their choice of resources, particular areas of interest, modes of response and evaluative expertise in relation to their own and others’ texts” (p. 26). Schools need to ensure that students are given opportunities and encouragement to explore their own areas of interest in all tasks, particularly Task 3. It is vital that students be given sufficient opportunities to make genuinely independent choices in responding to Task 3. Task 3 (a) and (b) should be framed to allow for student independence in selecting their own texts, their focus of investigation and the theorist(s) whose perspectives will most illuminate their readings of those texts and assist them in their focused inquiry. District and state review panels have noted that many students are showing great initiative and responsibility in framing and developing their responses to Task 3. However, it is still apparent from the close similarity of texts, topics and theorists selected by students in the same cohort that some schools are encouraging their students into standardised or formulaic responses that replicate existing sample responses without students providing evidence of a sufficiently developed grasp of the theoretical understandings at work and how to apply these.

Task length

The importance of ensuring that task length is consistent with syllabus requirements still remains an issue that schools are asked to address (syllabus s. 8.2.4). Where students’ work is over-long, teachers are strongly advised to counsel them in how to limit the scope of their inquiries. It is particularly important that parts (a) and (b) of Task 3 are framed in ways that encourage coherence and concentration of focus rather than diffuse discussion, and that are properly selective in the range of theorists brought to bear on the inquiry.

In-text referencing, bibliographies and plagiarism

An academic discourse is required of students in Task 1 defenses, Task 2 defense, and Task 3 (a) and (b). This entails acknowledging all resources used (s. 8.4.2 Authentication of “prepared” tasks, dot-point 3). It also means attributing theoretical concepts to the originating theorist. District and state panels have observed that some students are inaccurately naming the editor of a collection or the author of an overview of theories as the one who has developed a theory or endorses it. Teachers are advised to show students how to present in-text referencing in order to avoid this inaccuracy. So too
students should be shown how to incorporate quotations from theorists and commentators into their own developing discussion. A bald, decontextualised or irrelevant quotation should not be used as a substitute for the student’s own argument.

**Teacher feedback on student responses needs to comment on matters of theory and argumentation**

Students’ attention should be drawn to their performance against each of the three criteria. In particular, students need to be directed to focus on applying their knowledge and understanding of reading practices to analysis and interpretation of texts. While by the end of the course students should be exhibiting independence in their writing, teachers’ feedback should be directed towards ensuring appropriate breadth and depth of theoretical understandings, choice of appropriate theoretical emphases and theorists, and sufficient application of this theoretical knowledge and understanding of reading practices to the texts being analysed. It is important that feedback draws attention to any flaws in the student’s argumentation — for instance, between theories cited, or between a theoretical point and the use that the student makes of it.

**Subject support**

In 2008, the QSA will launch its updated website. It is planned that the new English Extension page will include sample course overviews and assessment tasks. These materials should provide support for English Extension teachers throughout the state.

In 2007 panel training was provided to all district review panels as ongoing support of the important role panels have in the processes of moderation and assessment, and relationships with schools.

The state review panel for English Extension (Literature) thanks all teachers involved in the process of moderation. We are particularly grateful for the dedication of those teachers who give their time and expertise to ensure the best outcomes for their students and, by extension, for students throughout Queensland. The panel is generally pleased with the stability of standards in the subject, and the level of comparability it sees in the samples from districts.

The state review panel also thanks all of the teachers who participate on various panels for their tireless commitment to the system of moderated school-based assessment. Their efforts and professionalism are widely valued and appreciated. The state review panel encourages teachers not currently on a panel to consider joining, as participation provides invaluable professional development and networking opportunities in the continued development of the teaching of English Extension (Literature) under the 2003 syllabus. Teachers are encouraged to contact their local QSA district coordinator or visit the QSA website for an application form.

Wendy Morgan  Ellen Connolly  
State Review Panel Chair  Senior Education Officer
In 2007 the syllabus for Film, Television and New Media went into its second year of implementation. The first cohort of Year 12 students exited under this syllabus in November.

Work programs continued to be submitted and approved throughout the year, particularly from schools with exiting Year 12 students. Work programs which embrace the syllabus best are those which teach the key concepts as the content focus, and have an obvious through line from objectives to key concepts to learning experiences to assessment and standards. When writing a work program, new schools are advised that a design suite consists of two formats and that each criterion has to be assessed twice to meet verification requirements.

For the first year of Year 12 verification, statewide standards were very comparable. There are still some school submissions which need to more clearly identify how they are dealing with the folios of those students who have not completed the mandatory elements of the course. Schools should refer to QSA policy in relation to late and not submitted work when making decisions about awarding credit.

Schools are reminded that they need to make on-balance judgments about whole student responses by matching the qualities of the student responses to the descriptors in the standards matrix, rather than trying to average results (see syllabus p. 48).

The general objectives of Design, Production and Critique are assessed through the key concepts, and focus of assessment. These three objectives form the basis of the exit criteria against which students’ work is assessed in relation to the standards. Schools are to note that in this syllabus, the standards are “typical” for each level of achievement.

Film, Television and New Media is a subject which studies the five key concepts through “the moving image”. When setting tasks, teachers need to be very cognisant of the reason why they are choosing a particular format for the assessment of the key concepts. For example, it is not necessary to have the students write a 1000-word extended task and then present it to the class as an oral. Likewise, those schools which include webpages as assessment tasks need to consult the syllabus very closely. Screen shots for webpages are listed as an acceptable design format when combined with “a treatment, or character outlines, or three-column script, or film script/screenplay or storyboard for a moving-image product that appears on the website”, the reason being that “websites are considered as a distribution point for a product, not a product in itself”. While websites may be a vehicle through which a design or critique task might be assessed, in this syllabus, they are not considered a production piece.

The choice of genre for an assessment task can also influence the type and quality of the student response. For example, schools should consider whether it is more appropriate to ask students to write the transcript for a podcast or to create the podcast itself. Schools need to consider the purpose of the task and the criteria being assessed, and should always use the conditions for assessment recommended in the syllabus.

Task sheets which seem to work best for students are those which clearly outline: a specificity in the
task, the conditions and the criteria and standards against which responses will be assessed. It is very important that in assessing student work, there is a clear correlation between the task expectations and the student’s response. This should be reinforced by quality teacher judgments, an indication of the standards highlighted on the standards schema, and a standard awarded for each assessable criterion.

In the design objective, schools are reminded that a “suite” refers to two related formats completed as part of the same task. There are some inconsistencies in terms of teacher understanding of the formats, so schools are reminded to refer to the definitions given in the syllabus and to use references to other places, such as the AFC website, for examples. Storyboards should become more complex and thorough as students progress through the two-year course.

Schools choosing to use the group production context must provide information about the individual’s contribution — whether the result was derived from the completion of a third of the production (and which third) or from working in formal roles. The 2005 syllabus does not require schools to submit a work log as evidence of an individual’s role, and it may be that some schools will need to revise the way they have been managing the group production if they are still identifying the individual component in this way. The syllabus states that “if the product is created by a group, then the individual student is assessed on the identifiable component they created, not the whole product; that is there is no group mark” (p.36). The identifiable components are outlined in the syllabus on page 41.

When submitting student samples on DVD, please ensure that DVDs are labelled externally and that all student work is accessible through a menu. Student designs should be approved before production in order to ensure that safe practices will be employed. Practices such as talking on a mobile telephone while driving a car or filming from a car while drag racing are to be discouraged. Schools are encouraged to familiarise themselves with section 4.6 of the syllabus (workplace health and safety).

Tasks which ask for critical analysis of a film or television text are those which allow students to best meet the criteria and standards in the critique dimension. While all teachers have a responsibility for the teaching of literacy, tasks should have a FTVNM focus and be assessed according to the syllabus standards. Referencing may also be an important aspect for teachers to validate the work students produce.

If students complete an oral as a critique task, or a pitch in design, schools must send evidence of a typical “A” and a “C” sample response as evidence of the school’s judgment. These should be labelled on the DVD and associated paperwork, but need not appear on the R6 as separate samples.

Schools should where possible send complete folios of student work to panel. If atypical samples are sent, schools must provide enough evidence to support the judgments being made by the school in relation to the students’ placements. This may mean sending drafts, plans, notes and so on rather than completed assignments.

Schools should also revisit the “Underlying principles of assessment” section of the syllabus when preparing student folios towards exit. Selective updating, for example, occurs naturally through the continuous assessment principle; however, it is permissible as a one-off in certain situations providing that it is completed in a manner which provides timely evidence, and that the student does not complete the same task. Section 6.1 of the syllabus reads:

**Selective updating**

Selective updating is related to the developmental nature of the two-year course of study. It is the process of using later information to supersede earlier information.

As the criteria are treated at increasing levels of complexity, assessment information gathered at earlier stages of the course may no longer be typical of student achievement. The information should therefore be selectively updated to reflect student achievement more accurately. Selective updating operates within the context of continuous assessment.

The principle of selective updating is linked to the developmental nature of the course. As student skills in the criteria develop towards increasing levels of complexity, assessment information gathered at earlier stages of the course may no longer be typical of student achievement at later stages. The
information should, therefore, be selectively and continually updated (not averaged) to accurately reflect student achievement.

Selective updating must not involve students reworking and resubmitting previously graded assessment tasks. Opportunities may be provided for particular students to complete and submit additional tasks. This may provide information for making judgments if achievement on an earlier task was unrepresentative or atypical, or there was insufficient information upon which to base a judgment. Schools are reminded that an additional task should not simply be a reworking or a resubmission of a previously completed task.

Subject support

In early 2008, the QSA will launch its updated website. The new Film, Television and New Media page will include sample work programs and assessment tasks, as well as guidelines for developing task-specific criteria-and-standards sheets. These materials should provide support for Film, Television and New Media teachers throughout the state in constructing tasks and criteria sheets.

In Semester 2, 2007, all Film, Television and New Media district panellists were involved in panel training to prepare for the first verification on the 2005 syllabus. Panellists discussed the requirements of the 2005 syllabus and the exit criteria and standards, and discussed ways of providing advice to schools at monitoring and verification meetings about their assessment packages and judgments of student achievement.

The state review panel encourages teachers not currently on a panel to consider joining, as participation provides invaluable professional development and networking opportunities in the continued development of the teaching of English under the 2002 syllabus. Teachers are encouraged to contact their local QSA district coordinator or visit the QSA website for an application form.

Chris Hayward
State Review Panel Chair

Susan Hollindale and Jo Genders
Senior Education Officers
FRENCH AND FRENCH EXTENSION — B02

Syllabus

There is evidence that schools are using more current and relevant materials in their teaching and assessment programs. With the revised syllabus being published in 2008, and implemented with Year 11 in 2009, schools will be required to rewrite their work programs. It will be a wonderful opportunity for schools to reflect on their courses of study and to review the currency of their units of work. How can ICTs be further integrated into the courses of study? How can schools supplement their basic texts with material from the internet? How can schools make better use of audiovisual resources in their teaching and learning? What are the most relevant and interesting topics and tasks for contemporary young people?

In 2007, 693 Year 12 students exited from 96 schools having studied French. Of these, 66 students from 43 schools studied French through the Brisbane School of Distance Education. Additionally, 63 students in three schools studied French Extension.

Feedback from districts

Being at the end of the current syllabus cycle, there have been very few new work programs. District panel chairs reported that the monitoring and verification meetings proceeded well. School submissions were well prepared and panels were, by and large, able to support school judgments, or come to a satisfactory agreement after negotiation.

The following points need to be considered:

- Schools are requested to include as much information as possible in folios to indicate how they made their judgments of standards of student work. All criteria sheets need to be completed with reference to performance in each criterion. In comprehensions it is helpful to indicate where detail has been missed; a single tick does not differentiate between a complete and a partial answer. Schools must also decide on a grade and not merely write B-/C+ on a profile sheet and leave it to a panel to make a decision.

- Recorded evidence of students speaking is often not of a high standard because students are not given the opportunity to develop points that they had initially made in an answer. Frequently there is too much input from teachers.

- Panels are seeing more reading comprehension items requiring students to look at an extended text (such as a tourist brochure) and summarise or give opinions on aspects of that text. Teachers need to ensure that students are required to justify their answers with specific reference to the text. Responses can otherwise be very general and can in some cases be guessed with a reasonable degree of accuracy.

- Where there are no other students in a level of achievement, the folios of students who have discontinued the subject after one of two semesters must be included in a submission.

- Schools are encouraged to submit samples of speaking on CD. Recordings can easily be made on an inexpensive MP3 recorder/player, the audio files transferred into a computer, and then burned to CD. An MP3 player is less intrusive in class, and tracks are very easily located on a CD. This would solve the problem of cassette players being difficult to obtain and maintain.

Statewide comparability

The panel generally found comparability across the districts in assigning levels of achievement. Where discrepancies occurred, it was often a case of a test item which might have been better formulated, rather than inaccuracies in matching student work to syllabus standards.
**Course coverage**

Overall it is obvious that there is excellent teaching and learning occurring in many schools across the state, where varied topics, activities, approaches and resources are being used. As always, teachers are reminded of the necessity to assess higher-order thinking.

**Quality of assessment**

Schools are reminded that exit levels of achievement are based on the fullest and the latest information. In general this will require teachers to match the quality of student work across the last two tests in each skill in making a determination.

Texts often provide teachers with opportunities to test higher-order thinking. Rather than giving vocabulary to students, it is appropriate to ask students to deduce the meaning of the unknown word or phrase. Students can also be asked to deduce ideas or draw conclusions after reading the whole text.

Where macro-skills are assessed at the same stage of the term, it is important to ensure that the testing is not too similar in nature. If the topic were drugs, for example, it would be inappropriate to have the listening, speaking and writing tests all on alcohol.

If oral and written tasks are guided, this guidance should be given mainly in English rather than in French. A stimulus such as a cartoon might be appropriate but a series of questions in French which the students have to answer provides too much scaffolding for students to demonstrate higher levels. More extensive scaffolding may well be appropriate, however, in a class where there are no students who are capable of an “A” or a high “B”, as it can enable the students to reach their potential. Scaffolding may be appropriate in encouraging students to reach a sound standard but then there needs to be a task or an aspect of the task which allows the stronger students to achieve higher levels.

Teachers are asked to think carefully about the genre of tasks set at the end of Year 12. A diary entry in the writing skill, for example, may not require complex verb and sentence structures which allow students to demonstrate a higher standard unless the task is so designed that the students are required to use past tense verbs, subordinating clauses and adjectives etc.

Prepared student performances are becoming more popular in assessment programs. Schools need to ensure that students still have the opportunity to use spontaneous language as part of the assessment task. This spontaneous use of the target language should not simply repeat the language used in the prepared section of the assessment.

It is very difficult in group assessment for panels to distinguish between the speakers. Schools are requested to clearly identify the speakers (e.g. limiting the number of students in the group activity or filming the task).

In general, a listening text should be heard twice. In some cases the complexity of a text might require a third playing. Teachers should reflect on the suitability of a text which requires multiple hearings.

Technology fails sometimes. In this case it might be appropriate to submit the previous speaking task where the students’ responses are clearer. It is inappropriate to submit no speaking exemplars.

**Subject support**

The revised syllabus will be available on the QSA website in 2008. As schools prepare their new work programs they particularly need to examine the following sections of the syllabus:

- General objectives
- Learning experiences — learning by inquiry
- Exit criteria and standards
- Mandatory requirements
- Requirements for a verification submission.

Teachers will be able to attend syllabus orientation workshops in Term 2, 2008, details of which will
be on the QSA website. Panellists will be supported by panel training in Term 3.

Year 11 students will commence courses of study based on the new syllabus in 2009 and Year 12 students in 2010. The first monitoring and verification meetings to review submissions reflecting the new syllabus will be in 2010.

Work program requirements will change to reflect new syllabus requirements, and will be presented and explained in the syllabus orientation workshops. They will be on the QSA website in 2008 or available by email from sao.languages@qsa.qld.edu.au.

All languages work programs will be submitted through the WP Online system. Work programs submitted to the QSA are a statement of the school’s intent to implement a course of study that meets syllabus requirements. They are not required to provide all the detail that was previously included. They will need to include a course organisation, sample units of work, and a completed sample student profile. Work programs will need to show breadth of learning through the course organisation and profile, and depth of learning through the units of work. Evidence of coverage of the detail of all mandatory aspects of the syllabus is not required in the work program; syllabus requirements are mandatory regardless of their inclusion in a school document.

The QSA website is being redeveloped and from 2008 onwards a range of materials will gradually be made available, for example sample work programs, annotated assessment tasks, annotated student scripts, suggestions for teachers. Materials for the 2001 and 2008 syllabuses will remain online until they are improved, replaced or superseded. A number of schools, teachers, panellists and review panel chairs have contributed their resources and valuable time to this project and thanks is extended to all contributors.

Philip Smith  Lester Ford
State Review Panel Chair  Acting Principal Education Officer
2008 is the general implementation year for all Year 11 students enrolled in Geography. The 2007 Geography syllabus is the result of a minor revision. All schools with a Year 11 cohort need to have submitted a work program by the end of Term 1, 2008. Work program approval notes and requirements plus additional Geography support material will soon be available on the QSA website.

The syllabus has had some revision since it was first published and panel draws schools’ attention to these areas. The stimulus response essay now has definitive conditions of assessment. These conditions are that the essay should be conducted under supervised exam conditions and the question should be unseen. The awarding of exit levels of achievement should read that the Limited Achievement is a standard “D” in any two criteria and the Very Limited Achievement is a standard “E” in any two criteria. These minor revisions should be in schools in first term next year. For enquiries please contact the Syllabus Revision Unit of the Teaching and Learning Division.

There is a new option in the assessment techniques that schools may use to gather additional evidence about student performance in criteria 2 and 3. This technique is called a data response and it is designed to provide flexibility in designing an assessment plan. It offers opportunities to test analytical and/or decision-making processes.

The 1999 syllabus will remain the guiding document for the 2008 Year 12 cohort.

Feedback from districts

At this time over 50 schools around the state have submitted work programs based on the 2007 Syllabus. The approval process is proceeding well with many programs being approved without any further alteration. One of the key features of the 2007 syllabus is the reduction in the minimum number of units that need to be studied in the two-year course from eleven to eight. Many schools have chosen to implement a program based on only the focus units without any elective units and this is perfectly acceptable.

The new requirements for work programs which omit the need to replicate information from the syllabus have meant that work programs are shorter and quicker to prepare and approve. Some examples of approved work programs are available on the QSA website.

While schools are encouraged to provide briefer documents, it is important that all school work programs include

- a course organisation outlining the semester, theme, focus and/or elective units and examples of case studies that therefore show a range of locations and scales of study
- a detailed study plan for one focus or elective unit including rationale, key questions, key ideas, learning experiences and geographic skills
- an assessment plan identifying the assessment techniques that will be applied over the course of study, conditions of implementation, associated criteria and indications of what tasks will be in the verification folio and what tasks will be undertaken after verification; in addition, a copy of the school student profile should be included.

Some of the issues that have created problems for a smooth approval process and should be considered include:

- the need to give some examples for the school of case studies for focus or elective units — these assist in providing an indication of location and scales of study
- including key questions for the school-specific focus or elective unit — these key questions should be modelled on the list of four or five key questions in the 2007 syllabus (p. 20) and not on the lengthy list of more specific questions to guide an inquiry
- inclusion of a range of geographic skills for the detailed unit (important)
• detailing the *conditions of implementation of the various assessment techniques* as described in the 2007 syllabus on pp. 68–70, when devising an assessment plan.

Monitoring is that phase of the quality assurance process where schools receive advice on the quality of the assessment packages, how well they are implementing the course and the reliability of their judgments about levels of achievement at that stage of the course. The key issue for monitoring was the quality of task design, particularly in developing instruments that capture evidence of student performance in criteria 2 and 3. Schools are advised to seek feedback from the Senior Education Officer, Quality Assurance, or members of the district and state panel during the development of their assessment instruments.

Verification is the phase of the quality assurance process where schools’ judgments about interim levels of achievement are verified. The significant issue at verification this year was the application of syllabus standards. This was particularly evident in the marking of geographic skills. The syllabus standards seek evidence of students following geographic conventions across the full range of standards, therefore it is difficult to substantiate schools’ judgments when the evidence of geographic skill and following convention is not evident or is incorrect. Schools are advised to use Geography skills books and atlases to familiarise themselves with geographic conventions.

The *Analytical processes* criterion asks for evidence of students’ identification of patterns and processes, simple and complex relationships, suggestions of causes and the identification of anomalies. Assessment instruments should specifically invite students to explore their understandings of these analytical concepts.

**Statewide comparability**

The comparability exercise undertaken by the state panel showed that there is a high level of reliability between teachers in the judgments they make regarding levels of achievement based on folios of student work. However, the standard where there is the greatest variation in teacher judgment is in the VHA band. This is probably not surprising but it does reflect some concerning variations in the rigour and quality of assessment tasks. Some of the issues that were identified by state panel included the:

• requirement for schools to ensure that they have included the *mandatory assessment techniques for verification* as listed in the 1999 syllabus p.53

• need for student work to show *evidence of geographic skills* to meet the syllabus standards — this is particularly true for evidence from student work in the VHA and HA standards

• need for the *awarding a global standard* to match the descriptor of a standard in the syllabus — this may not be so for every performance but it should be for the majority of performances; the evidence in the folio should represent a student’s pattern of performance in that particular criterion.

One of the other concerns of the state panel is the inadequate evidence of authentication of student responses. This particularly pertains to the nonwritten response. To ensure the increasing independence of students, the number of drafts of field reports and nonwritten responses that are commented on by class teachers should decrease substantially between Semester 1, Year 11, and Semester 4, Year 12. Exhaustive teacher annotation and corrections that continue into Semester 4 are not effective ways of assisting students to develop their independence.

In terms of the nonwritten response, the following guidelines are recommended to ascertain that a prepared response is genuinely that of the student. The teacher should monitor the development of the task by seeing plans and a draft of the student’s work. The student will produce and maintain documentation of the development of the response such as referenced research notes or an annotated bibliography. The student must acknowledge all resources used. The QSA information statement “Strategies for authenticating student work for learning and assessment” is available from the website on memorandum no. 47 of 2005, at Schools and teachers >Memos and forms > Memoranda. This statement provides information about various methods teachers can use to monitor students’ work to ensure authentic tasks.
Course coverage

A scan of the short-response tests provided evidence to suggest that the coverage of the course in relation to the core units was not as comprehensive as it should be.

The 1999 syllabus requires schools to include assessment of both core units from each semester theme in short-response tests. These tests should also be based on assessment of a majority of the key ideas in the core unit. Many tests failed to adequately reflect these key ideas.

Quality of assessment

While there were some exciting examples of good-quality assessment evident in the district samples reviewed by the state panel, there were also many examples of assessment that needed to be improved. Some of the issues that were identified included the following:

- The need for schools to use the correct title of assessment techniques as per the syllabus, for example: short-response test and report — the state panel recommends that schools check all instruments against the syllabus and be consistent.

The need for students to demonstrate their geographic skills especially in reports and practical exercises — it is also important for the conventions associated with maps and graphs to be evident in the grade awarded by the teacher. Guidelines for practical exercises and the expectations for various types of maps and graphs will soon be available on the QSA website.

The need for students to be able to demonstrate analytical and decision-making skills in reports that are of an appropriate size and scale of task for a 17-year-old. Report tasks were often too big for students to respond to and failed to give valid alternatives for students to make decisions about. (Advice — think local and small scale in the design of tasks for reports. Investigation of a plan for a city or suburb is not feasible for a 17-year-old but investigation of a city block or a particular site within a block certainly is reasonable study for a student to undertake.)

- The need for schools to assist students in decision making by providing scaffolding for students to tease out relevant criteria specific to the task. When provided with the broad categories of economic, environmental and social for decision-making criteria, most students will be able to make only simplistic and generalised applications in their evaluation. (Advice — provide students with finer-grained criteria such as improvement in traffic congestion, retention of riparian vegetation or improved services for elderly residents.)

- The need for practical exercises to be simple and sequential in terms of their question design. (Advice — practical exercises are best broken into two parts. The first part is the manipulation of data which should require students to design and construct maps and/or complex graphs. The second part then builds on this whereby students need to identify relationships and then possibly make decisions based on the spatial/visual material that they constructed with the provision of additional information.)

- The need for task-specific criteria schemes to be grounded in the syllabus standards. (Advice — check the 1999 syllabus exit matrix on page 52 and ensure that the key points in Analytical processes such as the identification of simple and complex relationships and the application of criteria in Decision-making processes are applied to the particular task.

Subject support

In 2007, syllabus orientation workshops were offered across all districts. This was an opportunity to introduce schools to the new revised Geography syllabus. Panel training was run in Term 3, 2007. The focus of panel training in 2007 was a broad view of verification and monitoring and a more detailed focus on work program approval. Panel training will be conducted again across the state in 2008. The purpose of these meetings will be on the syllabus standards and feedback on the quality of assessment packages.

The QSA website is currently being updated. Sample assessment tasks, sample work programs and
advice to teachers will be available. Teachers are encouraged to access the sample assessment tasks on the website, seek support from the senior education officer or a member of their district or state panel. Another place where teachers may seek sample assessment tasks is on the QSA website in the external exam part of the website.

Jo MacDonald  Lucie Sorensen
State Review Panel Chair  Senior Education Officer
Syllabus

There is evidence that schools are using more current and relevant materials in their teaching and assessment programs. With the revised syllabus being published in 2008, and implemented with Year 11 in 2009, schools will be required to rewrite their work programs. It will be a wonderful opportunity for schools to reflect on their courses of study and to review the currency of their units of work. How can ICTs be further integrated into the courses of study? How can schools supplement their basic texts with material from the internet? How can schools make better use of audiovisual resources in their teaching and learning? What are the most relevant and interesting topics and tasks for contemporary young people?

In 2007, 561 Year 12 students exited from 96 schools having studied Senior German. Of these, 40 students from 28 schools studied German through the Brisbane School of Distance Education, and 11 students from 4 schools accessed it through the Virtual Schooling Service. Additionally, 52 students in three schools studied German Extension.

Feedback from districts

Being at the end of the current syllabus cycle, there have been very few new work programs. District panel chairs reported that the monitoring and verification meetings proceeded well. School submissions were well prepared and panels were, by and large, able to support school judgments, or come to a satisfactory agreement after negotiation.

The following points need to be considered.

- Schools are requested to include as much information as possible in folios to indicate how they made their judgments of standards of student work. All criteria sheets need to be completed with reference to performance in each criterion. In comprehensions it is helpful to indicate where detail has been missed; a single tick does not differentiate between a complete and a partial answer. Schools must also decide on a grade and not merely write B-/C+ on a profile sheet and leave it to a panel to make a decision.

- Recorded evidence of students speaking is often not of a high standard because students are not given the opportunity to develop points that they had initially made in an answer. Frequently there is too much input from teachers.

- Panels are seeing more reading comprehension items requiring students to look at an extended text (such as a tourist brochure) and summarise or give opinions on aspects of that text. Teachers need to ensure that students are required to justify their answers with specific reference to the text. Responses can otherwise be very general and can in some cases be guessed with a reasonable degree of accuracy.

- Where there are no other students in a level of achievement, the folios of students who have discontinued the subject after one of two semesters must be included in a submission.

- Schools are encouraged to submit samples of speaking on CD. Recordings can easily be made on an inexpensive MP3 recorder/player, the audio files transferred into a computer, and then burned to CD. An MP3 player is less intrusive in class, and tracks are very easily located on a CD. This would solve the problem of cassette players being difficult to obtain and maintain.

Statewide comparability

The panel generally found comparability across the districts in assigning levels of achievement. Where discrepancies occurred, it was often a case of a test item which might have been better formulated, rather than inaccuracies in matching student work to syllabus standards.
Course coverage

Overall it is obvious that there is excellent teaching and learning occurring in many schools across state, where varied topics, activities, approaches and resources are being used. As always, teachers are reminded of the necessity to assess higher-order thinking.

Quality of assessment

Schools are reminded that exit levels of achievement are based on the fullest and the latest information. In general this will require teachers to match the quality of student work across the last two tests in each skill in making a determination.

Texts often provide teachers with opportunities to test higher-order thinking. Rather than giving vocabulary to students, it is appropriate to ask students to deduce the meaning of the unknown word or phrase. Students can also be asked to deduce ideas or draw conclusions after reading the whole text.

Where macro-skills are assessed at the same stage of the term, it is important to ensure that the testing is not too similar in nature. If the topic were drugs, for example, it would be inappropriate to have the listening, speaking and writing tests all on alcohol.

If oral and written tasks are guided, this guidance should be given mainly in English rather than in German. A stimulus such as a cartoon might be appropriate but a series of questions in German which the students have to answer provides too much scaffolding for students to demonstrate higher levels. More extensive scaffolding may well be appropriate, however, in a class where there are no students who are capable of an “A” or a high “B”, as it can enable the students to reach their potential. Scaffolding may be appropriate in encouraging students to reach a sound standard but then there needs to be a task or an aspect of the task which allows the stronger students to achieve higher levels.

Teachers are asked to think carefully about the genre of tasks set at the end of Year 12. A diary entry in the writing skill, for example, may not require complex verb and sentence structures which allow students to demonstrate a higher standard unless the task is so designed that the students are required to use past tense verbs, subordinating clauses and adjectives etc.

Prepared student performances are becoming more popular in assessment programs. Schools need to ensure that students still have the opportunity to use spontaneous language as part of the assessment task. This spontaneous use of the target language should not simply repeat the language used in the prepared section of the assessment.

It is very difficult in group assessment for panels to distinguish between the speakers. Schools are requested to clearly identify the speakers (e.g. limiting the number of students in the group activity or filming the task).

In general, a listening text should be heard twice. In some cases the complexity of a text might require a third playing. Teachers should reflect on the suitability of a text which requires multiple hearings.

Technology fails sometimes. In this case it might appropriate to submit the previous speaking task where the students’ responses are clearer. It is inappropriate to submit no speaking exemplars.

Subject support

The revised syllabus will be available on the QSA website in 2008. As schools prepare their new work programs they particularly need to examine the following sections of the syllabus:

- General objectives
- Learning experiences — learning by inquiry
- Exit criteria and standards
- Mandatory requirements
- Requirements for a verification submission.

Teachers will be able to attend syllabus orientation workshops in Term 2, 2008, details of which will...
be on the QSA website. Panellists will be supported by panel training in Term 3.

Year 11 students will commence courses of study based on the new syllabus in 2009 and Year 12 students in 2010. The first monitoring and verification meetings to review submissions reflecting the new syllabus will be in 2010.

Work program requirements will change to reflect new syllabus requirements, and will be presented and explained in the syllabus orientation workshops. They will be on the QSA website in 2008 or available by email from sao.languages@qsa.qld.edu.au.

All languages work programs will be submitted through the WP Online system. Work programs submitted to the QSA are a statement of the school’s intent to implement a course of study that meets syllabus requirements. They are not required to provide all the detail that was previously included. They will need to include a course organisation, sample units of work, and a completed sample student profile. Work programs will need to show breadth of learning through the course organisation and profile and depth of learning through the units of work. Evidence of coverage of the detail of all mandatory aspects of the syllabus is not required in the work program; syllabus requirements are mandatory regardless of their inclusion in a school document.

The QSA website is being redeveloped and from 2008 onwards a range of materials will gradually be made available, for example sample work programs, annotated assessment tasks, annotated student scripts, suggestions for teachers. Materials for the 2001 and 2008 syllabuses will remain online until they are improved, replaced or superseded. A number of schools, teachers, panellists and review panel chairs have contributed their resources and valuable time to this project and thanks is extended to all contributors.

John Barker          Lester Ford
State Review Panel Chair      Acting Principal Education Officer
**SYLLABUS**

The 2001 Graphics syllabus is in the sixth and final year of implementation. 2008 will be the final cohort of Year 12 students under the 2001 syllabus. 2008 sees the implementation of the new 2007 syllabus in schools throughout the state for the Year 11 cohort. All schools should have received two hard copies of the new syllabus and an electronic copy is available on the QSA website. The main focus of the syllabus review was to integrate the implementation model within the objectives of the course and the exit criteria and standards. Other sections of the syllabus have been refined and clarified including the course organisation, contextual units and assessment.

Work program requirements, approval review notes, two sample work programs and a work program template are available on the QSA website. Schools should aim to have work programs written before students commence the course and they must be submitted for approval no later than the end of the first term of the first Year 11 cohort intake for the subject. The approval of new work programs has been a relatively smooth process with the introduction of the online approval process, and the use of the work program template available from the QSA website.

The following points will assist schools with work program development and implementation.

- Minimum of three and a maximum of five pieces of assessment should be indicated on the work program for submission at verification.
- Ensure that the final piece of assessment, post-verification, assesses all three criteria.
- All three criteria must be assessed at least twice before verification.
- Each of the three contextual areas must be summatively assessed.
- Generally, the criteria of presentation is not normally assessed in formal testing, but with the use of computer-generated drafting, a task set to assess presentation techniques would be acceptable.
- It is not the intent of the syllabus that a number of assessment items be grouped together to form a single entry on the student profile.
- The student profile should be similar to the example in the sample work program on the QSA website. In particular, a single column should be provided for the entry of an A–E standard in each criterion for the relevant assessment items.

**Feedback from districts**

The district review panel chairs and state review panellists’ conference in July provided an opportunity for collegial sharing and professional development. The district chairs shared their differing experiences and perspectives from throughout the state. It is understood and accepted that different schools have vastly different access to resources, some with mostly manual drafting facilities, some predominately making use of electronic media, and those in between. It is apparent that access to computer technologies is continuing to grow at a rapid rate. Schools should be encouraged to develop meaningful and challenging learning experiences for their students regardless of their situation. It is the teacher — not necessarily a teaching resource — that can make the biggest influence on the curriculum and the student.

Schools in general should be congratulated for the presentation of clear and well-organised submissions. It was pleasing to see and hear that most schools are reducing the size and weight of their submissions. A general reminder that the Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995 specifically states that the maximum weight for manual handling be 16 kg.

Schools are reminded that it is the students’ work, not standards on the profile in isolation, that is the basis for determining overall standards and levels of achievement. Decisions on global standards and levels of achievement are on-balance professional judgments based on the standards of students’ work as it is reflected in the standards matrix — with consideration of the six principles of assessment, and
demands and conditions of the task. Formulaic methods, including the “averaging” of standards or trending of ticks/dots on student profiles should not be used.

**Statewide comparability**

In 2007 the state review panel conducted its meeting in accordance with the horizontal comparability process that was use in 2006 for the first time. The purpose of the two-day comparability meeting was to provide advice to QSA regarding the match between the verified levels of achievement in the district sample submissions from each of the districts across the state, and the syllabus requirements. Each panellist was assigned a threshold achievement level to review across all districts: i.e. one panellist would look at all the threshold VHAs across all districts.

There was a general consensus that school judgments in awarding levels of achievement matched syllabus standards in all districts. This was due to highly successful negotiations of verification submissions at the district level. Thank you to schools and district chairs for your understanding and support of this process.

**Course coverage**

The new syllabus will assist teachers to continue the development of the subject Graphics. The contextual nature of the curriculum provides opportunities for students to experience industry-related learning. Students are genuinely investigating, refining, evaluating and producing quality graphical solutions to real-life situations. The emphasis of future student work should be directed towards creating graphical communication for an identified target audience.

Schools need to ensure that the approved work program is followed. If the school wishes to alter its direction, the correct procedure for amending work programs must be followed. The QSA district coordinator can assist with this process.

**Quality of assessment**

The quality of assessment across the state continues to improve. Schools should be constantly evolving assessment practices in the light of improved understandings of the syllabus and assessment processes. Task-specific criteria sheets have enhanced the understanding of the syllabus standards matrix and have proven to be a good indicator of the degree that schools understand the syllabus standards, in particular in the area of reasoning associated with the use of the implementation model.

The 2007 syllabus will require schools to manage new assessment techniques and requirements. When planning formal tests, schools need to ensure that challenging and unfamiliar/unrehearsed contexts are developed to justify achievement at an “A” standard. Regardless of difficulty, formal testing, same or similar to rehearsed classwork, is not beneficial to students at this level, and is often the cause for non-agreement at verification.

Similarly, with the introduction of context-based folios, the assigned task or brief should be flexible enough to allow and promote the higher-order reasoning processes in addressing and solving the task for the target audience. The brief provided to students should elicit a variety of responses rather than the reproduction of identical or similar graphical representations by all students in the cohort. For example, in the production graphics context this could be a set of graphical instructions that can be used by a consumer to assemble a product. Creating graphical representation of this nature for an identified audience requires students to use the implementation model (investigation, refinement and production) and provides opportunities for responses to demonstrate the dimensions of the criteria required for “A” standard responses.

**Subject support**

2007 panel training was conducted in all districts and focused on work program requirements and the on-line approval review processes associated with the introduction of the new syllabus. Panellists
continue to find panel work rewarding and valuable in terms of professional development and schools are encouraged to nominate teachers to panels. Syllabus orientation workshops were also conducted in 2007 and these included work program writing.

The state panel encourages teachers to continue to use the Graphics edna-group online community, www.edna.edu.au/edna, for support, to allow professional discussions to occur and the sharing of experiences and resources.

The QSA website is currently being redeveloped and the new site will be available in January 2008. Thank you to the dedicated and hardworking graphics teachers in schools who are continuing to be excited about what they are doing in the classroom, and for making the difference for our students’ learning.

Larry Scaroni  
State Review Panel Chair

Roy Barnes  
Senior Education Officer
HEALTH EDUCATION — A19

Syllabus

The 2004 Health Education syllabus is in the third year of implementation. Under the current cycle of review the syllabus is due for review in 2010. The popularity of the subject continues to grow with 71 schools offering Health Education to Year 12s in 2007 and another nine schools offering Health Education to Year 11s for the first time.

New work programs and any required amendments to existing programs are to be submitted for approval online through the QSA website no later than the end of Term 1. Advice about work program requirements and amendments can be found on the QSA website.

Feedback from districts

Work programs for schools with exiting cohorts in Health Education are all approved. Schools are encouraged to adjust issue statements and assessment tasks as change occurs in the relevant health issues and interests for each cohort. The process for amending work programs can be located on the QSA website.

District review panel chairs reported at the annual conference regarding monitoring. The consensus was positive and it is generally believed that the current panels are developing their skills and experience over time. Feedback from district panels continues to indicate that panel experience assists with implementation of Health Education and all schools are encouraged to maintain membership on these panels. It was agreed that districts were generally satisfied that schools were implementing the syllabus as intended. The increase in the number of schools offering Health Education to students has created a need for two more panels and these will be formed in 2008 in the Cairns and Gold Coast districts.

Verification reports indicate that there is an ongoing concern with the depth of response in Application & analysis, and Synthesis & evaluation in student responses. This can be addressed by framing tasks with one main question for the students to answer, in one genre format and with an opportunity to use supporting evidence to provide convincing arguments to change and maintain health for the community and specific populations. These changes continue to be orchestrated by public health approaches that address inequalities to enable health concerns to be minimised if not eliminated.

Facilitating a way to better health outcomes in real-life situations are still providing the most effective tools for this design.

Statewide comparability

District review panellists and staff at schools are congratulated for resolving with schools any disagreed submissions in 2007. This allowed state review panel to focus on the process of comparability, which is comparing district samples to the syllabus standards. Horizontal comparability procedures were implemented at state review panel for the second time this year with sample folios from levels of achievement from the state viewed consecutively. It has proved to be a reliable method to ascertain current standards across panels.

The process of comparability indicated some concerns with the application of Application & analysis. The state review panel found that this criterion becomes critical in threshold levels of achievement and in many cases there is a lack of secondary data and complex health relationships analysed.

Making global decisions by comparing the evidence in the whole folio against the exit criteria continues to be crucial for each school’s consideration before awarding levels of achievement at verification. With only four tasks required at verification it is now possible to get an even pair of results within each criterion. Awarding levels of achievement when reaching an on-balance decision with a possible two of each result (e.g. two “A”s and two “B”s within one criterion) over two or more criteria needs to be considered against the principles of assessment. Reference should be made to a
body of evidence of student work in comparison to the standards associated with exit when determining levels of achievement. Schools are also reminded that the assessment principle of “fullest and latest” in Health Education refers to consideration of all evidence in the Year 12 folio.

Course coverage

Composition of work programs displays an understanding of issue selection. It is essential that schools continually develop issue statements to match current health concerns in the local and wider community. Issue statements should continue to frame the possible social justice solutions required to address health inequalities and achieve better health outcomes for the population concerned. Schools are reminded that issue statements must identify the relevant population experiencing a health concern and that population must relate to the unit of work.

Quality of assessment

Assessment items

To assist students to better understand the requirements of an assessment item, tasks should include the issue statement from the work program, one main task requirement, the genre and conditions. Tasks must match the syllabus requirements. Task composition should involve students solving a manageable slice of the issue, be driven by the Synthesis & evaluation criterion and require proof in their arguments. Language in the task needs to relate to the population of the unit as expanded in the syllabus. Schools must ensure that tasks give directions to explore the social impacts on health concerns, relate to real-life health contexts, link to inter-agency health services and consider what is currently on the public health agenda.

Student responses should include a personal thesis and evidence from other contexts. The student’s own personal ideas and line of argument about their own context (at their school, in their family, community, peer group etc.) should be supported by credible evidence that informs practice.

Complex relationships

State review panel continues to provide information to assist schools in interpreting and understanding health relationships. A simple health relationship is established when a health-related outcome is linked directly to one influencing factor or effect. A complex health relationship is established when the related health outcome is evaluated according to the integrated impacts of more than one of the influencing factors, including social justice, and the health issue.

Integrated tasks

State review panel encourages schools to be innovative in the integrated task assessment technique. It is important to facilitate this process with students to ensure that the task expectations transfer to the student work. Evaluation and reflection elements should include a focus on the inequalities or barriers that could not be minimised, or, why improvements were actually successful due to these social justice perspectives. The process, not just the strategy and whether it was successful, should contribute to assessment expectations. Directions within the task should be focused on one aspect of a solution, rather than a broad sweep of all solutions and must be directly related to the teacher and/or student-generated issue. Tasks used for assessment purposes need to include a description of the strategy. This will allow anyone reading the task to determine what it is the students have actually done. Assessment task instructions must include an indication of what evidence is being assessed and what that evidence might look like.

Subject support

Assessment workshops were conducted in three of four districts. Workshops were extremely well attended with up to 25 attendees per workshop. Workshops focused on integrated and developing tasks
so that they allow students more opportunities to develop depth in *Synthesis & evaluation* responses.

No workshops will be held in 2008; however panel training will occur in every district. Teachers are encouraged to apply to be panellists and take advantage of the professional development that comes with such a role.

The QSA website is currently being redeveloped and the new site will be available in January 2008. The Health Education page will contain updated and annotated examples of assessment and work programs.

Gwynfa Johnston  
State Review Panel Chair

Kim Lavin  
Senior Education Officer
Syllabus

All schools offering Home Economics (2001) in 2007 have an approved work program. New work programs and any required amendments to existing programs are to be submitted for approval online through the QSA website. Schools who wish to offer Home Economics for the first time are advised to refer to the work program requirements, which can be found on the QSA website, before submitting to work programs online. Schools are advised to check their approved work programs to ensure that their current teaching and learning, assessment and profiles match what is stated. Also as teachers adopt more varied and innovative approaches in lesson design and assessment techniques, amendments may be essential. The planned review of the syllabus has been placed on hold pending the review of senior phase of learning.

Feedback from districts

Monitoring and verification ran smoothly in 2007.

Assessment tasks generally provided opportunities for students to match the higher standards of the syllabus. Some submissions were bulky and schools are reminded to submit necessary requirements only. In practical work panellists need to see the completed journal work; sometimes exercise booklets were included that contained many unused pages; these should be removed.

For monitoring, all Year 11 assessment tasks and student responses should be included in the sample folios as required for monitoring. Teachers who are new to the subject or would like to have a deeper understanding of the moderation process are most welcome to attend monitoring meetings as an observer. To do so teachers need to contact the district coordinator for details.

For verification, all summative assessment tasks with student responses need to be included in the sample folios required for verification. If any summative tasks are completed in Year 11 these should also be included.

It is also timely to refer to the syllabus page 61, “8.8: Requirements for a verification folio” which outlines the evidence required for October verification. Schools must ensure any revision to the assessment program considers and meets verification folio requirements. Student profiles should also match assessment programs.

When submitting monitoring and verification submissions, the approved work program with the Form R1 (for hard copies and R2 for online approved work programs) should be included. Any variations to the work program should be explained in a letter included in the submission. Changes that affect summative assessment or are likely to be permanent should be made by an amendment. Amendments are to be submitted online and require a cover sheet which can be found on the QSA website at Publications > Forms > Moderation > Forms and Procedures > Amendment to an approved Work Program.

A requirement for verification is to have a minimum of nine sample folios. This could require the inclusion of atypical folios for some small group submissions. For example it may be necessary to submit a folio that only includes Year 11 work, either from Semester 1, Semester 2, or both semesters. Verification is about the evidence in the folio, and district review panel chairs are required to sign off on the evidence. Evidence can take many forms: student work with written responses to assessment tasks, teacher’s feedback on the student work, and marking schemes or task-specific criteria sheets for the various assessment items. A complete sample folio has all of this evidence available for panellists and district review panel chairs to verify teacher judgments. Atypical sample folios need to include the evidence that has been used to arrive at the level of achievement and rung placement for that student. It is imperative that some evidence be in the atypical sample folios to enable the awarded level of achievement to be verified, otherwise district review panel chairs are unable to sign off the R6.
Statewide comparability

Comparability ensures that standards and levels of achievement are maintained across Queensland. That is, to ensure the judgments made in schools across the state match the syllabus descriptors of standards. At the state review panel comparability meeting, standards were agreed to as comparable across the majority of districts.

There is a need for teacher feedback to guide and improve future student performance and this should be evident on the tasks that students undertake. This could take the form of either written comments by teachers, annotations on students’ responses or completion of detailed task-specific criteria sheets.

When developing task-specific criteria sheets, care needs to be taken to ensure the standards awarded reflect the syllabus standards. When awarding overall standards, particularly at exit, the exit criteria from the syllabus are to be used.

Course coverage

Overall, the mandatory aspects, subject matter and treatment of electives have been productively developed throughout the course coverage implemented by schools. Two areas that may need to be revisited are practical performance and combining criteria.

In this syllabus, the key concepts outlined for core and elective units encourage practical performance in relation to textiles and food preparation. Development of house plans would not qualify as suitable core or elective subject matter.

The syllabus, page 61, states “assessment tasks may be combined”. Possibilities for this may be combining an extended written response (C2) and a practical performance task (C3), understanding (C1) and practical performance task (C3), or understanding (C1) and extended written response (C2).

It is a timely stage of the syllabus cycle to experiment with different diverse assessment techniques. It is important when combining assessment opportunities that a task-specific criteria sheet be developed and that the exit standards descriptors be clearly evident and reflected on the marking scheme.

Quality of assessment

Assessment opportunities provide mostly varied and quality tasks which cover a range of topics and issues relevant and appropriate for adolescents. Areas for improvement in assessment task development come from concerns noted from this year’s moderation process of monitoring, verification and comparability. These are outlined below:

Criterion 1: Knowledge & understanding

To demonstrate “thorough understanding” a question needs to be developed that allows students to match standards. Multiple understanding questions do not necessarily mean a quality assessment task or demonstration of thorough understanding. One or two quality questions that encompass a number of key concepts, principles, processes and practices can be more effective in allowing students the opportunity to match to standard descriptors.

Knowledge & understanding requires students to recall previously learned factual information and to demonstrate understanding of that information (syllabus page 5), therefore is would be very difficult to be able to cite evidence of recall in an assessment task such as a pamphlet or brochure. However, these types of assessment can be developed to assess the understanding component of Criterion 1. For this assessment technique to be a valid task, it must require students to demonstrate understanding — that is to interpret, explain and apply in familiar situations the key concepts, principles, processes and practices related to the wellbeing of individuals and their families, not to just find and copy. Orals with structured question-and-answer sections can be used to validly assess recall of information. Other examples could include a PowerPoint presentation to primary school students outlining the links between diet and diabetes. For textiles a website for the school intranet highlighting the importance of considerations of design elements and principles might be appropriate. Detailed task-specific criteria
sheets, developed from the exit standards, and teacher feedback is essential to these types of assessment tasks.

**Criterion 2: Reasoning process**

Students’ responses to researching an issue can be presented in a variety of forms. An issue is a matter which has particular importance or significance to the wellbeing of individuals or families. This could be a generic matter or related to a case study or scenario in a family context. Issues should not be so complex and/or sophisticated that students cannot develop logically reasoned arguments and sustain them with evidence within the word limit.

Some evidence in sample student folios was simply downloaded and pasted into their assignments; the information should be used to “investigate, inquire, debate, argue, develop an opinion, rather than merely describe”.

Word length as stated in the syllabus (page 55) “should be a minimum of 800 words and a maximum of 1000 words in Year 12, and conform to accepted language and referencing conventions”. If these limits are not evident in the student response it is difficult to match to the “A” and “B” standard descriptors of “communicate effectively”.

Genre requirements should be clearly identified on tasks. Learning experiences to develop skills for each genre should be developmental and therefore allow a reduction in scaffolding thus encouraging students to become increasingly self-directed in the evidence they produce.

When students use a report genre they need to use one provided in the syllabus or another accepted report genre. Students need to develop arguments using the report genre not merely present information. For arguments to be “logically reasoned arguments” they need to have supporting evidence.

When referencing ensure an acceptable, consistent system is used.

It is not a requirement in Home Economics for students to include copies of articles used as reference material in appendixes. Appendixes should only contain collated statistics or primary data gathered by the student to support their arguments.

There needs to be some guidance to students regarding appropriateness of student work to be presented. QSA has developed guidelines and procedures for schools and review panels: “Appropriate material for submissions of student work” and this is available from the QSA website at Publications > Index to publications > Senior assessment > Forms and procedures > Appropriate material for submissions of student work.

**Criterion 3: Practical performance**

Photographic evidence needs to have comments describing the “quality” of the technique.

The student’s decision about final product should be evident. This product should be evident in the process journal and supported by teacher feedback and comments on the task-specific criteria sheet.

In Year 12 tasks, ensure that there is not excessive scaffolding as it can restrict the learner from being self-directed and demonstrating their own decision-making skills. The practical performance model (see syllabus page 17) does not mandate that a number of alternatives must be analysed and documented in a process journal. It is acceptable for a student to nominate one plausible solution and justify it in relation to the factors and their interrelationships. Modifications to an option may also be made so that the option becomes a suitable solution.

**Teacher feedback**

While task-specific criteria sheets can be used to provide excellent feedback to the students, some teachers leave these sheets unannotated. Feedback should indicate the action needed to improve future performances.
The language education statement (syllabus page 7) reminds us that we are responsible for developing effective language communication. In particular, teachers should help students to use technical terms and specialised vocabulary that are central to Home Economics. They should also ensure students use language conventions related to grammar, spelling, punctuation and presentation. While this is assessed only in Criterion 2, it should be fostered in all work.

**Subject support**

In 2008, panel training will be conducted for Home Economics in all districts.

No workshops were held in 2007, but support was available from the senior education officer through phone, email, fax and the website. The QSA website is being redeveloped and will come online early in 2008. Careful selection of relevant work programs and annotated assessment items will be of assistance to teachers to support the development of a work program and assessment package that reflects the needs of students and that of the syllabus.

Thank you to Robyn Kent for her leadership as state review panel chair especially through trial pilot and general implementation. Robyn is a true professional and is dedicated to Home Economics. Thank you to all state and district review panel members for what has been a busy year.

Meredith Gleadhill
State Review Panel Chair

Kerri Gorman
Senior Education Officer
Syllabus

The subject is currently offered at 85 schools across the state with many schools awaiting the outcome of the new training package before undertaking this subject in the future. The current syllabus will be reviewed when the training package is finally endorsed. QSA will notify schools of the implications for Hospitality Studies.

Feedback from districts

This year we have extended our panels to four with the new Toowoomba panel taking schools from all three panels to spread the load. For this year some panellists have had to be a part of both district and state panels to allow the process to run smoothly during the changeover. This change did however, deplete some panels and teachers are encouraged to become panellists. Being a panellist provides an excellent opportunity for professional growth and a deeper understanding of the syllabus as well as generating new ideas for the development of the subject. If you are interested in joining panel, contact your district coordinator for details or download an application form from the website by looking under “Schools & teachers” on the homepage, then: Moderation & panels > Application for membership of state or district review panels.

Monitoring and verification were completed successfully due to the diligence of all panellists.

Assessment tasks on the whole are improving with students being given the opportunity to match to the higher standards of the syllabus.

Verification and exit should reflect the fullest and latest information as per page 37 of the syllabus.

When submitting monitoring and verification submissions the approved work program, including the Form R1 (for hard copies and R2 for online approved work programs) should be included. Any variations to the work program should be explained in a letter included in the submission. Schools need to be aware that in order to change the course organisation or assessment plan, an amendment needs to be submitted before verification. Amendments are to be submitted online and require a cover sheet which can be found on the QSA website at Publications > Forms > Moderation > Forms and Procedures > Amendment to an approved Work Program.

Video evidence presents complications for panels in terms of incompatibility of DVDs or faulty videos. Schools should ensure that video evidence is free from technical faults and includes information about suitable formats (where relevant). Panels only require a short visual representation of the evidence of an “A” and “C” standard, and short script or voiceover to describe the standards, not a glossy professionally produced television program. Videos presented at monitoring and verification need to represent the current cohort and the current year (video evidence for Year 11 and then again in Year 12) but do not necessarily need to be from a function. They could be a compilation of several occasions demonstrating “Quality” and “Acceptable quality”.

Some evidence of practical work presented is too long in duration and ambiguous in the nomination of acceptable and quality samples; some submissions provided no written script or explanation of the standards expected for an “A” or a “C”, nor a voiceover on the video/DVD. Refer to the syllabus page 44 for full instructions for submitting video evidence.

It is important that hygiene and safety issues comply with industry standards as cited in Education Queensland guidelines, (http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/eppr/health/hlspr012/cookery.html) and also consider industry standards for student dress and equipment used (Food Hygiene Standards).
Statewide comparability

Comparability ensures that standards and levels of achievement are maintained across Queensland. That is, the judgments made in schools across the state match the syllabus descriptors of standards. At the state review panel comparability meeting, standards were agreed to as comparable across the majority of districts.

Course coverage

Three of the five topic areas from the syllabus are mandatory in summative assessment together with the certificate competencies embedded in these. It is wise to include the three topic areas in Year 12 so that only Year 12 assessment items contribute towards exit. Schools using Year 11 work as summative may be disadvantaging students who develop more strongly in Year 12.

Hospitality topics for assessment items should ensure the focus is on the hospitality industry rather than social issues as can be the case from other syllabus documents.

Whilst the syllabus does not stipulate that all focus areas of a topic are to be covered, it is suggested that as many focus areas as possible are covered to give students a broad understanding of the subject.

Quality of assessment

Criterion 1: Knowledge & understanding

The Knowledge & understanding criterion is twofold and as such, the understanding component needs to be strongly represented in assessment items. The knowledge area appears to be overrepresented and as such prevents students from demonstrating their understanding. Examples of understanding questions include application of knowledge to industry situations, response to case studies and developing alternative menus for specific conditions. At exit, opportunities must be provided for students to demonstrate the “A” standard, “recalls a comprehensive range of information and demonstrates a thorough understanding of key ideas, principles and concepts”.

Criterion 2: Reasoning processes

Research questions should be based on hospitality industry issues and provide opportunity for students to investigate the issue, develop arguments on the issue which can be supported by evidence, draw conclusions on the issue and how it is affecting the industry and/or make recommendations to the hospitality industry concerning the issue. All of this should be done taking the industry perspective. Tasks that require students to examine the social consequences of gaming, responsible service of alcohol and nutrition etc. do not, therefore, allow students opportunities to demonstrate the higher standards of the criterion. The student’s response must relate to the effect of the issue on the hospitality industry. Careful guidance will need to be given to students.

In the formative semesters it is appropriate to provide scaffolding to guide student research, to assist students to develop arguments and draw conclusions; however, in Year 12 this scaffolding should be reduced to allow students to develop the reasoning processes and enable Criterion 2 tasks to be discriminating.
Criterion 3: Practical performance

Criterion 3 tasks should present students with a hospitality venture or function. Tasks need to provide clear directions. The syllabus (pages 18 and 19) states the dimensions that need to be incorporated. The syllabus also states that “dimensions incorporated into a task must be accounted for by students in their decision making”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of practical performance tasks</th>
<th>Sample student activities to implement task and fulfill dimensions</th>
<th>Practical performance criterion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Client needs</td>
<td>Clarify the dimensions of a task</td>
<td>Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose, style or setting</td>
<td>Explore factors influencing decisions</td>
<td>Making and justifying decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources available</td>
<td>Decide on the plan of action</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specified skills</td>
<td>State reasons for decisions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal skills</td>
<td>Put plan into action</td>
<td>Performing practical skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others, specific to task</td>
<td>Monitor progress and adjust where necessary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manage resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Produce products and/or services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reflect on the effectiveness of plan and implementation</td>
<td>Reflecting, evaluating, making recommendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Make recommendations if appropriate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is important to include individual and team elements to these tasks and for the procedures and processes that students use to reflect those used in industry. Written evidence to verify planning and decision making could be quite extensive and should include rosters, stock requisitions, transfer notes, costing, standard recipe cards and diagrams of table lay-ups or room arrangements etc., where relevant. Care needs to be taken that students justify the decisions they make in relation to how they satisfy the dimensions outlined in the task brief. The evaluation should involve a critical reflection on the planning, decision making and implementation of the function. A description only of what happened matches the “C” standard.

Whilst it is not necessary for schools to plan and run large functions, the student-to-customer ratio by Year 12 should be realistic to the industry setting. Increasing the number of dimensions in Year 12 will add to the complexity of the task and the complexity needs to increase throughout the course so that Year 12, Semester 4, is more complex (involving more complex dimensions) than Year 11, Semester 1.

Subject support

The redevelopment of the QSA website with relevant work programs and annotated assessment items will be of assistance when it comes online early in 2008. Much effort has gone into the selection of work programs to reflect different certificates strands and appropriate styles of annotated assessment and criteria sheets which match to the items.

No workshops were conducted throughout 2007 although schools have had the opportunity to contact the SAO for support. Workshops for 2008 are not planned at this stage, but panel training will take place in Semester 2.

Thank you to all panellists, state and district, for your hard work again this year.

Penny Braithwaite  Kerri Gorman
State Review Panel Chair Senior Education Officer
Syllabus

The state panel takes this opportunity to thank schools for their ongoing support of Indonesian. Some 106 students in 14 schools undertook and completed studies in senior Indonesian in 2007: there was one large group (14 or more OP-eligible students), three intermediate (10–13 OP-eligible students) and 10 small groups (nine or fewer OP-eligible students). While Indonesian Extension is offered, there was not a cohort in 2007. Indonesian was also offered under Variable Progression Rate (VPR) arrangements.

The Languages Syllabus Advisory Committee has completed revision of the 2001 Syllabus. Year 11 students will commence their course of study under the new syllabus in 2009, and Year 12 students will exit for the first time in 2010. Syllabus orientation workshops and panel training are planned for 2008. These workshops will help teachers and panellists prepare their work programs for implementation with Year 11 in 2009.

Panellists are to submit their work programs for approval during 2008. All other schools should have their programs written and submitted by the end of Term 1, 2009. The first cohort of Year 12 students will exit in 2010.

Feedback from districts

During the monitoring and verification process of 2007, the presentation of school submissions was complete and comprehensive. These meetings were followed by many professional discussions between schools and panel that promoted shared understandings around the state. The consultation process with schools was successful this year, with no unresolved submissions.

Panel members were very professional in their approach and made every effort to provide schools with high-quality, detailed advice.

Special mention needs to be made of VPR students and the curriculum innovations implemented by some schools to meet the needs of these cohorts. Providing opportunities for students to study language as a VPR student has given more students the chance to study and complete senior Authority Indonesian courses.

Course coverage

Following monitoring and verification this year, the comments made by panel on Forms R3 were analysed. The following areas were highlighted as needing further consideration and clarification:

- The typical requirement at verification is for the submission of nine folios of student work. If there are only nine students in a cohort, all student folios must be sent. This includes the top student in the cohort as well as students who may have dropped the subject or are the only example of a Very Limited Achievement or Limited Achievement in the school. Incomplete folios may also need to be submitted.

- Where recorded evidence did not substantiate the school’s decisions about the application of standards to speaking performances, and evidence in the folio of student work did not match the standards awarded, placements could not be supported by the panel. This led to consultation with the school, sometimes involving additional recordings. Schools need to ensure that all speaking tasks are recorded and are available for possible consultation and negotiation.

- Recorded evidence should be cued to the exact location the panellist is to listen to, and samples need to be labelled, “Sample C (mid-range), side B”. It is important to be mindful that conditions may affect the recording and quality of the evidence provided.

- Standard “A” writing is characterised by flexibility in sentence structure, some originality, a range of complex sentences incorporating aspects of time, mood and intention, and a high degree of
accuracy in familiar language across a variety of topics and genres.

- A student who attains, for example, an “A” on the final assessment, is not necessarily an “A” in that skill at exit. If all other results were “B’s”, the student has not consistently demonstrated the “A” standard across a range of topics and genres. Evidence in a folio must reflect the standards descriptors in the syllabus.

- A judgment of student performances must be made and clearly indicted on the interim standards schema. For example, B+/A- on an assessment task is not a judgment and does not provide information about performance in relation to the standards for a student, and does not allow panellists to be able to support a school decision when there is not a clear indication of that school judgment. Judgments should also be clearly indicated and recorded on the student profile. Where an assessment includes a range of tasks, one overall grade must be indicated on the interim criteria and standards and on the student profile.

- Schools sometimes change the sequence of topics in their work programs, or substitute one unit for another. A permanent change requires an official amendment to the program, but, for a “one-off” change, an explanation to the panel included with the submission will suffice.

**Quality of assessment**

Most assessment tasks allowed students to demonstrate all aspects of the standards descriptors and meet syllabus requirements. Generally teacher judgments about student work in the sample folios matched syllabus standards. However there are still areas which require further consideration:

- Providing questions that allowed students’ performances to be matched to all aspects of the criterion, e.g. deducing meaning from context, or recognising the register, tone or purpose in a text. There must be adequate opportunities for students to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills.

- Supporting questions for assessment should not lead or hinder students in the demonstration of standards. A list of questions sometimes gives clues to the content of a text. To avoid this, a more general task or set of questions could be used. For example: “Give an overview of the text and its content. Explain what type of document it is, where it might have been found, who might have written it, what its purpose might have been, and who the intended audience may have been. Justify your answer with references to the text. Comment on the tone and register of the text.” These questions may allow students to demonstrate higher-order thinking.

- Quality of assessment tasks again allowed students to engage with authentic language. The focus of assessment tasks should be to provide students with sufficient challenge while drawing on the students’ own interests and experiences.

- Assessment tasks should come from a variety of sources and texts and should reflect the current language learning methodology. It is pleasing to see that schools are incorporating internet-based sources into their assessment programs and that students are able to access a range of multimedia.

**Subject support**

The revision of the syllabus was completed this year and the new syllabus will be available on the QSA website in 2008. The revision was conducted by the Syllabus Revision Unit of the Teaching and Learning Division. The Indonesian Syllabus Committee was convened to consider changes that would enhance the Indonesian syllabus.

The introduction of the 2008 Indonesian syllabus will be supported through a range of syllabus orientation workshops in Semester 1, Term 2, 2008. These will be conducted across the state and information about these can be found on the QSA website: Schools & teachers > PD & events > Years 11 & 12 > Workshops > Languages.

Panellists will be supported through the introduction of the new syllabus with panel training conducted throughout the state in Semester 2, Term 3, 2008.

Year 11 students will commence courses of study under the new syllabus in 2009 and Year 12 students in 2010. The first monitoring and verification meetings to review submissions developed to
meet the requirements of the revised syllabus will be conducted in 2010.

Work program requirements will change to reflect new syllabus requirements. These will be on the QSA website in 2008 or available by email from: sao.languages@qsa.qld.edu.au.

These requirements will be presented and explained in the syllabus orientation workshops.

For the first time, all languages work programs will be submitted online. A work program is the school’s intention to implement a course of study that meets syllabus requirements. Consequently, new work programs will not provide all the detail that they previously have. Course organisation, sample units of work, and completed student profiles will be required. Work programs will need to show breadth of learning through the course organisation and completed sample profiles and depth of learning through the sample units. Evidence of coverage of all mandatory aspects of the syllabus is not required; syllabus requirements are mandatory regardless of their inclusion in a school document.

The QSA website is being redeveloped and from 2008, there will be a range of materials such as sample work programs, annotated assessment tasks, annotated student assessment and other relevant documentation available. A number of schools, teachers, panellists and review panel chairs have contributed their resources and valuable time to this project and thanks is extended to all contributors.

There will be a period where materials for the 2001 and 2008 syllabuses will be online. As the implementation of the new syllabus is completed, a full range of support materials will become available and 2001 materials will be superseded. Materials will be continually improved and consequently resources may be enhanced or replaced as practice develops and is refined.

After many years of involvement with the Indonesian state panel, Debra Hoven has resigned. The panel takes this opportunity to recognise Debra’s contributions and to wish her well for the future.

The state panel would like to recognise the quality of outcomes achieved by teachers of Indonesian in Queensland, their tireless efforts and, in particular, the contributions of those teachers to promote, support and sustain the studying of Indonesian in their schools.

Kath Symmons              Terry McPherson
State Review Panel Chair  Senior Education Officer
INFORMATION PROCESSING AND TECHNOLOGY — A16

Syllabus

This is the third year of implementation of the 2004 syllabus and all schools have an approved work program. Issues with schools failing to adopt the practices of the new syllabus noted in the 2006 state review panel report appear to have been overcome. There has, significantly, been a trend for schools to amend programs to a Year A – Year B format for composite classes in the face of the challenge of falling subject enrolments. There has, similarly, been a rise in the number of schools enrolling students in IPT with the Virtual Schooling Service, or in distance education (in a virtual schooling mode).

Feedback from districts

Monitoring submissions from schools were of an acceptable standard with some issues of concern continuing from previous years: rigour in exam questions assessing the Research & development criterion; evaluation and user document being descriptive rather than critical; and inconsistent opportunities for students to achieve HA or VHA.

Verification submissions from schools are of some concern with most districts reporting a high proportion of “not agreed” submissions although, as noted in there being only two unresolved submissions sent to the state panel, these were negotiated between the school and the state review panel chair. This may, in part, be due to the differing requirements for small groups. The issues commonly raised included inappropriate or unsubstantiated placement and poor submission preparation (with some items missing). As critical, but less common, were insufficient attention to syllabus requirements (with two schools attempting to “trade-off” between criteria) and the deleterious effect of teacher turnover with three instances of a school ending the year without a qualified teacher to make exit decisions.

What has emerged, from both monitoring and verification in 2007, has been a difficulty in staffing district panels. Experienced panellists are being “lost” to retirement or to other panels such as Information Technology Systems. In some instances, experienced panellists are in schools which are no longer offering Information Processing and Technology. The state panel wishes to extend an invitation to qualified teachers to join district panels. Thank you to those who continue to participate in the panel process and its associated professional discussions.

Statewide comparability

The state panel had the opportunity in November to compare sample submissions from all districts in the state. As only minor amendments were suggested between and within bands, standards appear to be consistent across the districts. The VHA samples presented were of a particularly high standard indicating the capacity of students to produce elegant solutions to complex problems and the development by teachers of open-ended assessment items which allow these students to demonstrate their mastery of the subject. Only two unresolved submissions were received.

Course coverage

The reviewed submissions all satisfied syllabus requirements.

Persistent issues remain with the IIS (Information and intelligent systems) topic, particularly the marking of conceptual schema. Evidence was noted which indicated a lack of teacher understanding of this process.

Evaluation is also problematic in that student responses remain simplistic and subjective rather than analytical or critical and it is apparent that this process (part of the Research & development criterion) is lacking in teacher scaffolding. The ability to evaluate with justification using both prescribed and self-determined criteria is frequently the discriminating evidence between High and Sound achievement levels.
Quality of assessment

Few issues were noted with the quality of assessment. Vestiges of the former syllabus and old practices remain indicating that some schools have not redrafted their assessment criteria and standards to align with the new syllabus and QSA policy. There were also some idiosyncratic assessment practices noted which do not align to the 2004 syllabus. These were (a) the use of A–E standards on simple Knowledge exam questions which did not have sufficient complexity to allow for this; and (b) applying marks to all student work and then using linear divisions to assign standards. Both are extremes and neither approach meets the intent of the syllabus.

A persistent issue, also noted in 2007, was the absence of apparent delineation of individual effort and achievement within group tasks. There needs to be fair and transparent means for this to happen. The current practice, in some schools, is to award all students in a group the same grade without differentiation. Because of this, the LA folios often had results for projects which were inconsistent with individual and supervised tasks. This had the consequence of masking or inflating a student’s own achievement.

It was noted that extended-writing tasks (EWT) tended to require descriptive responses, such as case studies, user manuals, lists of research findings, rather than providing opportunities for students to present points of view, arguments, discussion or judgments.

There is encouraging evidence to suggest that HCI (Human computer interaction) is increasingly being foregrounded in student work. This is in marked contrast to 2006 where, being new to the syllabus, the positioning of the topic was not fully understood. Similarly, there is increasing evidence of the use of task-specific criteria. This is a welcome and positive development but schools need to curb a tendency for these to become overly lengthy.

Subject support

This year, 13 syllabus implementation workshops for Information Processing and Technology were conducted around the state in combination with school visits from the senior education officer. In 2008, Year 4 panel training is proposed for Semester 1 which will focus on inducting new panellists, and dealing with issues from monitoring, verification and assessment. The state panel encourages teachers to continue to use the IPT Edna group online community for support (http://www.edna.edu.au/edna), to allow professional discussions to occur and the sharing of experiences and resources.

Margaret Lloyd
State Review Panel Chair

Steve Gramenz
Senior Education Officer
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS — A26

Syllabus

In 2007, the new syllabus for Information Technology Systems went into its first year of general implementation. The first Year 11 cohort commenced their course of study under the new syllabus this year whilst the final cohort of Year 12 students exited under the 2004 extended pilot syllabus.

Feedback from districts

Work program approvals are ongoing for schools. Of the 90 schools offering the subject, 45 work programs have been approved. It was evident from new work programs submitted by schools in 2007 that the new syllabus requirement of breaking the course into 70 per cent core and 30 per cent extension, and organising the subject matter under the five interwoven threads in the course outline created some confusion. Schools are encouraged to contact district review panel chairs to clarify any misinterpretation of syllabus requirements before submitting work programs so as to accelerate the work program approval process.

Generally, district review panel chairs indicated that monitoring and verification ran smoothly. The district review panel chairs worked long hours to finalise comments on Forms R3 and R6 and their efforts are highly valued and greatly appreciated. Some district review panel chairs highlighted the need for incidental panel training in 2008, as a result of the high mobility of panellists in 2007 and the limited panel experience of incumbents in some districts. They also highlighted difficulties when reviewing student folios at verification, in distinguishing between group and individual student work within minor and major projects.

Statewide comparability

The comparability process highlighted for the state panel the distinct quality of student work at a VHA and HA level in most districts. Overall, the state panel found that the judgments made in schools across the state in general matched the syllabus exit standards. There were only two unresolved submissions and this clearly confirms the good work being conducted by district review panels.

The state panel noted a few general recommendations for the district review panels for 2008:

- The comments on the R6 form should expand on the comment bank to use syllabus language and evidence-based comments.
- All panellists should have the syllabus standards open whilst reviewing submissions to make accurate reference to the syllabus standards in their feedback to schools.
- It is important that the district review panel remain alert to the QSA’s non-submission policy whereby an “E” standard for a particular assessment cannot be awarded where there is no physical evidence for it. Schools must be informed if their submission consists of this practice.

Course coverage

Schools continue to develop interesting course opportunities for students. However, the state panel would like schools to place an equal emphasis on the Communication criterion and implement, as stated in the syllabus, the CIPP model effectively in the communication aspect of the course.

Quality of assessment

With the introduction of the new syllabus in 2007, it is evident that schools have reviewed their assessment practices, resulting in varied, challenging and appropriate assessment instruments being implemented across the state.

However, excessively long assessment instruments were an area of concern for the state panel. While
assessment instruments should provide enough detail to allow students to know what is required of them in the task and provide opportunities for students to achieve at a VHA level, it was evident from work in some student folios that excessively long task sheets caused students to become disoriented, and unsure of what was required of them. State panel suggests that some of the detail may be better placed in criteria sheets associated with the tasks and, in some instances, split a large assessment instrument into two separate assessment tasks which may consist of two different assessment techniques.

The state panel reviewed criteria sheets in many of the submissions where the standard “E” represented a non-submission. The state panel is concerned with this practice and advises schools to review their criteria sheets to ensure they reflect the assessment task and meet the syllabus assessment requirements. Schools should refer to the policy on late and non-submission which can be found on the QSA website at Assessment > Senior Assessment > Special consideration > Late submission and non-submission of student assessment in authority subjects and authority-registered subjects.

Subject support

This year syllabus implementation workshops, panel training and school visits for Information Technology Systems were conducted around the state in Semester 1 by the senior education officer. These sessions focused on developing work programs for the new syllabus as well as training panellists in work program approval processes and sharing feedback from monitoring. The state panel encourages teachers to continue to use the ITS Edna group online community for support (http://www.edna.edu.au/edna), particularly in sharing and developing assessment and resources, and at the same time allowing important professional discussions to occur. Year 2 panel training is scheduled for Semester 2 in 2008.

Lee-Ann Barton  
State Review Panel Chair

Steve Gramenz  
Senior Education Officer
There is evidence that schools are using more current and relevant materials in their teaching and assessment programs. With the revised syllabus being published in 2008, and implemented with Year 11 in 2009, schools will be required to rewrite their work programs. It will be a wonderful opportunity for schools to reflect on their courses of study and to review the currency of their units of work. How can ICTs be further integrated into the courses of study? How can schools supplement their basic texts with material from the internet? How can schools make better use of audiovisual resources in their teaching and learning? What are the most relevant and interesting topics and tasks for contemporary young people?

In 2007, 174 Year 12 students exited from 20 schools having studied senior Italian.

Being at the end of the current syllabus cycle, there have been very few new work programs. District panel chairs reported that the monitoring and verification meetings proceeded well. School submissions were well prepared and panels were, by and large, able to support school judgments, or come to a satisfactory agreement after negotiation. The following points need to be considered:

- Schools are requested to include as much information as possible in folios to indicate how they made their judgments of standards of student work. All criteria sheets need to be completed with reference to performance in each criterion. In comprehensions it is helpful to indicate where detail has been missed; a single tick does not differentiate between a complete and a partial answer. Schools must also decide on a grade and not merely write B-/C+ on a profile sheet and leave it to a panel to make a decision.

- Recorded evidence of students speaking is often not of a high standard because students are not given the opportunity to develop points that they had initially made in an answer. Frequently there is too much input from teachers.

- Panels are seeing more reading comprehension items requiring students to look at an extended text (such as a tourist brochure) and summarise or give opinions on aspects of that text. Teachers need to ensure that students are required to justify their answers with specific reference to the text. Responses can otherwise be very general and can in some cases be guessed with a reasonable degree of accuracy.

- Where there are no other students in a level of achievement, the folios of students who have discontinued the subject after one of two semesters must be included in a submission.

- Schools are encouraged to submit samples of speaking on CD. Recordings can easily be made on an inexpensive MP3 recorder/player, the audio files transferred into a computer, and then burned to CD. An MP3 player is less intrusive in class, and tracks are very easily located on a CD. This would solve the problem of cassette players being difficult to obtain and maintain.

The panel generally found comparability across the state in assigning levels of achievement. Where discrepancies occurred, it was often a case of a test item which might have been better formulated, rather than inaccuracies in matching student work to syllabus standards.

Overall it is obvious that there is excellent teaching and learning occurring in many schools across state, where varied topics, activities, approaches and resources are being used. As always, teachers are reminded of the necessity to assess higher-order thinking.
Quality of assessment

Schools are reminded that exit levels of achievement are based on the fullest and the latest information. In general this will require teachers to match the quality of student work across the last two tests in each skill in making a determination.

Texts often provide teachers with opportunities to test higher-order thinking. Rather than giving vocabulary to students, it is appropriate to ask students to deduce the meaning of the unknown word or phrase. Students can also be asked to deduce ideas or draw conclusions after reading the whole text.

Where macro-skills are assessed at the same stage of the term, it is important to ensure that the testing is not too similar in nature. If the topic were drugs, for example, it would be inappropriate to have the listening, speaking and writing tests all on alcohol.

If oral and written tasks are guided, this guidance should be given mainly in English rather than in Italian. A stimulus such as a cartoon might be appropriate but a series of questions in Italian which the students have to answer provides too much scaffolding for students to demonstrate higher levels. More extensive scaffolding may well be appropriate, however, in a class where there are no students who are capable of an “A” or a high “B”, as it can enable the students to reach their potential. Scaffolding may be appropriate in encouraging students to reach a sound standard but then there needs to be a task or an aspect of the task which allows the stronger students to achieve higher levels.

Teachers are asked to think carefully about the genre of tasks set at the end of Year 12. A diary entry in the writing skill, for example, may not require complex verb and sentence structures which allow students to demonstrate a higher standard unless the task is so designed that the students are required to use past tense verbs, subordinating clauses and adjectives etc.

Prepared student performances are becoming more popular in assessment programs. Schools need to ensure that students still have the opportunity to use spontaneous language as part of the assessment task. This spontaneous use of the target language should not simply repeat the language used in the prepared section of the assessment.

It is very difficult in group assessment for panels to distinguish between the speakers. Schools are requested to clearly identity the speakers (e.g. limiting the number of students in the group activity or filming the task).

In general, a listening text should be heard twice. In some cases the complexity of a text might require a third playing. Teachers should reflect on the suitability of a text which requires multiple hearings.

Technology fails sometimes. In this case it might appropriate to submit the previous speaking task where the students’ responses are clearer. It is inappropriate to submit no speaking exemplars.

Subject support

The revised syllabus will be available on the QSA website in 2008. As schools prepare their new work programs they particularly need to examine the following sections of the syllabus:

- General objectives
- Learning experiences — learning by inquiry
- Exit criteria and standards
- Mandatory requirements
- Requirements for a verification submission.

Teachers will be able to attend syllabus orientation workshops in Term 2, 2008, details of which will be on the QSA website. Panellists will be supported by panel training in Term 3.

Year 11 students will commence courses of study based on the new syllabus in 2009 and Year 12 students in 2010. The first monitoring and verification meetings to review submissions reflecting the new syllabus will be in 2010.

Work program requirements will change to reflect new syllabus requirements, and will be presented...
and explained in the syllabus orientation workshops. They will be on the QSA website in 2008 or available by email from sao.languages@qsa.qld.edu.au.

All languages work programs will be submitted through the WPonline system. Work programs submitted to the QSA are a statement of the school’s intent to implement a course of study that meets syllabus requirements. They are not required to provide all the detail that was previously included. They will need to include a course organisation, sample units of work, and a completed sample student profile. Work programs will need to show breadth of learning through the course organisation and profile, and depth of learning through the units of work. Evidence of coverage of the detail of all mandatory aspects of the syllabus is not required in the work program; syllabus requirements are mandatory regardless of their inclusion in a school document.

The QSA website is being redeveloped and from 2008 onwards a range of materials will gradually be made available, for example sample work programs, annotated assessment tasks, annotated student scripts, suggestions for teachers. Materials for the 2001 and 2008 syllabuses will remain online until they are improved, replaced or superseded. A number of schools, teachers, panellists and review panel chairs have contributed their resources and valuable time to this project and thanks is extended to all contributors.

Sarina Kearney  Lester Ford
State Review Panel Chair    Acting Principal Education Officer
Some 1393 students undertook and completed studies in senior Japanese in 2007: 151 schools offered the course internally; there were 15 large groups (14 or more OP-eligible students) and 21 intermediate groups (10–13 OP-eligible students); and 83 students studied through the Brisbane School of Distance Education or Virtual Schooling.

As the syllabus is in the final stage of its cycle, there are few new work programs being submitted for approval.

Feedback from districts

Monitoring and verification were conducted as usual in 2007. Some districts reported some concerns at monitoring and verification but, generally, schools are successfully implementing courses of study in Japanese. Judgments about student work in the sample folios matched syllabus standards and assessment tasks provided opportunities for student performances to be matched to the criteria and standards.

Verification meetings were conducted quite successfully and, although there were a number of disagreements, only a small number proceeded as unresolved submissions to state panel. Some issues arose during the monitoring and verification processes.

Students should be given the opportunity to demonstrate: comprehension of gist, detail, main and subsidiary points; deduction of meaning from context including ideas as well as information; and recognition and appreciation of intention, purpose, register and sociocultural references (reading only). A high-quality assessment task will provide the opportunity for student demonstration of all these aspects. However, there remains a view that demonstration of understanding of a text is sufficient for the awarding of an “A” standard. Syllabus standards describe more than this and a task that does not allow for a demonstration of higher-order thinking skills cannot provide sufficient evidence for a panel to substantiate school decisions regarding the grading of student work and the awarding of levels of achievement.

Recorded evidence is submitted to substantiate school judgments regarding the spontaneity of student performances. However, a student’s ability to initiate and sustain conversations can be inhibited when the teacher is leading the conversation. Spontaneous language use can best be demonstrated when a task is designed with this as its focus. Recorded samples must contain clear evidence of the student’s ability to initiate and sustain conversation.

Unless there is a specific reason to submit an atypical folio, complete folios should be sent. If there is uncertainty about these variations to procedures, please refer to the relevant documentation on the QSA website at Assessment > Senior assessment > Forms and procedures > Moderation procedures for atypical sample folios.

For example, folios where students may have left the subject or are missing assessment items may not provide the best examples of school judgments concerning standards or school decisions regarding levels of achievement and relative placement.

While there are very few work programs being submitted for approval, those that have been sent used the work program online approval process (WP Online). In conjunction with the introduction of WP Online, work programs requirements have been refined. Schools should refer to the QSA website if there is uncertainty regarding current requirements. The state panel thanks panellists and district review panel chairs for their efforts during the transition to these online processes and compliments them on their contributions to the processes of moderation, their support of schools in the development of high-quality assessment and their part in the facilitation of judgments that reflect syllabus standards.
Statewide comparability

Comparability between districts has been good: standards in general have been consistently applied and reflect shared understandings of syllabus requirements and standards descriptors.

Course coverage

Course coverage is generally being well achieved.

Schools should note that, where a textbook is being used as the basis for the design of a course, the publishing of newer editions, or a change to a new textbook, may result in a need for an amendment to or a resubmission of a work program.

Quality of assessment

Assessment continues to be of an appropriate standard.

As the current syllabus reaches the end of its cycle of implementation, assessment practices are still to reflect the scope offered in the syllabus; assessment items featuring the use of technology are not being offered to students. It is recognised that access to the appropriate technology may inhibit its incorporation into quality assessment.

Dictionary use needs to be considered in relation to a range of factors. Additional vocabulary may need to be omitted from a test where a dictionary is allowed. Genre associated with an item may, or may not, lend itself to dictionary use. For example, a dictionary might not be used when writing an email but could be when writing a speech or essay.

There were issues to do with speaking tasks. Visual stimulus during speaking tasks is encouraged where it does not provide students with an advantage. Teachers are asked to ensure that their input does not advantage a student’s performance but provides them with the opportunity to demonstrate all aspects of the standards descriptors. For example, initiating the use of a required pattern in questioning does not necessarily allow the students to demonstrate spontaneous use of that pattern. Comprehension of teacher input is not an aspect of the Speaking criterion. Only verbal and non-verbal student performance can be used as evidence in making a judgment. Preparation for speaking assessment should not include the sample questions to be used in an interview. Notes prepared in the time allocated before the performance should not be read but be used to sustain a spontaneous presentation.

Schools are encouraged to present recorded evidence on video or as a digital presentation. Video samples of school judgments regarding spontaneous language use are within the scope of syllabus requirements regarding recorded evidence.

Recorded samples must provide evidence of spontaneous language use. Assessment tasks should allow students opportunities to speak spontaneously and provide evidence that addresses this aspect of the standards descriptors.

Writing tasks should allow for originality and spontaneity. While students may have written texts as part of their learning experiences, assessment should require this rehearsed and familiar language to be applied in unrehearsed and unfamiliar settings and scenarios. Assessment should facilitate the application of language skills not just the demonstration of knowledge and understanding of learned structures and words. Proficiency in use of Katakana did not consistently match standards for Hiragana and Kanji.

Judgment of student performances must be made and clearly indicted on the standards schema. For example, B+/A- on an assessment task does not provide information about a performance in relation to the standards and does not allow panellists to support school decisions. Where an assessment includes a range of tasks, one overall judgment must be made. Results should be clearly recorded on the student profile.

There is a growing trend for assessment to be well produced and quite attractive in appearance. This is to be commended and should provide students with a more positive outlook on assessment items.
Subject support

The revision of the syllabus was completed this year and the new syllabus will be available on the QSA website in 2008. The revision was conducted by the Syllabus Revision Unit of the Teaching and Learning Division. The Japanese Syllabus Committee was convened and met to consider changes that would enhance the study of Japanese in Queensland schools.

The introduction of the 2008 Japanese syllabus will be supported through a range of syllabus orientation workshops in Semester 1, Term 2, 2008. These will be conducted across the state, and information about these can be found on the QSA website, www.qsa.qld.edu.au, under: Schools & teachers > PD & events > Years 11 & 12 > Workshops > Languages.

Panellists will be supported through the introduction of the new syllabus with panel training conducted throughout the state in Semester 2, Term 3, 2008.

Year 11 students will commence courses of study under the new syllabus in 2009 and Year 12 students in 2010. The first monitoring and verification meetings to review submissions developed to meet the requirements of the revised syllabus will be conducted in 2010.

Work program requirements will change to reflect the new syllabus. These will be on the QSA website in 2008 or available by email from: sao.languages@qsa.qld.edu.au.

These requirements will be presented and explained in the syllabus orientation workshops.

For the first time, all languages work programs will be submitted online. A work program is the school’s intention to implement a course of study that meets syllabus requirements. Consequently, new work programs will not provide all the detail that they previously have. Course organisation, sample units of work and completed student profiles will be required. Work programs will need to show breadth of learning through the course organisation and completed sample profiles and depth of learning through the sample units. Evidence of coverage of all mandatory aspects of the syllabus is not required; syllabus requirements are mandatory regardless of their inclusion in a school document.

The QSA website is being redeveloped and from 2008 there will be a range of materials such as sample work programs, annotated assessment tasks, annotated student assessment and other relevant documentation available. A number of schools, teachers, panellists and review panel chairs have contributed their resources and valuable time to this project and thanks is extended to all contributors.

There will be a period where materials for the 2001 and 2008 syllabuses will be online. As the implementation of the new syllabus is completed, a full range of support materials will become available and 2001 materials will be superseded. Materials will be continually improved and consequently resources may be enhanced or replaced as practice develops and is refined.

The state panel would like to recognise the contributions of Mrs Kay Sivyer to Japanese language education in Queensland. Kay has been involved in the education of young people as a teacher for a number of years. She has supported and facilitated the processes of moderation as a panellist and a chair, both district and state. Kay’s contributions and tireless efforts cannot be overstated; it was with great sadness that we learned that that Kay had decided to resign as state review panel chair this year. We wish her well in the future.

The state panel would like to recognise the efforts of the teachers of Japanese throughout the state. The system of externally moderated, school-based assessment is dependent on the contributions and efforts of this dedicated group. Their professionalism was evident in the high standard of assessment and the high-quality decision making presented in moderation submissions in 2007.

Greg Dabelstein
State Review Panel Chair

Terry McPherson
Senior Education Officer
LEGAL STUDIES — B21

Syllabus

The 2007 cohort of Year 11 students will be the final group verified using the 2001 syllabus. From the beginning of 2008 all schools with a Year 11 cohort must be using the new syllabus. Work programs must be submitted no later than Term 1, 2008.

During 2007, syllabus orientation workshops were held around the state. These were well attended and many teachers took advantage of the opportunity to become more familiar with the changes in the syllabus and the requirements for work programs.

Feedback from districts

Work program approvals

Many schools have now lodged their new work program online and the process of reviewing them is being conducted. Work program requirements, the checklist and sample programs are available on the website. A sample task accompanied by task-specific criteria, derived from the 2007 syllabus, must be submitted with the program.

Monitoring

Monitoring is concerned with reviewing schools’ implementation of the syllabus as demonstrated by the assessment evidence presented in sample folios. At monitoring meetings, panels consider the quality of the assessment, the coverage of the course and the school judgments about the standards.

Panels noted that many schools submitted good-quality assessment items accompanied by appropriate scaffolding which directed students to address all aspects of the tasks. One of the most common issues identified was the misapplication of evaluation and communication criteria.

Effective evaluation is present throughout extended tasks rather than only being evident in an isolated section limited to recommendations. The syllabus requires that students present cohesive, extended argument, incorporating in-depth analysis and evaluation. The syllabus also requires that student responses contain in-text referencing and a bibliography. Student responses should reflect these requirements.

Verification

Verification is the process by which review panels advise schools on the standards of student work and the relative achievement of students. Please note that folios of students who have exited the course with less than four semesters must be submitted as a sample when they are the only student in a level of achievement.

Consideration must be given to the currency of the laws presented to students over the course of study. It is important that students receive up-to-date information, and their responses reflect this. Students should also be encouraged to critically reflect on the authority of the sources they select when researching.

Judgments in Investigation and Evaluation continue to prove challenging across the state. Some tasks set require investigation and evaluation, but when the students do not address them, the results they achieve do not reflect this omission. Task design plays an important role in providing students with the opportunity to demonstrate their ability in these criteria. The use of appropriate task-specific criteria will help ensure standards are awarded that meet with the syllabus requirements.
Statewide comparability

Panel noted the appropriate application of standards between districts within the subjects across the state. It was also pleasing to see that panels recommended that schools review their judgments and award higher levels of achievement in some instances.

Schools are reminded that they must apply the standards of the syllabus especially in Investigation and Evaluation. To be awarded an “A” in Investigation, the 2001 syllabus states the students must examine a wide range of legal issues, through the detailed, logical and insightful application of relevant legal principles. To be awarded an “A” in Evaluation, students must construct comprehensive, well-informed explanations and draw detailed, convincing and valid conclusions as to the social relevance and justification for the legal outcomes.

The 2007 syllabus defines the differences between the investigation and evaluation criteria more effectively. It states that investigation refers to students’ ability to examine legal situations and issues. Evaluation involves students critically reviewing the law’s attempts to achieve just, fair and equitable outcomes. The standards matrix is also substantially different from the previous syllabus.

Course coverage

Schools are to provide flexibility and choice for students in topic selection for the independent study. Topics chosen need to be legally based rather than investigations of social issues. In negotiation of the topic with their teachers, students must be directed to ensure their focus is the legal rather than the social issue of their selected topic.

Concern was also raised over the use of the report genre for the independent study. The syllabus states that the independent study “must allow students to present cohesive, extended argument, incorporating in-depth analysis and evaluation” (p. 61). Therefore students will need to use evaluation throughout their assignment in order to meet syllabus requirements. Evaluation should not be limited to one section, such as recommendations. It must be integrated throughout the entire report.

Quality of assessment

The conditions for all tasks must be clearly articulated on the task sheet. This includes the technique, time allowed, word or time lengths, and whether the question is seen or unseen. The 2007 syllabus requires that teachers find ways to ensure that students’ work is their own. The techniques for authentication should be stated very clearly on task sheets.

An unseen extended response must be completed before verification. The 2007 syllabus states that this piece must be 600–800 words. This must be a stand-alone item to give students the best opportunity to produce a successful response that demonstrates their ability in the criteria.

Topics provided for “Renting and buying” continue to be problematic. It is very important to ensure that tasks are set that allow students to demonstrate their ability in investigation and evaluation. A number of questions from Renting and buying are leaning towards being social essays rather than legal essays and there is no reference to law in the responses. When tasks purport to assess investigation and evaluation it is vital that the question directs students to address these criteria. The use of appropriate task scaffolding is a way of ensuring this.

The 2007 syllabus requires each assessment item be accompanied by a task-specific criteria sheet which provides evidence of how students meet standards associated with assessment criteria. All tasks for Year 11, 2008 and Year 12, 2009 will need to be rewritten to meet with the revised general objectives and criteria of the new syllabus. It is very important that the standards descriptors for the new tasks come from the 2007 syllabus.
Subject support

The QSA website has undergone some redevelopment recently. Samples of work programs, assessment items and support materials are now available. Much of the material has been successfully used in schools and is annotated. These resources are intended to be a guide to help teachers plan and develop assessment tasks for individual school settings.

Panel training was conducted during Semester 3, 2007, and focused on work program approval and moderation.

Karyl Young          Bernadette Stacey
State Review Panel Chair  Senior Education Officer
MARINE STUDIES — A27

Syllabus

The current syllabus for Marine Studies is in its third year of implementation.

Feedback from districts

At this stage a small number of work programs are being presented either by new schools with a Year 11 cohort for the first time or schools that have decided to introduce the subject. The subject continues to be strongly supported by students and reflects its relevance to students’ interests.

It is important that schools consider the placement of units when planning the structure of the course to ensure that the Year 12 units of work provide appropriate opportunity for students to demonstrate the VHA and HA exit standards as described in the syllabus.

Monitoring provided the opportunity for panels to offer schools valuable advice on the quality of assessment and student work compared to the syllabus exit standards statements. Issues at verification were minimal, reflecting the hard work of panels and the advice provided to schools at the monitoring process earlier in the year. Comments reflected minor issues associated with task design and criteria applied to inform school decisions.

Statewide comparability

The district samples presented at the comparability meeting provided an excellent overview of the standard of student work across the state. Students are, on the evidence provided, being challenged to respond to a diverse range of challenging tasks across the full range of syllabus general objectives. Placement of students was well supported by the evidence presented in student folios and this applied across the full range of exit levels of achievement. In two cases some concern was noted with the level of complexity of the tasks provided to ensure students had appropriate opportunity to demonstrate VHA and HA exit standards. Some concerns were also noted where tasks were inappropriately categorised as Information processing & reasoning, and schools are reminded to consider the criteria carefully when designing tasks. On one occasion, skills were assessed using a written format and schools are reminded that in the context of the Marine Studies syllabus, skills are manipulative.

Course coverage

Submissions received at state comparability meetings demonstrated that schools have effectively covered the mandatory aspects of the syllabus, while using local features, issues and industries to build appropriate elective units that enrich student learning experiences. Marine Studies requires students to perform manipulative skills in integrated tasks associated with the marine environment. Evidence from student folios confirms that schools are providing extensive and appropriate opportunities for students to develop these skills both in field studies and on the water.

Quality of assessment

Assessment tasks continue to reflect schools’ efforts to develop effective tasks and criteria that align with the syllabus. There are still concerns with some schools where assessment tasks are not reflective of the syllabus. This is most commonly associated with core topics such as Navigation where tasks are inappropriately categorised as Information processing & reasoning when they should be placed as Knowledge & understanding.

Issues still exist with a small number of schools providing tasks with sufficient depth and complexity to allow students to demonstrate VHA and HA exit standards at Year 12 and this is an area that those schools need to carefully consider.
Schools are continuing to refine skill criteria sheets to allow judgments to be made using integrated tasks. The most effective tasks in the skill criteria continue to be found in “Boating and personal water skills”. It is pleasing to note that many schools have implemented task-specific criteria related to the exit standards from the syllabus. There are still a small number of schools where the criteria while task-specific, do not appropriately reflect the exit standards, and schools where this is the case have been advised by panels to review these criteria.

**Subject support**

Half-day workshops addressing assessment of the general objectives and task-specific criteria were offered in Term 3, 2007. These were well attended with extensive professional discussion contributing to the development of understanding of the participants.

Panel training will take place in Term 1, 2008, with emphasis on the protocols associated with monitoring and verification and the importance of providing evidentiary-based feedback to schools on their assessment tasks, syllabus implementation and judgments leading to allocation of LOA.

Kathy Steggles  Beth Brook  
State Review Panel Chair  Senior Education Officer
**Syllabus**

In 2007, the fifth cohort of Year 12 students exited under the 2001 revised syllabus. At present the revised syllabus is in draft form on the QSA website. There will be syllabus orientation workshops held in each district during Semester 1, 2008, followed by panel training in Semester 2. Information about times and dates of these events will be available on the QSA website.

**Feedback from districts**

All schools completed the verification process with approved work programs. Two schools were awaiting amendment approvals.

Monitoring was completed satisfactorily providing feedback to schools on the quality of assessment procedures in terms of syllabus expectations.

District review panel chairs reported a successful 2007 verification process. District review panel chairs again performed a remarkable job, with many spending a number of post-meeting hours completing feedback to schools with the length of time dependent on the number of schools given recommendations. One problem noted was that the R6 software was not compatible with Apple Mac.

In general, district review panel chairs provided high-quality feedback based on evidence sighted in the sample folios and stated in terms of syllabus standards, referencing relevant exit criteria terms. District review panel chairs indicate that most recommendations made to schools were of a low priority and centred on the within-band placement of some sample folios. Some recommendations suggested lifting the placement of certain sample folios while others suggested some lower placements for relevant sample folios. All recommendations cited evidence matched against syllabus standards. Most recommendations were satisfactorily negotiated between the school and district panel.

It was noted in some cases that “good” comments were made by district review panel but on inspection there were issues that state review panel believed should have been brought to the attention of the respective schools.

**Statewide comparability**

Generally schools continue to meet syllabus requirements and are applying standards in the spirit of the syllabus. A few problems were identified with a few schools incorrectly interpreting required standards and district review panels are encouraged to keep a firm check on this. Similarly, schools are encouraged to consider carefully the extent to which students’ work has demonstrated the syllabus standards descriptors and the impact these decisions may have on the awarding of levels of achievement. Each of the three criteria is not being treated equally. Consistency in communication and justification judgments continues to be a recurring problem with some schools applying harsher judgments compared to other schools.

There is concern that a number of schools need to refer to the moderation protocols available on the QSA website. These schools need to note that, where possible, a minimum of nine sample folios is required to complete the verification submission — the top student of the cohort, the middle and threshold student of the VHA, HA, SA and LA bands, and the mid-VLA. All levels of achievement bands awarded need to be verified. If the level of achievement is represented by an atypical student or a student who has left the subject, evidence must still be provided, based on any completed Year 11 and/or Year 12 assessment. Verification of levels of achievement is based on the evidence provided. If there is no evidence, the panel cannot verify the level of achievement. Judgments must be made on what the student has done, not on what has not been done. This still occurred in a small number of cases. All schools are reminded of the June 2004 policy statement concerning late and non-submitted assignments.
State review panel was concerned about an increasing trend towards the loss of transparency in documenting how student work matches syllabus descriptors. In a larger than usual number of cases, there were little or no annotations to highlight evidence sighted in folios to justify decisions made or to provide information to reviewers or students. This also applied to a number of sample responses to indicate expectations. There was a lack of the modelling of an “A” standard response.

There appears to be an increasing trend towards schools not submitting threshold folios at the SA and LA levels of achievement and not providing an explanation why this has been done.

**Course coverage**

In general, course coverage is consistent with syllabus requirements, as is the breadth and depth of treatment of core and elective subject matter. Syllabus mandatory aspects and requirements have been met.

**Quality of assessment**

While there was an understandable range of quality in the assessment packages reviewed, the samples indicated that the quality of assessment reflected the intent of the syllabus and effectively provided evidence on which to verify the judgments of schools and district panels.

**Subject support**

The Mathematics section of the QSA website has been reconfigured so that it is consistent with other subjects, and will continue to be upgraded as material becomes available. The Mathematics ABC workshops held in 2007 focused on the identification of the attributes and associated examples of *Communication & justification*. The information from these workshops is on the website, and can be obtained from the secure section of the Mathematics site, using the form “Access to restricted subject support materials form”.

Andrew Foster Wayne Stevens
State Review Panel Chair Senior Education Officer
Syllabus

In 2007, the fifth cohort of Year 12 students exited under the 2001 revised syllabus. The revised syllabus, due for implementation in 2009, is in draft on the QSA website. There will be syllabus orientation workshops held in each district during Semester 1, 2008, followed by panel training in Semester 2. Information about times and dates of these events will be available on the QSA website.

Feedback from districts

All schools with exiting students are operating from approved work programs. Amendments to approved work programs will continue to be submitted as schools evaluate and refine the methods used for collecting and combining information on student achievement. As new schools come on line, new work programs are developed and submitted using the abbreviated online submission format.

District review panel chairs indicated that monitoring and verification days generally ran smoothly. Many district panel chairs continue to work long hours to finalise comments on Forms R3 and R6 and their efforts are highly valued and greatly appreciated. Feedback provided to schools by district panels has been more focused on verification issues rather than on issues which are not part of the verification process.

Statewide comparability

In general, it was noted that the district sample showed a genuine improvement of quality and application of standards. In some cases and across districts there was little difference in application of syllabus standards and their application to the determination of standards and levels of achievement. There were some inconsistencies in the provision of comments for individual students in the criteria of Communication & justification. It is important that students receive feedback on responses provided.

Course coverage

Issues such as providing opportunities for challenge and initiative were discussed at state panel. This included providing opportunities for students to achieve in the higher-order attributes of Modelling & problem solving and Communication & justification. In some cases this was dependant on the cohort at the individual school and whether they were able to address these issues to obtain the higher levels of achievement that require these dimensions.

Quality of assessment

State panel was pleased with the progress in assessment tasks. However, there were still a number of closed assignment tasks that did not provide opportunity for initiative and challenge at the higher level. There were very few instances where assessment items went outside the syllabus content and standards.

Subject support

The Mathematics section of the QSA website has been reconfigured so that it is consistent with other subjects, and will continue to be upgraded as material becomes available. The Mathematics ABC workshops held in 2007 focused on the identification of the attributes and associated examples of Communication & justification. The information from these workshops is on the website, and can be obtained from the secure section of the Mathematics site, using the form “Access to restricted subject support materials form”.

Peter Antrobus Wayne Stevens
State Review Panel Chair Senior Education Officer
Mathematics C — A38

Syllabus

In 2007, the fifth cohort of Year 12 students exited under the 2001 revised syllabus. The revised syllabus, due for implementation in 2009, is in draft form on the QSA website. There will be syllabus orientation workshops held in each district during Semester 1, 2008, followed by panel training in Semester 2. Information about times and dates of these events will be available on the QSA website.

Feedback from districts

The state review panel was in substantial agreement with the district panel advice and the recommended placements on the Form R6. Differences were noted in LA threshold samples that did provide evidence to justify low SA. This was evident in high-performing cohorts.

Statewide comparability

The state review panel was satisfied that the levels of achievement across the state were substantially comparable in most aspects. A small number of threshold VHA samples were found to be lacking in evidence to justify placement mainly due to the lack of opportunity or consistency in the higher-order modelling and problem-solving attributes.

Course coverage

The only issue state panel found with respect to the implementation of the course was that sample schools did not always use vector calculus treatment in the option topic of Dynamics. The contexts of application, technology, initiative and complexity were addressed very well by sample schools.

Quality of assessment

The sample submissions provided the state review panel with some excellent examples of schools’ work in providing opportunities for students in the higher-order attributes in Modelling & problem solving. This is an area where schools that place students at the upper end of the VHA band do not always provide panels with the sufficient evidence to support agreement. However, the effort made around the state by schools to align their work with the syllabus requirements must be commended.

Subject support

The Mathematics section of the QSA website has been reconfigured so that it is consistent with other subjects, and will continue to be upgraded as material becomes available. The Mathematics ABC workshops held in 2007 focused on the identification of the attributes and associated examples of Communication & justification. The information from these workshops is on the website, and can be obtained from the secure section of the Mathematics site, using the form “Access to restricted subject support materials form”.

Bevan Penrose Wayne Stevens
State Review Panel Chair Senior Education Officer
All students studying Modern History across the state are working from the 2004 syllabus. The Modern History syllabus will enter its fourth year in 2008.

Feedback from districts

Work program approval

All work programs for schools with students exiting in Year 12, 2007 are approved. Approvals are ongoing for work programs for schools with student cohorts exiting in 2008. The calibre of work programs being designed and offered to students across the state continues to impress. It is clear that teachers are providing students with the “intellectual toolkit” (Taylor & Young) necessary for understanding the past and making connections with it, not simply leading them towards arcane narratives. The elements of historical literacies — the concepts of change, continuity, cause and effect, values and motives — evident in work programs, are enabling students to make the connection between content and concept, understanding and explanation, empathy and judgments.

Monitoring and verification

In 2007, monitoring and verification of sample folios revealed a high level of compatibility between schools’ judgments and panels’ standards. A small number of submissions were negotiated at state panel level in November during comparability. A key issue to emerge through the review process was the need for schools to fully implement the “aspects of inquiry”. The aspects of inquiry are a mandatory part of the syllabus. They are referred to in s. 6, “Learning experiences”, (pp.19–20), s. 7, ”Themes and inquiry topics”, (pp.26–43) and s. 8 “Assessment and standards”, (pp.57–59). It is essential for schools to provide evidence in student folios of the aspects of inquiry having been implemented. Where research booklets are used by students, it would be appropriate to design sections compatible with the aspects of inquiry.

Statewide comparability

State panel conducted the second statewide comparability for the new syllabus. The level of agreement between state and district panels was impressive. Of 104 folios reviewed, state panel agreed with district panel decisions on 96 occasions. As a quality assurance exercise, the comparability meeting revealed high levels of accuracy by schools and district panels in making judgments about student standards and levels of achievement across the state.

Course coverage

As mentioned in the 2006 State Review Panel Report, Queensland Modern History students are being exposed to a wide range of themes and a broad range of content. While traditional areas of study continue to be popular, it is encouraging to see schools venture into areas of Peace, Diversity, Cooperation and Hope. However, schools are asked to note that all inquiry topics must have a clear historical focus and avoid being contemporary social or cultural studies. Application of the aspects of inquiry should ensure that this does not occur. A second point to keep in mind is that inquiry topics must reflect the theme that is being studied. It is important to refer to the purpose statements in the syllabus and to the context and coherence statements in the approved work program.

Quality of assessment

In response to a number of issues that arose throughout the year, state panel provides the following advice on each of the categories of assessment:
Category 1: Extended written response to historical evidence

State panel reminds schools that students are required to give a “response to a question or statement, mainly by reference to sources supplied.” Well-chosen evidence will allow students to corroborate evidence and enable VHA and HA students to fulfil the demands of Criterion 2, “evaluating the relevance, representativeness, likely accuracy and likely reliability of sources.” It may also be helpful to provide students with a short summary of the contributors to the sources, enabling them to make clear judgments as to perspectives and reliability.

Category 2: Written research tasks

State panel and district panels were concerned about the number of VHA and HA research assignments that were narrative and descriptive. As mentioned above, close application of the aspects of inquiry, with sub-questions derived from aspects 3 and 4 will ensure that responses fulfil the stated standards. Schools are encouraged to use creative formats for category 2 responses, but are reminded that such work must demonstrate the relevant standards. This can be evidenced in the student’s research materials, annotated bibliography or annotated footnotes.

Category 3: Multimodal presentations

Again, state panel draws schools’ attention to the aspects of inquiry as a means of leading students through the process and as a means of demonstrating clearly, to all audiences, that the inquiry process has been implemented by students. It is also important to note that the genre chosen by the student must conform to the characteristics of the mode and medium selected.

Category 4: Additional test formats

State panel reminds schools that all essay tests in category 4 are “unseen” and “without notes or sources.” Where an unseen essay is chosen as a technique, it is important that students will have an opportunity to make definite reference to significant sources that have been studied. Otherwise it becomes difficult to assess Criterion 2 and fulfil the descriptors. It is acceptable for a school to set an unseen essay that assesses Criterion 3 only, but this may not be a post-verification assessment instrument. State panel was also concerned that some short-response tests in Year 12 lacked rigour and, indeed, wondered at the efficacy of such tests in the summative assessment program at all.

Standards associated with exit criteria

State panel requests that schools note the following points:

- Task-specific criteria sheets are to accompany all assessment instruments by 2009.
- The full range of standards descriptors apply to all Year 12 assessment.
- The core language of the standards descriptors cannot be amended, deleted or altered.
- Students should be fully conversant with the “language” of the standards descriptors. Reference to the glossary in the syllabus (pp.65–66) is essential.
- The aspects of inquiry are specifically stated in the standards descriptors.
- When assessing student responses, be rigorous in applying each of the subset of standards descriptors that are relevant to the task.
- In Criterion 1, recognise that reflection refers to reflecting on the research process being undertaken to determine directions. Reflection should be directed at historiographical issues and the development of the argument.
- In Criterion 2, be aware that the standards mirror the processes followed by students when applying the process of inquiry.
- In Criterion 3, be rigorous in applying the standards associated with expression.
Subject support

Panel training is scheduled for Semester 1, 2008 for all districts. Year 4 panel training will focus on reinforcing QSA policies and procedures as well as addressing issues emerging from monitoring and/or verification.

Kevin McAlinden       Mary-Anne Vale
State Review Panel Chair  Senior Education Officer
Syllabus

The syllabus is in its eighth year of implementation.

Feedback from districts

As can be expected from a syllabus at this stage of its implementation, very few problems have been reported. Work program approval has been finalised, with all students exiting the subject under an approved work program.

Statewide comparability

At verification it was apparent that district panels are working well with the schools in their districts as no unresolved submissions were referred to state panel. District samples displayed a high degree of comparability of standards across the state.

Course coverage

Generally there is good course coverage by schools across the state, but it is timely to remind schools that the syllabus allows a very wide scope for a variety of school- or community-based units. Schools may wish to update their work program to cater for changing school needs.

Across the state there is a very wide variety in the amount of assessment used by different schools. Some schools may wish to reduce the amount of summative assessment in their course of study, providing that the syllabus requirement of 4–10 summative tasks is met.

Quality of assessment

Many schools are successfully using criteria and standards schemas, providing clear links between the syllabus general objectives and the task. Areas of concern detected in district samples that, while they did not affect overall standards, have the potential to cause problems include:

- submissions that were difficult to follow, i.e. the transparency required by panels to help them validate school decisions was lacking
- lack of variety in tasks
- large numbers of lightly weighted CRP items
- lack of adequate detail in criteria-and-standards schemas
- unclear application of criteria-and-standards schemas
- inconsistent application of criteria-and-standards schemas
- difficulty relating assessment items to student profile
- awarding of grades that do not match syllabus descriptors for CRP, i.e. a number of schools are using grades to define LA and VLA standards for CRP; the syllabus does not have any requirements for CRP at the LA or VLA level of achievement.

Inappropriate penalties for non-submission of assessment were detected across a number of districts.

Subject support

Generic science assessment workshops were held during Term 2. These workshops focused on assessment task design and the development of task-specific criteria sheets.

Gordon Power  Natalie Konecki
State Review Panel Chair  Acting Principal Education Officer
Syllabus

In 2007 the first cohort of students exited under the 2004 Music syllabus. The state review panel would like to acknowledge the efforts of teachers and panellists in ensuring the success of work program approval, monitoring and verification in the initial years.

In addition, thanks are extended to the Music Syllabus Convenor, Subcommittee and Syllabus Advisory Committee for the generation of the document.

Feedback from districts

Thanks to district review panel chairs and schools for ensuring that the process of work program approval was completed in an effective manner. Please ensure that all processes are completed in a timely fashion, including amendments and any new work program approvals.

At monitoring and verification, it was noted that there were some instances of schools not following the 2004 Music syllabus. Schools should ensure that they are implementing the correct current document, and associated criteria and standards. Teachers are reminded to familiarise themselves thoroughly with the exit standards statements, and to ensure that all student responses reflect the standards awarded.

In all districts it was noted that, overall, the first verification of the 2004 Music syllabus was a success. A broader range of repertoire, task design and student response was seen than in previous years, and a greater inclusion of contemporary repertoire across the objectives was evident. This indicates that teachers have engaged with the learning frameworks, assessment principles and the standards of the new syllabus.

There were some issues in software compatibility for audio and audiovisual documentation of compositions and performances. Please ensure that samples are easily navigable on generic hardware devices, and adhere to the verification folio requirements outlined on page 29 of the syllabus. For example, Sibelius and other composing software files should be converted to sound files for inclusion in review folios.

Statewide comparability

Overall, there was comparability across the state in the application of standards and differentiation between levels of achievement. This suggests that teachers have engaged well with the standards descriptors, and for the most part are making appropriate decisions about student achievement. The state review panel also noted a wide diversity of assessment tasks and student responses from district samples.

When interpreting the new standards matrix, section 6.6.3 of the syllabus outlines “making on-balance judgments about the standard of student work” (p. 30). Teachers should engage with the matrix language; in particular, the characteristics of the criteria as indicated in each standard (such as deconstruction and evaluation in Analysing repertoire), and the differentiating qualifiers (such as perceptive and thorough in standard “A”). These aspects should be applied in an on-balance way to the entire student response. This does not involve judging the standard of small features of the work (such as accuracy to the score or particular technical skills) and then combining these separate standards in some way (often by averaging).
Course coverage

Analyzing repertoire

This criterion is defined on page 22 of the syllabus this way:

Students deconstruct repertoire and determine the relationships between identified musical elements and compositional devices, and evaluate how these relate to context, genre and style.

Teachers are reminded that tasks must require students to do more than describe musical elements. Section 6.4.1 describes the nature of Analyzing repertoire tasks further:

As this criterion has two parts: deconstruction and evaluation, assessment tasks must allow students to demonstrate both aspects. This is best accomplished when tasks focus on applying skills developed in class to unfamiliar repertoire. Tasks based on previously deconstructed repertoire should ensure that students are required to demonstrate both deconstruction and evaluation — thus unstudied repertoire must be part of these tasks. For example: a comparison that requires justifying a stance, agreeing or disagreeing with a challenging quote, devising a hypothesis. Tasks developed in this way are authentic, because they challenge students and allow for discrimination between them, whereas prepared responses to studied repertoire do not.

Schools are reminded that the syllabus does not demand that all seven musical elements be assessed in every assessment task. The criteria and standards do not stipulate manipulation, analysis or presentation of all seven musical elements; rather they describe the relationship of identified elements to context, genre and style. For example, in the case of percussion, students may not be required to refer to harmony; however, this omission is a stylistic characteristic.

Page 23 of the syllabus states that student responses to Analyzing repertoire tasks are to be accompanied by the score(s) and/or recording(s). Sound sources or scores that accompany Analyzing repertoire tasks should be included in student folios (p. 29). If multimedia, a record of the presentation should be made and submitted (pp. 23 and 29).

Composing

The state review panel acknowledges teachers’ efforts in providing students with opportunities to respond to Composing tasks in a wide variety of ways. A broad range of styles and genres was demonstrated, and students were given opportunities to move towards developing their own personal style.

The combination of musical elements and compositional devices, not the manner of presentation (recorded sound or scores), is the focus of composition. Students can present their compositions as a score (traditional, graphic or contemporary) and/or a sound recording. This is important when considering standards for composing. Non-musical and technological aspects of presentation should not form the basis of decisions regarding composing responses. The Composing criterion clarifies this emphasis on musical aspects:

Students combine the musical elements and compositional devices to create music that is within a context and/or genre, and which expresses style. (page 22)

In addition, the presentation format of the composition should be such that the music can be clearly “heard” and communicated whether recorded or notated sound (syllabus page 29). For example, the performance of a composition should not be to the detriment of the composition.

Performing

The syllabus defines Performing as:

Students, through playing, singing or conducting, interpret musical elements to communicate music to audiences (real or virtual), within a context and genre while expressing style. (page 22)

As communication of music to an audience is an aspect of the objective and all standards statements, schools should consider the ways that students may best demonstrate this in their Performing responses. All students should aim to communicate their performance to an audience, real or virtual, in some way. For example, students may respond best to performing tasks in a performance-like setting.
The selection of repertoire should allow students to demonstrate the criterion and be within their technique (syllabus page 24).

Teachers should ensure that audiovisual documentation of the performance is clearly annotated and labelled, and the performer should be clearly visible and audible. The performer should not be obstructed by other musicians or music equipment.

**Quality of assessment**

Section 6.6.1 outlines the nature of the post-verification task within the 2004 syllabus. The sample course overviews at the end of the syllabus have called this task a “selective update”. This is not an accurate use of the terminology, and the task should provide “subsequent summative assessment” to further inform the student’s overall achievement, as per the statement on page 29:

In addition to the contents of the verification folio, there must be subsequent summative assessment in the exit folio. In Music, this should consist of one task in any one of the criteria. This task:

- can be student choice with teacher consultation
- reflects the conditions set out in table 2 (section 6.5)
- is not to be a task used in Music Extension.

Teachers should make an on-balance judgment, considering the principles of assessment, about the student’s overall achievement within the one criterion in which another task has been completed. Teachers should then consider how this impacts upon students’ exit placements, along with achievement in the other criteria, and considering the principles of assessment (syllabus pp. 18–20). It is the student’s work, not the profile in isolation that forms the basis of decisions about exit levels of achievement.

Any significant changes between the agreed verification placements and exit placements for all students should then be negotiated with the panel chair using the procedures of the Fax Form R7. (Please refer to the Form R7 guidelines for further information.)

**Subject support**

The redeveloped QSA website will include support information about Music. There is no scheduled panel training or subject workshops for Music in 2008.

Helen O’Neill  Andrew Reid
State Review Panel Chair  Senior Education Officer
**Music Extension — B36**

**Syllabus**

2007 was the initial year of the implementation of the trial-pilot syllabus in Music Extension, with 136 schools participating either as stand-alone providers or in shared campus arrangements.

Throughout the year, conferences were held in major centres to provide orientation, familiarisation, and discussion of ideas for classroom implementation. They also provided an opportunity for feedback to the evaluator and syllabus subcommittee for refinement of the document.

In 2008, the Music Extension syllabus will continue to be in trial-pilot only, with release of the revised syllabus scheduled for later that year. General implementation of the syllabus for all schools is currently scheduled for 2009.

**Feedback from districts**

Most work programs indicated that schools engaged well with the requirements and spirit of the syllabus and the majority of work programs were approved without changes. While most work programs were written to cater for all specialisations, some schools structured their programs for the Performance specialisation only.

There were some examples of work programs including material beyond that stipulated by the work program requirements.

Feedback from districts following monitoring and verification indicated that most schools had a thorough understanding of task requirements, and the application of standards. There was, however, some concern about the quality of application of standards for Investigating tasks, especially at monitoring. Although the emphasis of monitoring is to provide advice on how the school is implementing the course, panels should ensure that where there are issues with the application of standards, schools are informed that the standards are not evidenced in the work. Advice at monitoring that some Investigating tasks did not match the standards awarded not did not always result in the student submitting a second Investigating task. This impacted on overall levels of achievement at verification.

Teachers are encouraged to engage with the language of the new standards matrix, in particular the characteristics of the criteria as indicated in each standard and the differentiating qualifiers. Teachers should ensure that student responses reflect the standards awarded. In providing feedback to students, it is important to refer to the qualifiers of the standards statements, as evidenced in the students’ work. Teachers are encouraged to provide positive feedback as well as constructive criticism.

All mandated assessment is summative and should be submitted at verification (syllabus 7.5, p. 30). There were some instances of schools not resubmitting the first Realising task for verification. Schools are reminded to include the Investigating task and the first Realising task in the verification folio.

All conditions for Composition, Musicology and Performance should be adhered to, as outlined in syllabus section 7.4, “Assessment tasks and conditions”.

There were some issues in the use of profiles at monitoring and verification. These included:

- some examples of profiling errors (for example, the globalising of standards “B”, “B”, “A” to a VHA. This is contrary to the advice on page 33 of the syllabus, Table 7)
- incorrect transcription from criteria sheets to profiles
- incorrect transcription from profiles to the Form R6.

**Statewide comparability**

The state review panel found that there was a high level of consistency of teacher judgments across all districts. There was a comparable application of standards across Composition, Musicology and Performance.
The state review panel reminds schools that:

- standards are “typical” and on-balance judgments (syllabus s. 7.6.1)
- standards should be applied globally but the characteristics of the work should be recognised
- it is the students’ work, not the profiles in isolation, that forms the basis of decisions about students’ levels of achievement, and placement on the Form R6 relative achievement ladder.

In arriving at levels of achievement, teachers should note that the three criteria are of equal value. This means that there is no “weighting” of any criteria or “weighting” of the second Realising task against the first. Teachers should consider the student folio as a whole and the principles of fullest and latest assessment in arriving at levels of achievement (syllabus page 23).

**Quality of assessment**

**General**

Students achieved best with tasks that provided broad scope to respond divergently and in a variety of formats.

**Investigating**

Responses to Investigating tasks indicated an exciting diversity of topics and approaches.

The syllabus states that in Investigating, the student “explores, analyses and synthesises evidence from music sources to develop their music ideas” (syllabus s. 3.2). A number of Investigating tasks did not show evidence of analysis and synthesis. “Music sources” refers to a broad range primary and secondary material, which may or may not include scores.

Under the principles of selective updating, a student may not rework and resubmit previously graded assessment tasks (syllabus page 23). A second Investigating task, if attempted, must be a different from the first task (syllabus s. 7.1).

Investigating tasks may be presented in a variety of formats (syllabus page 26, Table 2.)

**Realising**

There were some examples of outstanding student responses to Realising tasks, indicating that both teachers and students had engaged well with both the task requirements and standards.

When planning the course, teachers should consider the relative lengths of Realising tasks and the demands of preparation. Students may commence preparation for the second Realising task from the beginning of the course.

*Composition and Musicology* Realising tasks demonstrated a variety of genres and were generally of a high standard.

There was an exciting variety of compositional styles, genres and presentation formats, indicating a thorough understanding and effective implementation of the requirements.

While students presented a variety of *Musicology* topics, not all students engaged with the syllabus statement that “students should aim to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills such as hypothesising, deconstructing, evaluating, synthesising and justifying.” (Syllabus page 27.)

Performance requires students to engage with an audience in an individualised interpretation of music (syllabus page 9). Whilst most performances demonstrated an understanding of this requirement, some students did not engage with an audience. Schools should ensure that the performance goes beyond merely singing or playing the notes, and allows students to demonstrate the standards for developing and expressing. Performance format is integral to the performance.

There were a number of issues associated with audiovisual recordings. To assist panellists, schools should ensure that:
- technology is easily viewed and navigated
- software is compatible with generic hardware
- DVDs are clearly annotated
- the quality of recording is not compromised by background noise wherever possible
- samples are clearly identified, particularly if their order changes between monitoring and verification.

Conductors do not need to perform from a score or submit a score for assessment.

Scores do not need to be included in the folios for Performance.

**Subject support**

Panel training will be conducted in 2008 in all host districts of combined panels, and all stand-alone districts. Panellists will be notified of these meetings by district coordinators.

Orientation workshops will be offered in 2008 in three districts, for schools who have not participated in the trial-pilot conferences, and wishing to implement the subject in 2009.

General implementation of the revised document is scheduled for 2009. This will necessitate the rewriting of all work programs for the 2009 exiting cohort.

The revised QSA website will include further support materials for Music Extension.

Lois Kavanagh  Andrew Reid
State Review Panel Chair  Senior Education Officer
OTHER LANGUAGES — B32

Syllabus

Some 202 students undertook and completed studies in Other Languages in 2007. The state panel takes this opportunity to thank schools for their ongoing support of languages education in Queensland. Students have completed studies of a range of European and Asian languages and there are now seven after-hours ethnic schools offering senior Authority language courses.

Korean: In 2007, 45 Year 12 students studied Korean. 41 students from eleven schools studied in two shared campus arrangements. One of these was through the Korean after-hours ethnic school. Eleven students completed their studies in their base schools.

Latin: In 2007, 24 Year 12 students studied Latin in two schools.

Modern Greek: In 2007, 13 Year 12 students studied Modern Greek. Seven students completed their studies in their base school, and six from six other schools in a shared campus arrangement through the Greek after-hours ethnic school.

Polish: In 2007, six Year 12 students from six schools studied Polish in a shared campus arrangement through the Polish after-hours ethnic school.

Russian: In 2007, nine Year 12 students from nine schools studied Russian in a shared campus arrangement through the two Russian after-hours ethnic schools.

Spanish: In 2007, 60 Year 12 students in 14 schools studied Spanish. Of these, nine students from eight schools studied in a shared campus arrangement through the Spanish after-hours ethnic school.

Vietnamese: In 2007, 45 Year 12 students in 11 schools studied Vietnamese. Of these, three studied in a shared campus arrangement through the Vietnamese after-hours ethnic school.

As the syllabus is in the final stage of its cycle, there are few new work programs being submitted for approval.

Course coverage

Course coverage is generally being well achieved. There is sufficient coverage of content and a variety of topics are being assessed. There is still a need for more opportunities to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in receptive assessment and spontaneous language use in productive tasks.

Quality of assessment

Students should be given the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding applied in a variety of complex tasks and over a range of texts. Tasks need to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate the higher-order thinking skills of deduction and appreciation. Where deduction and appreciation are not required to be demonstrated, the general objectives are not being addressed and coverage of the mandatory aspects of the syllabus is not being achieved.

There is a concern that, at times, a topic may be over-assessed. The syllabus requires a range of topics be covered. There is no requirement for assessment in all four macroskills for each topic.

Subject support

The revision of the syllabus was completed this year and the new syllabus will be available on the QSA website in 2008. The revision was conducted by Syllabus Revision Unit of the Teaching and Learning Division. Various subject-specific syllabus committees were convened to consider changes that would enhance the study of smaller languages in Queensland.

The introduction of the 2008 Languages syllabuses will be supported through a range of syllabus
orientation workshops in Semester 1, Term 2, 2008. These will be conducted across the state, and information about these can be found on the QSA website, www.qsa.qld.edu.au, under: Schools & teachers > PD & events > Years 11 & 12 > Workshops > Languages.

Panellists will be supported through the introduction of the new syllabuses with panel training conducted throughout the state in Semester 2, Term 3, 2008.

Year 11 students will commence courses of study under the new syllabus in 2009, and Year 12 students in 2010. The first monitoring and verification meetings to review submissions developed to meet the requirements of the revised syllabus will be conducted in 2010.

Work program requirements will change to reflect new syllabus requirements. These will be on the QSA website in 2008 or available by email from sao.languages@qsa.qld.edu.au.

These requirements will be presented and explained in the syllabus orientation workshops.

For the first time, all languages work programs will be submitted online. A work program is the school’s intention to implement a course of study to meet syllabus requirements. Consequently, new work programs are not required to provide all the detail that they previously included. Course organisation, sample units of work and completed student profiles will be required. Work programs will need to show the breadth of learning through the course organisation and completed sample profiles, and depth of learning through the sample units. Evidence of coverage of the detail of all mandatory aspects of the syllabus is not required in the work program; syllabus requirements are mandatory regardless of their inclusion in a school document.

The QSA website is being redeveloped and from 2008, there will be a range of materials such as sample work programs, annotated assessment tasks, annotated student assessment and other relevant documentation. A number of schools, teachers, panellists and review panel chairs have contributed their resources and valuable time to this project and thanks is extended to all who were involved.

There will be a period where materials for the 2001 and 2008 syllabuses will be online. As the new syllabus’ implementation is completed, a full range of support materials will become available and 2001 materials will be superseded. Materials will be continually improved and consequently resources may be enhanced or replaced as practice develops and is refined.

The state panel would like to recognise the efforts of the teachers of Other Languages throughout the state. The system of externally moderated, school-based assessment is dependent on the contributions and efforts of this dedicated group. Their professionalism was evident in the high standard of assessment and the quality decision-making presented in moderation submissions in 2007.

George Orfanos 
State Review Panel Chair

Terry McPherson 
Senior Education Officer
Syllabus

The Philosophy and Reason syllabus was introduced with Year 11 students for the first time in 2005 and the first group of Year 12 students to complete a course of study in the subject exited in 2006. 2007 was the third year of implementation and 265 students from 19 schools completed the subject. Eleven schools have an approved course of study and all have classes up to the end of Year 12. This year there were six large groups (14 or more OP-eligible students), four intermediate groups (13–10 OP-eligible students) and one small group (9 or fewer OP-eligible students). Several schools are considering offering a course or writing a course of study to offer in the future.

Statewide comparability

The benefits of strong networking between schools has manifested in the high level of comparability between submissions this year. Panel has recognised an increase in the shared understanding of the application of syllabus standards and in the willingness of schools to apply advice given in relation to standards of assessment, and in the purpose and use of task-specific criteria sheets.

Course coverage

The syllabus change has allowed for greater variety in subject matter. This has been reflected in most submitted and approved work programs. This is particularly true of the Critical Thinking and Philosophy strands of the course which have been the catalyst for a significant number of new schools undertaking the subject. Syllabus interpretation has continued to be of a high standard with excellent coverage, treatment and presentation of course material.

Quality of assessment

High-quality assessment continues to be a hallmark of submissions, even in those schools new to the subject. This is due to a number of reasons. Teachers of Philosophy and Reason have shared understandings regarding application of criteria and standards. There is extensive professional networking. Effective communication is facilitated through the sharing of subject support material by email and other web-based networks.

Subject support

The syllabus is in its third year of implementation this year and, consequently, there was a subject workshop. This was well attended and most schools offering the subject sent a representative. Following a brief introduction and discussion of broader issues to do with assessment and standards, time was spent on implementation issues, high-quality task design, resources and standards. The discussion was led by members of the state panel. In the final part of the workshop, participants looked at assessment and student work sent as part of 2007 monitoring. Teachers of Philosophy and Reason do not have many opportunities to engage in peer review of their assessment and application of standards to student work so this part of the workshop was a chance to engage in substantive professional conversations and develop shared understandings about standards and good assessment practices.

Developing standards schema for assessment tasks was a focus area for the workshop: some samples were provided and discussed. This is an area were there is substantial work to do and it is hoped that schools can develop and enhance their use of these during the life of this syllabus.

The QSA website is being redeveloped and, from 2008, there will be a range of materials such as sample work programs, annotated assessment tasks, annotated student assessment as well as other relevant documentation available. The state review panel and chair have contributed their resources
and valuable time to this project and thanks is extended to them. The project is ongoing and further contributions are welcomed. The state panel is continuing to work on a project to develop subject support materials. As syllabus implementation continues, and assessment practice develops and is refined, the range of support materials on the web will be increased and the quality of task design improved.

The state panel would like to recognise the efforts of the teachers of Philosophy and Reason throughout the state. The system of externally moderated, school-based assessment is dependent on the contributions and efforts of this dedicated group. Their professionalism was evident in the high standard of assessment and the quality decision-making presented in Moderation submissions in 2007.

Peter Ellerton  Terry McPherson
State Review Panel Chair  Senior Education Officer
PHYSICAL EDUCATION — A24

Syllabus

The 2004 Physical Education syllabus is in the third year of implementation. Under the current cycle of review the syllabus is due for review in 2010. Physical Education continues to be one of the most popular curriculum offerings with 353 schools offering Physical Education to their Year 12 students.

New work programs and any required amendments to existing programs are to be submitted for approval online through the QSA website. Advice about work program requirements and amendments can be found on the QSA website.

Feedback from districts

In 2007 six new district review panel chairs were appointed. The high turnover is mainly due to the promotion of chairs to deputy principal and hence they are no longer teaching Physical Education. Initially, verification meetings presented over 100 unresolved submissions. The chairs were able to negotiate agreement in all of these cases before comparability. It is prudent to commend the district review panel chairs on this achievement which allowed the state review panel to focus solely on the task of Comparability.

Each district review panel chair reported to the annual conference regarding monitoring. The consensus was positive and it is generally believed that the current panels are developing their skills and experience over time. It was agreed that districts were generally satisfied that schools were implementing the syllabus as intended. Schools where inconsistencies existed were offered additional feedback and support from chairs and the QSA. This was intended to rectify implementation issues before verification. District review panel chairs indicated that email was now a common form of feedback to schools and that it has given them the opportunity to provide good-quality written evidence of conversations with schools.

A significant issue arising from monitoring was the growing incidence of “alternative programming” by schools. This informed a discussion at the annual conference whereby the state review panel and district review panel chairs sought to develop a statement to guide schools in the use of “supplementary evidence” to substantiate exit levels of achievement. This advice was further discussed at the 2007 conference so that district review panel chairs and state panellists were in the best position possible to assist schools in making decisions about the inclusion of any supplementary evidence in the review folios at verification. The advice statement on the use of supplementary evidence is available form the senior education officer and the district review panel chairs.

At the 2007 annual conference the 2006 verification process was reported on. Chairs were congratulated on their collective achievement in resolving all disagreed submissions by comparability. Concerns expressed will inform the support and content of future workshops offered by the Quality Assurance Unit (formerly the Standards and Assessment Unit). The main issues included integration of Focus Area C into physical activities, personalising assessment tasks and quality video verification. 2007 verification reports from district review panel chairs indicated that the main issues this year included issues around standards for applying and evaluating in written/oral assessment, issues over evidence for evaluating in video verification, and arriving at global decisions.

Schools are reminded that it is the students' work, not standards on the profile in isolation, that is the basis for determining overall standards and levels of achievement. Decisions on global standards and levels of achievement are on-balance professional judgments based on the standards of students’ work as it is reflected in the standards matrix, with consideration of the six principles of assessment, and demands and conditions of the task. Formulaic methods, including the “averaging” of standards, should not be used.
Statewide comparability

In 2007 the state review panel conducted its meeting in accordance with the horizontal comparability process that was used in 2006 for the first time. The state review panel viewed video evidence from all districts to firstly determine districts where video verification was consistent with the syllabus standards. The process was modelled first by the whole group, panellists viewed the same video and discussed indicators in the video evidence of the exit standards. Two groups were formed, each comprising four panellists and these two groups viewed the videos from all districts for consistency and quality in terms of evidence presentation. From this process, the state review panel was able to determine which districts could be reviewed more quickly due to the affirmation of the quality of their video evidence. They were also able to identify any districts in which there was doubt about the efficacy of video verification evidence. These were reviewed earlier so that it could be determined whether the third district sample was needed.

The state review panel then separated into pairs balancing the levels of panel experience. These pairings were assigned a threshold achievement level to review across all districts. In general, state review panel found evidence that syllabus standards were appropriately applied in all districts.

Course coverage

The mandatory aspects of the course continue to present challenges across the state, especially the aspects of integration and personalisation and their interpretation in both physical responses and the written/oral components. Progress continues to be made in these areas through assessment workshops and schools acting on panel feedback.

Of the mandatory objectives, Criterion 3 Evaluating, remains the strongest indicator of performance in physical responses and written/oral responses. Feedback continues to indicate that this will remain one of the major areas for interpretation and assessment workshops in the future.

Generally, the statewide account of focus area content is sound. The syllabus requires schools to demonstrate that learning is developmental and sequential and this aspect was targeted in the sampling and approvals process. Many schools (with multiple cohorts across different timetable lines) have taken the opportunity to create “limited choices” with regard to physical responses. This has been a successful model for schools to take advantage of local facilities and expertise.

Quality of assessment

The quality of assessment across the state continues to improve. Schools should be constantly evolving assessment practices in the light of improved understandings of the syllabus and assessment processes. Task-specific criteria sheets have enhanced the understanding of the syllabus standards matrix and have proven to be a good indicator of the degree that schools understand the syllabus standards, in particular, in the area of discriminating between simple and complex performance environments in physical responses.

A number of quality control issues related to assessment were identified at comparability.

Task-specific criteria sheets, particularly those that address assessment of the physical response, should reflect the exit criteria and standards. It is recommended that two dot points in each of the criteria are used for decision making, as per the exit standards.

1. Schools need to remain committed to supplying video evidence of the current cohort in physical responses and oral responses for “A” and “C” standards only.

2. Schools need to be wary that “scaffolding processes” do not provide excessive guidance to students. Some sample assessment items provided such things as pages of scaffolding strategies as well as the provision of the “expected responses” that accompany the submissions. When preparing tasks that include scaffolding, teachers should consider the developmental nature of the course and the expectation that students should demonstrate increasing independence in their responses. Tasks earlier in the course may use prompting or stimulus questions to help students follow a specific pathway of
response. An example would be an essay task in which the scaffolding leads the students through investigating the elements of the task, and then identifying how they should arrive at, structure and sequence the information that they will present. For Year 12 extended writing tasks, teachers are encouraged to write one succinct question rather than a series of shorter questions. Teachers are encouraged to write challenging, comprehensive tasks that demonstrate higher-order thinking skills such as evaluation and synthesis. Tasks should be written so that students can independently select the processes used in their response with less scaffolding than that provided in Year 11 tasks.

3. Schools need to focus more on a depth of study and assessment rather than a breadth of study and assessment. In other words, focus on “less” and develop it “more”.

**Subject support**

2007 assessment workshops targeted the self evaluation of assessment of physical responses. Workshops were extremely well attended with an average of 25 to 30 attendees at each workshop. A sample of the physical activity netball was used to demonstrate a methodology for the development of evidence and learning experiences in physical activities. The DVD was presented as a discussion starter on what constitutes complex and simple performance environments in physical activities.

The QSA website is being redeveloped and the new site will be available in January 2008. The Physical Education pages will contain updated and annotated examples of assessment and work programs.

Michael Kiss  
State Review Panel Chair  
Kim Lavin  
Senior Education Officer
PHYSICS — A05

Syllabus

The Physics 1995 Syllabus is in its 12th year of implementation. Schools presently working on the Physics '95 syllabus have the option of implementing the new Physics 2007 syllabus for the Year 11 cohort in either 2008 or 2009.

Feedback from districts

Feedback from district panels indicates that monitoring and verification meetings face no major issues. Incorrect labelling of assessment items over the three criteria and the lack of complexity of some Complex reasoning processes items remain an issue albeit minor ones near the end of this syllabus’s cycle.

Monitoring is an opportunity for schools to receive feedback on the quality of the course they are delivering to students. District chairs reported that the standard of assessment items and school decision-making were generally of a high standard. Some issues that schools need to be aware of that were particularly commented on by district panels are:

- Complex reasoning processes assessment items are frequently at the low- to mid-level of challenge. If the level of challenge does not cover a full range of depth and breadth, school decisions may not be able to be substantiated.
- Errors in mark schemes have led to incorrect judgment about student ability.
- Frequently, assessment items in Scientific processes dimension are really assessing knowledge of subject matter.

District chairs welcomed the presence of observers at monitoring meetings as an opportunity to broaden the experience of teachers in the assessment and review process.

Statewide comparability

In November an annual comparability exercise is undertaken by state panel. This year the task involved reviewing two sample submissions from each of the 13 districts. Submissions were provided that were deemed to meet all aspects of syllabus requirements. The state review panel agreed with decisions about levels of achievement made by district review panels.

Course coverage

Generally all mandatory aspects of the 1995 syllabus are being correctly implemented in all districts. All syllabus subject matter topics are represented to an appropriate breadth and depth. Assessment packages offer a range of methods and techniques. Supervised assessments and practical reports predominate but the range and style of assignments is widening, and increasingly sophisticated criteria sheets are being developed as teachers continue to prepare to implement the new Physics syllabus.

Quality of assessment

Assessment is the basis upon which school and panel decisions regarding student levels of achievement are based. It is essential that schools provide students with a broad range of authentic and relevant assessment tasks.

Discussions between state and district panels this year have provided the following important points for consideration:

- Schools need to be more discriminating in assessing practical reports. As with all forms of assessment, practical reports need to have sufficient challenge as to be able to discriminate between students. Students who exhibit different levels of achievement in other forms of assessment should
not regularly produce similar results with practical reports.

- Formula sheets attached to tests should carry formulas from the whole course in an ungrouped way. This is particularly important on Complex reasoning processes tests. In particular, specific formulas should not be included as a hint in a question unless it is a previously unseen formula presented in a relevant and new context.

**Subject support**

QSA presented science assessment workshops in Term 2, 2007. These one-day workshops consisted of a generic introductory section on tasks and criteria before critiquing specific (Physics) tasks and sample responses. Samples of tasks and responses identified at verification and comparability were used to develop common understandings of assessment.

Workshops introducing the new Physics 2007 syllabus were run in all districts in Term 3 of this year. In addition, panel training occurred in October for the new A45 panels which have been established in all districts.

There will be further support for Physics in 2008 with the introductory workshop being repeated in Term 1, 2008 for schools electing to introduce the new Physics syllabus in Year 11 in 2009. In addition, Workshop 2 of the proposed four-workshop series will be offered in all districts in February and March 2008. This workshop will focus on assessment strategies for the new syllabus. In Semester 2, 2008, Workshop 3 will be offered, focusing on awarding standards of achievement. All workshops in the series are being offered twice, once for the schools introducing the new syllabus in 2008 and then repeated a year later for schools introducing the new syllabus in 2009.

Website support has increased, with several approved work programs available on the Physics page as well as teacher support material in the form of supervised assessment items (SA items), annotated to show their links to both general objectives and criteria added. As more material becomes available, this will be added to the site.

Chris Pingel
State Review Panel Chair

Beth Brook
Senior Education Officer
**PHYSICS (EXTENDED TRIAL-PILOT) — A35**

**Syllabus**

The syllabus is in the third year of the extended trial-pilot. The document will continue in restricted use for the Year 12 cohort in 2008. It is being replaced for the Year 11 cohort in 2008 by the Physics 2007 (A45) syllabus for all ETP schools.

Schools presently working on the Physics ’95 syllabus have the option of implementing the new syllabus for the Year 11 cohort in either 2008 or 2009.

**Feedback from districts**

At this time, all ETP schools have had their work programs approved. Monitoring this year went fairly smoothly. Some schools require reminders about criteria sheets needing to be more task-specific and better linked to the syllabus exit standards as well as the need to ensure that the full range of exit standards can be achieved by the Year 12 assessment tasks.

Some tasks such as extended-response tasks (ERTs) and extended experimental investigations (EEIs) should require students to show more evidence of higher-order thinking processes, such as critical analysis and evaluation, justified decisions and clearer links to Physics concepts.

Verification by all accounts went smoothly with only one unresolved submission sent to state panel. Again, similar issues to monitoring were seen in a couple of districts — ERTs and EEIs require students to show more evidence of higher-order thinking process, such as critical analysis and evaluation, justified decisions and clearer links to Physics concepts.

One area of concern is that schools are tending to make their written tasks (WTs) fairly straightforward and lacking in opportunities for students to show their true abilities on complex, challenging and/or novel questions and/or qualitative questions. Schools are reminded that there needs to be an on-balance of all higher-order thinking processes across the range of assessment tasks.

There is some evidence that the general objective of Scientific investigations does not appear to be being assessed as frequently as Knowledge & conceptual understanding (KCU) and Scientific techniques (ST). This will have even more significance with the implementation of the new syllabus.

**Statewide comparability**

There was general agreement with district panels with placement of typical VHA and HA students, to within 1/3 band. However, there were some concerns regarding threshold VHA, HA and SA students: there did not appear to be sufficient evidence of the general objectives/exit standards to warrant these levels of achievement (LOAs), in particular: linking concepts etc. to solve challenging and complex situations, designing tasks, generating valid research questions/hypotheses, analysis of data, generating conclusions, and justifying conclusions.

There were some anomalies detected in task-specific criteria sheets that did not reflect the exit standards, for example, for WTs, a lack of challenge and complexity required for VHA & HA grades. Also, some criteria sheets did not require interpretation of concepts; generation of feasible alternatives; identification of trends, patterns and errors; or analysis of primary/secondary data for sound achievement. These aspects are required by the exit standards on page 30 of the syllabus.

**Course coverage**

Mandatory aspects of the syllabus have been covered by all schools, in that the general objectives have been addressed. However, it would be good to see a wider variety of modes used to assess Scientific techniques, and to see more opportunities for threshold students to justify decisions and evaluate judgments, as well as linking Physics concepts in investigative tasks (i.e. EEIs and ERTs), with conclusions which would be expected of an HA student.
The mandatory Physics concepts appear to be covered twice over the two years and in more than one context.

Schools are covering some interesting contexts and so providing real-life situations in which students can explore Physics concepts.

Schools need to ensure that students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their LOAs against the full range of exit standards.

**Quality of assessment**

Schools are reminded that assessment tasks need task-specific criteria sheets that reflect the syllabus exit standards, to allow sufficient opportunities for students to demonstrate, on balance, the full range of exit-level standards.

Some assessment tasks and task-specific criteria sheets did not reflect the exit standards, in particular WTs and ERTs, and hence some students were not able to show the full range of exit standards on these tasks.

EEIs should require students to collect and analyse primary data, link this to theoretical concepts/Physics principles, and show evidence of research, by in-text referencing. Many schools are providing students with innovative opportunities for students to demonstrate their scientific investigation techniques and skills.

Schools need to ensure that ERTs are structured to elicit opportunities for students to show evidence of research, by in-text referencing and higher-order thinking skills, such as analysis, critical evaluation, justifying alternatives and points of view, as well as linking the material to Physics principles/concepts. Some analysis of primary data may be appropriate in ERTs, to allow students the opportunity to address more of the exit standards, e.g. SI, and integrate concepts to show higher-order thinking skills. WTs need to allow opportunities for both qualitative and quantitative questions, and complex, challenging and/or novel questions.

Schools are to be reminded that the use of marks for WTs can disguise a student’s ability on complex and challenging questions, a requirement for VHA and HA grades, as per the exit standards. State panel interprets dot point 1 for LA in KCU to mean ability to answer single-step questions, and the same dot pint in SA requires students to manipulate formulas/information to show evidence of “constructs”.

Teachers are required to play an active role in clarifying and identifying appropriate research tasks that allow students to demonstrate the full range of exit standards, as well as give active feedback to ensure students understand the exit standards/criteria sheets.

**Subject support**

QSA presented assessment workshops in Term 2, 2007. These one-day workshops consisted of a generic introductory section on tasks and criteria before critiquing specific (Physics) tasks and sample responses. Samples of tasks and responses identified at verification and comparability were used to develop common understandings of assessment.

Workshops introducing the new Physics 2007 syllabus were run in all districts in Term 3 of this year. In addition, panel training occurred in October for the new A45 panels which have been established in all districts.

There will be further support for Physics in 2008 with the introductory workshop being repeated in Term 1, 2008 for schools electing to introduce the new Physics syllabus in Year 11 in 2009. In addition, Workshop 2 of the proposed four-workshop series will be offered in all districts in February and March 2008. This workshop will focus on assessment strategies for the new syllabus. In Semester 2, 2008, Workshop 3 will be offered, focusing on awarding standards of achievement. All workshops in the series are being offered twice, once for the schools introducing the new syllabus in 2008 and then repeated a year later for schools introducing the new syllabus in 2009.
Website support has increased, with several approved work programs available on the Physics page as well as teacher support material in the form of supervised assessment items (SA items), annotated to show their links to general objectives and criteria added. As more material becomes available, this will be added to the site.

Megg Kennedy  
State Review Panel Chair

Beth Brook  
Senior Education Officer
Schools are currently implementing the 2001 Study of Religion syllabus. A minor revision of the syllabus is under way and will be completed by the end of 2007. This review was informed by a survey of the teachers of Study of Religion, feedback from schools delivering the subject, tertiary representatives, non-government stakeholders, the Indigenous liaison officer, and input from the Principals’ Association. Two copies of the revised syllabus will be in schools by April 2008. General implementation of the 2007 revised syllabus is for all Year 11s in the 2009 cohort. Schools will be required to submit a work program by Term 1, 2009.

Feedback from districts

There are a very few amendments to work programs across the state. Schools are reminded to follow the work program requirements as outlined in the syllabus. Monitoring went through very smoothly.

The lack of evidence in student folios to support the teacher judgments about student performance in multimodals was one of the most common issues identified at verification. The multimodal should be accompanied by evidence of research, teacher comments about classroom interaction and the way teachers made their judgments. The state panel recommends that schools familiarise themselves with the minimum requirements for verification and exit as outlined in the syllabus.

Referencing is a continuing issue across the state. The syllabus states that students should be able to summarise, reference their research notes and create annotated bibliographies. Students are also expected to identify issues for investigation and frame research questions.

Statewide comparability

One of the key concerns of the state panel is the inadequate evidence of authentication of student responses. To ensure the increasing independence of students, the number of drafts of both assignments and reports that are commented on by class teachers should decrease substantially between Semester 1, Year 11, and Semester 4, Year 12. Exhaustive teacher annotation and correction that continue into Semester 4 are not effective ways of assisting students to develop their independence.

The following guidelines are recommended to ascertain that a prepared response is genuinely that of the student: The teacher should monitor the development of the task by seeing plans and a draft of the student’s work. The student will produce and maintain documentation of the development of the response such as referenced research notes or an annotated bibliography. The student must acknowledge all resources used.

Schools are misinterpreting “fullest and latest” by giving more weight to a single instrument or trend at the end of the summative part of the developmental two-year course of study. “Fullest and latest” is one of the six principles of assessment that need to be implemented concurrently. The six principles of assessment are: continuous assessment, balance, selective updating, fullest and latest, significant aspects of the course, and mandatory aspects of the course.

The syllabus states clearly that the fullest and latest information, on which schools should base their decisions about students’ levels of achievement, are the minimum requirements for a verification folio and the minimum requirements for exit.

These decisions about levels of achievement are based on representative patterns of achievement, not a single performance of the general objective. “Fullest” refers to information about student achievement gathered across the range of general objectives. “Latest” refers to information about student achievement gathered from the latest period in which the general objectives are assessed. Fullest and latest information consists of the most recent data on developmental aspects together with any
previous and not-superseded data. Decisions about achievement requires both fullest and latest to be considered in determining a student’s level of achievement.

Attention needs to be given to the research part of the Research & communication criterion. The syllabus clearly states that students should be able to select and gather information from a variety of sources using investigative techniques such as observations, surveys, interviews, inquiries, web inquiries and literature searches by the end of a two-year course of study. Task sheets should invite students to research by using such terms as search, collect, paraphrase, draft, collate, logically sequence, select, gather, organise, identify issues, and frame research questions.

Course coverage

In the final phase of the syllabus, schools are in general covering the significant aspects and all the electives with appropriate breadth and depth.

Quality of assessment

Across the state, assessment tasks are creative and challenging. In terms of the quality of assessment packages, the full range of the evaluative processes general objective is not evident. This is particularly clear in the absence of any evaluation of sources and information in the student responses. Students are not given the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities in this skill.

Tasks need more scaffolding to specifically invite students to demonstrate the breadth of the general objectives. Some questions are too broad and/or esoteric to effectively give students the opportunity to present evidence of how well they have developed their knowledge processes, evaluative processes, and research and communication.

Subject support

The Study of Religion webpage is being updated. There will be syllabus orientation workshops in Term 2 next year across all districts. The work program requirements will be available on the website from Term 1 next year. Panel training for work program approval will be offered in Term 3, 2008.

John Thomas  Lucie Sorensen
State Review Panel Chair  Senior Education Officer
**Study of Society — B11**

**Syllabus**

The Study of Society syllabus was first implemented in 2001. All schools currently offering Study of Society have approved work programs based upon the 2001 syllabus.

**Feedback from districts**

Both district review panels currently have vacancies. The panels would welcome applications from teachers who are interested in becoming involved in the moderation process.

**Work program approvals**

Work programs and amendments must all be submitted online.

**Monitoring**

Monitoring is concerned with reviewing schools’ implementation of the syllabus as demonstrated by the assessment evidence presented in sample folios. At monitoring meetings panels consider the quality of the assessment, the coverage of the course and the school judgments about the standards.

Panels noted that many schools submitted good-quality assessment items accompanied by appropriate scaffolding which directed students to address all aspects of the tasks. It is also pleasing to see many schools effectively using task-specific criteria sheets.

One of the most common issues identified was the misapplication of the *Research & communication* criterion. Students must demonstrate the standards of the syllabus and effectively present evidence of their research and communication ability.

**Verification**

Verification is the process by which review panels advise schools on the standards of student work and the relative achievement of students. Folios of students who have exited the course with fewer than four semesters must be submitted as a sample when they are the only student in a level of achievement.

As the syllabus is overdue for revision, some schools are using tasks that may need to be updated. When tasks are revised please ensure that the task-specific criteria sheets are based on the standards of the syllabus. Task-specific criteria sheets will ensure the assessment items will be marked by explicit, clear, unambiguous criteria that students can use in advance to ensure they address all aspects of the task.

The task of assessment is to assess in terms of the specifications of the syllabus, not to redefine the syllabus. Therefore it is important that in writing task-specific criteria sheets the language and standards of the syllabus are maintained.

**Statewide comparability**

The samples reviewed generally showed comparability. Panel noted the mostly appropriate application of standards between districts within the subject across the state.

**Course coverage**

Schools assess an interesting variety of topics which cover the mandatory aspects of the syllabus. Generally, topics are relevant; although sometimes schools appear to be using out-of-date statistics and source material. Consideration must be given to the currency of the information presented to students.
over the course of study. It is important that students receive up-to-date information and their responses reflect this. Students should also be encouraged to critically reflect on the authority of the sources they select when researching.

Schools need to ensure that the verification folio requirements (p. 56) are met. The syllabus indicates that a minimum of two extended pieces of writing or essays from Year 12 that have been completed under test conditions must be included in the verification folios. Additionally one of these instruments must be based on an unseen question or task.

**Quality of assessment**

One issue that emerged is lack of modelling of referencing quotes or references on task sheets. The *Communication* criterion requires that students acknowledge the sources they use. This must be modelled on task sheets supplied to students.

Careful consideration must be given to the application of Criterion 2, *Critical processes*. Some tasks reviewed require only description rather than analysis, evaluation and synthesis when addressing an issue. It is also the case that some tasks set require these higher-order critical processes, but when the students do not address them, the results they receive do not reflect this omission.

Criterion 3, *Research*, is also a problematic area. Variety of resources is also of concern in many instances. While it is acknowledged that the internet is a valid and effective resource, the sites accessed need to be carefully monitored. There is an over-reliance on Wikipedia and general internet sites. More needs to be done to encourage students to look beyond the internet and when they do use it, to use it critically and thoughtfully.

Some schools are still not providing evidence of the research process, either in the form of notes or research booklets that are structured using an appropriate method of inquiry. Attachment of printouts from the internet is not evidence of research, particularly in the higher levels of achievement.

**Subject support**

Panel training will be conducted during Semester 2, 2008 in both districts.

The QSA website has undergone some redevelopment recently. Samples of work programs, assessment items and support materials are now available. The material has been successfully used in schools and is annotated. These resources are intended to be a guide to help teachers plan and develop assessment tasks for individual school settings.
Syllabus

The 1999 Technology Studies Syllabus is in the eighth year of implementation. This year will be the final cohort of Year 11 students under the current syllabus. The revised syllabus has been approved for general implementation in 2008. In the development of the revised syllabus one of the main focuses was to develop a syllabus that provides schools with more prescriptive information on what is required in delivering the syllabus, in particular assessment techniques.

Work program approval for the 2007 syllabus is progressing well. There are areas that appear to be problematic in achieving the overall intent of the syllabus. In designing a course of study, teachers develop design tasks that nominate a singular and different context each time. In developing assessment plans, teachers use only the assessment techniques detailed in the syllabus.

We remind teachers that it is the students’ work, not standards on the profile in isolation, that is the basis for determining overall standards and levels of achievement. Decisions on global standards and levels of achievement are on-balance professional judgments based on the standards of students’ work as it is reflected in the standards matrix, with consideration of the six principles of assessment, and demands and conditions of the task. Formulaic methods, including the “averaging” of standards, or trending of ticks/dots on student profiles should not be used, nor should a 15-point scale. Therefore, the state panel is encouraging schools to adopt the format of the student profiles displayed in the sample work programs.

Feedback from districts

The district review panel chairs and state review panellists’ conference in July provided an opportunity for collegial sharing and professional development. The district chairs shared their differing experiences and perspectives from throughout the state. There are currently seven district panels and three combined district panels for Technology Studies. In 2007 four new district review panel chairs were appointed and for monitoring 2008 a further three new chairs will be appointed. New leadership at district level before the new syllabus should provide ongoing consistency in leadership for the critical early years of syllabus interpretation and implementation.

Statewide comparability

The purpose of the state review panel meeting is twofold:

• to provide advice to QSA regarding the match between the verified levels of achievement in the district sample submissions and the syllabus requirements, and
• to consider school submissions where agreement has not been reached between the school and the district review panel during consultation and negotiation following verification.

This is the second year since QSA initiated a new approach to comparability. This is best described as a “horizontal comparability” model. Each panellist was assigned a threshold achievement level to review across all districts, i.e. one panellist would look at all the threshold VHAs across all districts.

The state review panel noted that, generally, school judgments in awarding levels of achievement matched syllabus standards in most districts. It is important to ensure that judgments regarding students’ levels of achievement are based on the syllabus criteria and standards and that close reference is made to the way in which exit standards are determined.

There were only three unresolved submissions. This is clear endorsement of the excellent work being conducted by district review panels.
Course coverage

The six areas of study are adequately covered by most schools as directed in the approved work programs. Schools need to ensure that the work program is followed, i.e. profiles in the sample must match the profiles shown in the work program. If the school wishes to alter its direction, the correct procedure for amending work programs must be followed.

Quality of assessment

Throughout the state it is apparent that there is a continued focus on improving the high-order reasoning processes within the student samples. However, at times the topics selected for related research reports do not allow the students to develop this reasoning to an appropriate level.

State panel reminds schools to refer to the QSA’s policy on late and non-submissions when determining exit level of achievements for their students.

Subject support

2007 panel training was conducted in all districts and focused on work program requirements and the on-line approval review processes associated with the introduction of the new syllabus. Panellists continue to find panel work rewarding and valuable in terms of professional development, and schools are encouraged to nominate teachers to panels. Syllabus orientation workshops were also conducted in 2007 and these included work program writing.

Support and resources for the 2007 Technology Studies Syllabus can be found through the Technology studies Edna-group (http://www.edna.edu.au/edna).

The QSA website is currently being redeveloped and the new site will be available in January 2008.

Tim Osborne        Roy Barnes
State Review Panel Chair    Senior Education Officer
Syllabus

The Authority subject in Tourism syllabus has completed its second year of trial. The syllabus is currently under review. This revision will take as its focus the evaluator’s report which is due in February next year. The revision of the syllabus will be shaped in part by what happens in terms of the endorsement of the Services Industry Training Package.

Report from monitoring

The work programs for all trial schools have been approved. Trial schools have taken a variety of approaches in structuring their courses of study. Specialisations are varied as are the learning experiences due to schools making use of their local resources. Some schools have amended work programs but most are waiting for the rewrite process to commence with an amended syllabus.

The purpose of monitoring was to view how well schools were implementing the course, the quality of assessment instruments, and the quality of decision making about student levels of achievement at this stage of the course. Feedback from monitoring indicated that most schools were realising strong and varied tourism courses for their students.

The main issues from monitoring concerned following the addendum to the assessment package. Schools are reminded to examine this addendum as they prepare their assessment for verification. A second issue became evident in the extended written response; there were some inconsistencies in folios in terms of making a distinction in the genre conventions of essays and reports, and the state panel recommends that teachers are careful in making a distinction between these two genres. An essay is a piece of extended prose; a report has headings and subheadings and is likely to include diagrams and representations of data.

Advice at monitoring centred around making sure that schools were gathering enough evidence to support their judgments about student achievement, that is, meeting the requirements of the syllabus. Schools are reminded that students need to be providing new evidence in each different category of assessment, not double dipping. For example, an assessment instrument may be based on the same content/subject matter, but students need to use this information in different ways. Students cannot simply orally present their reports and be awarded two separate results for reasoning. Another illustration of how this might work is that the extended written response may be analysing and evaluating and making decisions about the best site or model for a cruise terminal. The nonwritten aspect may include presentation of one key stakeholder’s perspective. This might take the form of a persuasive presentation to council. The nonwritten aspect is likely to be evidence of communication only in this case.

The state panel would like to remind schools that the syllabus is a complementary document to the work program and the two should be read together.

Statewide comparability

The principal concern of the state panel was the need to maintain academic rigour in the assessment instruments across the package. There is evidence that the boundaries between the Authority subject, the subject area specification and the certificate are very fluid. This has caused some inconsistencies in depth of knowledge and understanding, reasoning and communication being demonstrated across the state. These inconsistencies may arise from the circumstance that some schools have combined the classes. In the main, standards are comparable across the state and schools.

Course coverage as observed at verification

Schools are covering the areas of study described in their work program in breadth but some schools
lack depth of coverage. Teachers need to be mindful that students at “A” and “B” standard should demonstrate high academic standards in all three criteria. This requires depth of coverage of course subject matter and evidence of higher-order thinking skills. Teachers should expect a concise and fluent response.

Assessment tasks are mostly clear in distinction between criteria-based assessment and competency-based assessment for Certificate II in Tourism Operations. Most schools choose to integrate the two forms of assessment rather than have two sets of assessment.

**Quality of assessment at verification**

Evidence at verification suggests that the panel’s advice at monitoring was considered, with significant improvement in the emphasis and structure of assessment tasks. Feedback from verification suggests that school’s judgments were of a generally high standard where panel members were able to find enough evidence in folios to support school’s judgments. However, schools are asked to use standards matrix statements as the syllabus states rather than extending them to include other factors. A task-specific criteria-and-standards matrix should not introduce new processes into the standards — this makes comparability very difficult. What should be adapted in the task-specific criteria-and-standards matrix is the context in which the task captures evidence about the student performance and the actual sub-elements of the criteria.

In general, task design provided students with a range of opportunities to show how well they had developed their skills across the general objectives. The state panel recommends that tasks should be within the experience of the student. For example, can the student make judgments/recommendations for an entire country? Can they imagine being a manager? Can they collect enough information in a short space of time to research the topic efficiently?

One of the key concerns of the state panel is the inadequate evidence of authentication of student responses. To ensure the increasing independence of students, the number of drafts of both assignments and reports that are commented on by class teachers should decrease substantially between Semester 1, Year 11, and Semester 4, Year 12. Exhaustive teacher annotation and correction that continues into Semester 4 are not effective ways of assisting students to develop their independence.

The following guidelines are recommended to ascertain that a prepared response is genuinely that of the student: The teacher should monitor the development of the task by seeing plans and a draft of the student’s work. The student will produce and maintain documentation of the development of the response such as referenced research notes or an annotated bibliography. The student must acknowledge all resources used.

Non-written responses must be accompanied by supporting written material that is extensive and supportive of criteria.

Non-written responses must be accompanied by teacher observation notes and/or some form of multimedia record of presentation.

With extended written responses, in comparing an 800-word essay with an 800-word report, the body of the report is much less informative since word limit is taken up by introduction, methodology, etc. Teachers are encouraged to teach the genre to have the major components of a report being the major part of the 800 words.

There was little issue with Knowledge & understanding being clearly assessed. A range of conditions of assessment was observed.

In Communication, a range of standards were observed, often influenced by the preparation provided by teachers in the classroom. Students should be familiar with the structure of the genre and be able to respond to questions in a concise fashion. This means observing word limits. It should be clear from the evidence in the folio that students have made decisions about the most appropriate way to present information. A standard “A” specifically asks for “confidence and initiative in the use of interpersonal skills”.

State Review Panel Reports 2008 (report of the 2007 state review panels) 116
The most significant issue observed was with regard to meeting Reasoning criteria and standards awarded. Many tasks (especially reports and essays) that were intended to assess Reasoning fell short in clarity of task. The task description needs to clearly spell out what students must do. Most asked for “access, interpret and analyse information”, “analysis of problems/issues” and “makes well-substantiated decisions”. However, there is a great diversity in what students are providing as demonstrations of “evaluate and synthesise” and what teachers are expecting and awarding grades for. Across the folio of student work, the panel would expect to see students accessing, interpreting, analysing, evaluating, synthesising, justifying and making decisions. These are specific skills that students are expected to know and do.

**Subject support**

In 2006 and 2007, five two-day conferences were delivered to support the trial of the Tourism subject. In July and March there was training for the state panel. We will have panel training next year in July. Panel training aims to support the schools and the panels in having confidence in the quality assurance of student achievement and assessment. It focuses on developing the skills of social moderation.

Panel thanks all schools and the Tourism teachers for their efforts during the first two years of the trial.

Ann Richardson
State Review Panel Chair

Lucie Sorensen
Senior Education Officer
2008 will be a transition year when students studying semesters 3 and 4 will complete their course of study on the senior Visual Art 2001 syllabus, and students in semesters 1 and 2 will be beginning their two-year course of study on the senior Visual Art 2007 syllabus.

The deadline for the submission of all new work programs for approval is the end of Term 1, 2008. The reduced requirements for QSA approval are with the expectation that each teacher of the subject will have a copy of the syllabus at all times. As a working document in the school, the work program will become complete as each unit is developed in detail, and as schools reflect on their practices and assessment.

Feedback from districts

The 2007 Visual Arts syllabus implementation is well under way with state panellists, district panel chairs and district panellists all with programs approved, submitted or in the process of finalising approval. Schools should ensure that they have approved work programs in place for their new cohort of senior students.

From reviewed programs, the biggest issue impeding the approval is a tendency for schools in their course organisation to list a concept and then to elaborate on a focus that appears to bear little or no relation to the stated concept. Where schools have unpacked exactly what they mean by the stated concept within the course organisation and then make explicit the link between the concept and the potential focuses that students could pursue, the intention of the syllabus is evident. The syllabus states that students through their focuses should “define interpretations and responses to the concepts” (p. 8).

Schools are reminded to make explicit the aspects of the syllabus global aim to “explore, appreciate and embrace contemporary visual arts practices and emerging technologies” (p. 3) and to ensure that the work program shows how students will have the opportunity to “explore, appreciate or embrace” the work of contemporary artists or work completed using emerging technologies. Specific references made to artists or the inclusion of some learning experiences within the course organisation, sample unit or sample Year 12 tasks will evidence the supporting of the critical understanding of contemporary practices.

At verification, district panel chairs reported there were significant numbers of schools where the evidence in the sample folios did not demonstrate the level of achievement proposed by the school. They expressed concern about the quality of the evidence to support the standards in making folios.

This could possibly be an issue more of the provided evidence than the schools’ understanding of the standards. In Visual Art we provide evidence of the milestones or significant points throughout the process and the resolution of the work, rather than everything that was completed for the folio and the actual work.

Quality evidence to support school judgments in a typical submission equates to these:

- **Identifying** clearly and consistently each sample throughout the submission.
- **Providing** a fully completed profile for each sample which is accurately transcribed from task sheets.
- **Using** clear and consistent labels to indicate where evidence begins and ends for each summative folio of work for each sample.
- **Ensuring** clear images (whole work as well as close-up details, not just cropped details) of the final resolved work(s) as either good-quality colour printouts or jpeg files. These images of resolved work should be clearly identified and distinguished from any process or developmental work. The inclusion of an indication of scale, an image showing the work hanging or installed in a space and the provision of a clear artist’s statement identifying key media and materials and a brief statement of the intent of the student would support this evidence further.
• Selecting evidence of the most significant process or developmental work that directs panellists to key points in the student’s research, development or resolution of the summative work. Some ways these key points or significant signposts can be evidenced is by either scanning, photocopying or removing pages from a student’s visual diary, including photographs of works in progress, evidencing the problem solving and decision making being undertaken by a student, or by tagging or labelling pages directly in a student’s visual diary or process journal. By being selective and signposting significant points in the student’s research, development and resolution, the school has the opportunity to underscore and present the actual decision making they themselves are undertaking when determining a student’s proposed level of achievement. Identify the points on which the schools made the decision when awarding the original grade.

Other than lack of quality evidence, in a small number of instances, the school’s incorrect interpretation of student profiles when determining a student’s exit level of achievement actually placed sample students at a position lower that proposed by the school. Page 23 of the 2001 Syllabus states the minimum standards for exit levels of achievement.

In some instances, samples in submissions could not be verified on the day. One significant reason was the insufficient coverage of the course. The most common omission in the verification folio relates to the dimension of Appraising. Schools are reminded that all samples must have completed “between two and four appraising responses to tasks including two written responses, one of which is to be extended writing of 800–1000 words” (p. 25). Where folios are incomplete, advice from schools on the R6 in regard to how the school came to the decision about the level of achievement will assist in the verification of samples on the day. If district panel chairs were not able to give advice on incomplete samples at verification, schools were asked to provide the missing evidence to reach agreement at a district level, before any subsequent submission to state panel and/or before final exit levels of achievement being confirmed.

Related to this is the issue of non-submission of assessment items by students. Where schools have clear and proactive policies on the late and non-submission of assessment, teachers are able to gather evidence on which valid decisions can be made in relation to standards and course coverage. All schools should now have a whole-school policy that is clear and accessible to students in advance of the assessment-due dates.

At verification, all submissions are a minimum of nine samples where there is the opportunity to do so. Schools are reminded to refer to the QSA’s publication on moderation processes that clearly outlines the requirements for both monitoring and verification. Where there are variations such as small cohort size, variable progression, Year 12 students studying Year 11 subjects, the QSA website provides guidance on procedures and processes for these instances. This can be found on the website at: Assessment > Senior assessment > Forms and procedures > Additional guidelines and procedures.

Following verification meetings, district panel chairs worked to negotiate with schools to give them the opportunity to provide further or clearer evidence to address the types of issues identified above. In most cases, district panel chairs successfully resolved most of these issues with individual schools and reached agreement on the placement of samples at the district level. Their professionalism in building supportive working relationships within districts and the quality advice on assessment and standards is greatly valued, and cannot be underestimated.

**Statewide comparability**

At comparability meetings in November, the state panel considered that across the 26 samples from 13 districts, there was a high level of comparability in the application of syllabus standards particularly to decision making at the threshold level for minimum standards at Sound, Limited, and Very Limited Achievement level.

There was some inconsistency in the application of the minimum standards at the threshold Very High and High Achievement levels across the state. Where there were instances of some lack of comparability found in a district sample, it was generally only evident in aspects in one of the two samples provided by the district. Reports following comparability have been sent to district panel
chairs to assist them in the ongoing professional development of their district panel and improve standard and assessment practices across the state.

**Course coverage**

The state panel revealed some issues and emerging trends across the state. Perhaps the most significant issue was the need for teachers to continue to renew their understanding of the *Visual literacy* dimension of the *Making* general objective. Previous state panel reports, which you can find on the QSA website at: Assessment > Senior assessment > Reports, have provided schools with commentary to help them identify the discriminators for a minimum “A” and “C” standard in *Visual literacy* (as well as the discriminators for the Application dimension) but there appear to be some ongoing issues concerning the types of evidence you would need to document in a student’s work to validate their achievement in the dimension of *Visual literacy*.

The 2001 syllabus states that the dimension of *Visual literacy* is about students communicating meanings, and the dimensions in the *Making* objective apply to both process and resolution. *Visual literacy* can be evident in a completed resolved work and/or by the way a student documents their ability to respond to a concept through a personalised focus which has been explored and refined through the interrelated processes of researching, developing and resolving. Evidence of the pathways the student has taken in defining the concept, finding a focus in relation to the concept, problem solving that they have engaged in along the journey to resolving an artwork, along with how they have directly explored the use of visual language and visual contexts to help refine their approaches, can also evidence the standard students have achieved in the *Visual literacy* dimension.

The 2007 Visual Arts syllabus has provided additional support to teachers to help build a solid understanding of what *Visual literacy* is and the types of activities that would evidence and could document a student’s engagement in the dimension of *Visual literacy*. It details that students demonstrate this engagement through “reading images, perceiving images, thinking with images, recording images, communicating images, processing images … constructing images, manipulating, classifying, recalling, discriminating, selecting, arranging … whether they stem from ideas, concepts, focuses, contexts, trains of thought, memories or insights” (p. 4, 2007 syllabus). Defining visual problems and creating and communicating meaning through use of visual language and expression are essential aspects of both syllabuses. Ensuring students have a solid understanding of core aspects of the building blocks of visual language, especially if they have not had exposure to this type of discourse previously, is a part of giving them the fullest opportunity to engage in this creative process.

The state panel members observed greater exploration of media areas such as electronic imaging, installation, and video and film being undertaken by schools. While schools have increasingly been supporting students to take the opportunity to work in these areas, student outcomes are increasing in sophistication, which could be a result of schools including the appraising of a wider variety of contemporary and emerging artists in their teaching as well as assessment. Greater engagement in the critical analysis of works from diverse and more contemporary contexts required by *Appraising* assessment tasks, appears to have supported an improvement in student outcomes in *Making* folios. The new 2007 syllabus continues to support this interrelatedness between *Making* and *Appraising* by requiring students to produce a body of work which “consists of individual responses to making and appraising tasks” (p. 9 syllabus). The redefining of media areas in the 2007 syllabus into two-dimensional media, three-dimensional media, design and time-based media should support this engagement in a broader range of traditional, contemporary and multimodal or hybrid art forms.

**Quality of assessment**

The new 2007 syllabus states that in Year 12, courses of study should “still include supportive learning experiences that can scaffold students to realise their individual expression” (p. 10). State panel is seeing increasing evidence of schools improving the task design and criteria-and-standards sheets for Year 11 and 12 students in *Making* and *Appraising* to support student achievement.

Improved scaffolding on *Making* tasks has been displayed by schools that have clearly done the
following:

- **Identified** the concept the students are to ultimately respond to (including a brief explanation of the concept for students to understand).

- **Outlined** possible focuses or “pathways of possibility” that students could explore or contrasting contexts that they could view the concept through, as they develop an individualised focus that relates back to the stated concept.

- **Scaffolded** a task-specific (i.e. not generic) process or series of open-ended inquiry questions that students could follow or engage with. This scaffold should reflect the inquiry learning model of the syllabus and try to ensure that the process students are following is not a linear one but one which interrelates researching, developing, resolving and reflecting, where any point could be the initial stimulus point.

- **Specific suggested artists and specific art works** that clearly and directly relate to the concept and/or focuses that could be pursued by students. Controlling these references to ones that best distil the nature of the concept rather than giving exhaustive lists of artists’ names when only a single work may be relevant.

This degree of scaffolding is encouraged for all Year 11 tasks but equally important for Year 12 task sheets. With a move towards the development of two bodies of work in Year 12 and the sustained inquiry that this demands, carefully guiding students in Year 12 without being prescriptive will be essential. While teachers and schools often provide this same type of supportive teaching every day, improving the quality and clarity of task design will contribute to continual improvements in outcomes for students.

**Subject support**

All support material for the 2001 syllabus will be removed from the QSA website at the end of this year. This will coincide with the redevelopment of the site. The 2008 Visual Art webpage will have electronic versions of the 2008 syllabus, work program requirements and review notes.

To accompany the current work program samples in the syllabus, a new complete sample work program (including sample tasks) will be the first of continuing support material available on the QSA website.

Janelle Williams  
State Review Panel Chair

Susan Hollindale  
Standards & Assessment Officer