State Review Panel Reports

2009

(Report of the 2008 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 2008, 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
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ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES — B31

Syllabus

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies senior syllabus 2001 is in its seventh year of general implementation. This syllabus underwent a review process which was finalised this year and was informed by key stakeholders, members of the community and teachers of the subject. The revised 2009 syllabus will be in general implementation for all Year 11 students in 2010. Schools are required to submit a work program based on the new 2009 syllabus by Term 1, 2010.

The syllabus is available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Social and Environmental Studies > Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (2001). All syllabus references in this section refer to this document.

Statewide comparability

The monitoring and verification processes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies went smoothly.

Schools are reminded to include all the required evidence to support their judgments at both monitoring and verification. When preparing submissions schools should refer to:

- the syllabus, Section 10.6, pp. 68–69
- *Moderation processes for senior certification* (QSA 2005) which can be found on the QSA website <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> Assessment > Senior assessment > Forms and procedures.

Three main issues have been identified by the moderation process in 2008. These are:

- Assessment tasks are not allowing students to demonstrate the full range of syllabus standards within the Processing criterion.
- Research skills need to be more tightly developed in the Managing criterion.
  
  Schools’ attention is drawn to the syllabus document for guidance on what is required in both these criteria, especially at A– and B–standards. It is important that assessment instruments provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate their skills in relevant criteria.
- There is still variation between schools’ judgments about Very High Achievement (VHA) and High Achievement (HA) levels. It is important to seek advice if unsure about the application of standards and the writing of assessment tasks.

Schools are advised to examine the syllabus document for further elaboration of the general objectives and criteria. Additionally, schools are advised to consult the Senior Education Officer (Quality Assurance) and to seek advice from panellists and other teachers. There are excellent networks established in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and all teachers of the subject are encouraged to contribute to professional conversations in those networks.

Course coverage

In the final phase of syllabus implementation, state panel noted that schools demonstrated good course coverage, providing students opportunities to demonstrate the general objectives of the course. Schools have developed learning experiences that meet the distinct needs of students in the cohort and reflect the schools’ geographical locations.

Panel noted an improvement in the breadth and depth of subject matter offered through the course of study and that schools are addressing previous concerns over balance in the acquired knowledge and understandings of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Schools are reminded that *Local area studies* are an integral part of the course as they allow students to gain “a meaningful and empathetic understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives” (Section 6.1, p. 23). They also provide the context for the *Local area study* assessment task. To this end, “protocols for working with the local community should be observed by both teachers and students” and...
“consultation must take place before students go out into the community to research” (Section 6.4, p. 25).

The purpose and scope of the Local area study and the protocols for consultation outlined in the syllabus in Section 6, pp. 23–27, should guide schools in planning their course of study.

**Quality of assessment**

In general, the state panel found that assessment instruments assessed what they intended to assess. The following observations were made by the state panel in relation to the quality of assessment packages.

- Inconsistencies were noted in the understanding of higher processing requirements in some assessment items, particularly in learning logs. Learning log entries should be more than descriptive and personal and schools need to work towards ensuring there is sufficient analytical depth. Entries should demonstrate students’ increased understanding of Indigenous issues and perspectives and the concept of Indigenous identity in present-day Australian society (syllabus, p. 63).

- Schools need to ensure they provide students opportunities to demonstrate efficient management of the research process and clear communication of findings. This is especially relevant to multimodal presentations. These tasks must be accompanied by students’ supporting documentation of the research process undertaken. Improvements are needed in the standard of “accessing and recording appropriate information” and communicating information through appropriate genres (syllabus, p. 70).

The panel recommends that the requirements of extended responses be stated explicitly and directly to avoid being an obstacle to student achievement.

**Subject support**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies has a state-only panel. This panel is responsible for the moderation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Political Studies and Futures. Panel training occurs yearly at the annual Moderation Conference. In 2009, syllabus implementation workshops will be offered to support the schools preparing to implement the revised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies senior syllabus. Changes in the syllabus, writing a work program and procedures for work program approval will be addressed in these workshops. Teachers are advised to check the QSA website for dates.

Updating the website with support materials will be ongoing. Teachers are invited to provide feedback to the Senior Education Officer (Quality Assurance) on support materials they would value. Any school or individual teacher who would like to receive email updates throughout the year should forward email details to Jackie Dunk at <sao@qsa.qld.edu.au>.

Shane Curley  
State Review Panel Chair

Jackie Dunk  
Senior Education Officer
ACCOUNTING — B12

Syllabus

The Accounting senior syllabus 2003 (amended 2006) enters its fifth year of implementation in 2009. The QSA has appointed a subcommittee, with Trevor Stanley as convenor, to guide the syllabus revision throughout 2009. This revised syllabus will be ready for general implementation in 2010.

The syllabus is available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Business and Commerce > Accounting (2003). All syllabus references in this section refer to this document.

Feedback from districts

Monitoring and verification for Accounting ran smoothly in 2008. Statewide, there are a growing number of schools running composite classes. The state panel commends the work being done by teachers to support students in this situation. Common themes in the advice given to schools from 2008 moderation processes related to:

- the need to comply with QSA policy for late and non-submitted assessment. In some cases, it has been noted that schools are awarding an E–standard to student work which has been submitted late or not submitted. This is not appropriate under QSA policy. In other cases, there is simply a blank space left on a profile with no indication to panel of how issues have been resolved.
- procedures for awarding exit levels of achievement (LOAs) to students completing only two semesters of the course. It is apparent that some schools are determining LOAs for students exiting the course after two semesters by considering only the summative standards awarded. It is, however, QSA procedure that these judgments are made based on “all information available at the time the student exited the course” (Verification procedures for subjects with discontinued students, QSA website > select Assessment > Senior assessment > Forms and procedures). Thus, schools should consider all assessment, formative and summative, from Year 11.
- treatment of incomplete sample folios at verification. It is sometimes the case that one or more of the sample folios submitted at verification may be incomplete. This can be for a range of reasons, and may be across a whole cohort or for individual folios. These folios are regarded atypical and district review panels are required to follow the Moderation procedures for atypical sample folios (QSA website > Assessment > Senior assessment > Forms and procedures). Schools are reminded of the required contents of verification folios, which are found in Section 9.6 of the syllabus (p. 51).

Statewide comparability

The state panel was satisfied that comparability existed generally across the state. A small number of folios were identified, however, where the state panel was unable to find consistent evidence across the folio to support the level of achievement awarded.

It is important when judgments are made regarding global standards for criteria at verification and exit that all of the underlying principles of exit assessment are considered concurrently (refer to Section 9.1, pp. 40–42 of the syllabus). One of these principles, Fullest and latest information, requires that judgments about student achievement at exit from a school course of study be based on both the fullest and latest information available. “Fullest” refers to the information about student achievement gathered across the range of general objectives. “Latest” refers to the information about student achievement gathered from the most recent period in which the general objectives are assessed. In considering this principle, it is essential that the schools consider the pattern of a student’s performance across time in each exit criterion. This means that one weak result in a particular criterion may not detract from the overall standard determined for that criterion if the overall pattern of performance matches the syllabus descriptors for a particular standard. Similarly, one strong result near exit should not be a sole determinant of an overall level, but may confirm an improving pattern of performance. It is inappropriate for schools to determine global standards using mathematical calculations or trade-offs.
Course coverage

Schools are reminded that the syllabus was amended in 2006. It is essential teaching and assessment reflect the specific understandings in the 2006 syllabus amendments. For example:

- syllabus understandings no longer require schools to consider discounts in the following topics:
  - Recording and Controls 2 (RC2) (see syllabus Section 8.2, p. 20)
  - Accounting Package (AP) (see syllabus Section 8.2, p. 32)

- the terminology “Statement of Financial Performance” and “Statement of Financial Position” have been replaced with “Balance Sheet” and “Income Statement”

- extraordinary expenses and revenues, and ledger accounts for inventories no longer exist.

Topics such as managerial accounting and analysis and interpretation of ratios sometimes present issues for schools when they are being assessed with Knowledge, interpretation and evaluation. It is important that the emphasis is placed on written interpretation of figures. Calculation of ratios, for example, is a practical assessment item.

Quality of assessment

In general, schools across the state are producing quality instruments that provide students the opportunity to demonstrate their achievement in all three criteria.

There are still some cases where assessment instruments for Challenging practical applications (CPA) are assessing “usual but complicated” aspects, but do not meet the required CPA guidelines and therefore do not give students the opportunity to demonstrate that they are able to deal with the complex aspects of the topics being assessed, such as accounting packages or cash budgets.

Information will be available on the QSA website regarding the development of quality task-specific criteria sheets for Accounting across all three criteria. It has long been the practice in many schools to use marks to allocate standards in Accounting, however the syllabus requires judgments on the quality of student work to be based on the exit criteria and standards with due consideration to the stage of the course. Schools are reminded that all assessment tasks must be accompanied by task-specific criteria sheets that address this requirement. State panel commends the many schools already using task-specific criteria sheets.

Subject support

Sample criteria sheets will be placed on the QSA website early in 2009. Panel training will be conducted across the state in 2009. The state panel encourages teachers not currently on panel to consider joining a panel, as participation is considered invaluable professional development.

Judith Beausang  Tammy Hope
State Review Panel Chair  Senior Education Officer
AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE — A21

Syllabus

Following a minor revision, the Agricultural Science senior syllabus 2007 was implemented with Year 11 students in 2008. This year also saw the final cohort of Year 12 students exit from courses of study derived from the Agricultural Science senior syllabus 1999. That syllabus and the associated work programs are no longer current.

The syllabus is available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Science > Agricultural Science (2007).

Feedback from districts

All students exited courses in Agricultural Science in 2008 under work programs approved for the 1999 syllabus. All schools have submitted their new work programs developed for the 2007 syllabus for review by the district review panels, with the majority gaining approval by the end of 2008.

The first moderation of the 2007 syllabus will occur at the forthcoming monitoring meetings. 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 (Quality Assurance) is available to assist schools in implementing this advice.

The four district panels in Agricultural Science are to be commended on their efficient operation, highlighted most notably by the fact that there were no unresolved submissions again in 2008.

Statewide comparability

District samples displayed a high degree of comparability of standards across the state. The state panel found evidence in the district samples to support the vast majority of school decisions and panel recommendations.

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 provided opportunities for 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 did not allow students the opportunity to demonstrate the full range of standards in these criteria.

Schools are asked to recognise that the assessable general objectives of the syllabus have multiple aspects and that across the course of study all aspects need to be part of the learning experiences and the assessment package.
Subject support

Sample approved work programs written for the 2007 syllabus are now available on the QSA website. Sample assessment instruments will also be posted on the website during 2009.

Panel training will be conducted in Semester 2 2009, as ongoing support for the important role that panels have in the processes of moderation and assessment and relationships with schools.

Adam Burke
State Review Panel Chair

Bill Wilson
Senior Education Officer
ANCIENT HISTORY — B38

Syllabus

The Ancient History senior syllabus 2004 is in its fourth year of general implementation. In 2009, a minor revision of the syllabus will be conducted as per the planned syllabus revision cycle. Teachers of the subject have been given the opportunity to provide feedback on the 2004 syllabus via a survey available on the QSA website.

The syllabus is available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Social and Environmental Studies > Ancient History (2004). All syllabus references in this section refer to this document.

Feedback from districts

All schools presently offering Ancient History in Queensland have approved work programs. Monitoring and verification were also completed successfully in 2008.

Statewide comparability

Comparability is the process by which state review panels collect information about the extent to which judgments about levels of achievement are comparable across the state. At the comparability meeting in 2008, the state review panel also considered one submission which was unresolved after verification.

It is clear that schools and districts are developing greater consistency in the application of standards across the state. While there remain examples of differences in interpretation, these are less frequent than in previous years. In most cases, state panel was able to find sufficient evidence to match the qualities of work within sample folios to the appropriate syllabus standards descriptors in order to support the judgments made about interim levels of achievements in the sample submissions provided by each district.

The application of the standards as evidence for meeting Criterion 1 and Criterion 2 remains the area of greatest variance. Application of the standards as evidence for meeting Criterion 3 is more consistently applied, with the exception of the sub-criterion “Refer to evaluation processes without disrupting the argument” and the conventions of indirect referencing.

Course coverage

Schools continue to offer diverse and engaging programs of work. It is clear, also, that schools are engaging more fully with the spirit of the 2004 syllabus. While work programs seem clearly implemented, the skill with which schools fully explore the implications of particular themes varies. While the quality of assessment tasks and sample work is generally appropriate, some themes are proving more problematic in their effective implementation than others.

Quality of assessment

The quality of assessment tasks reviewed by the state panel continues to improve, demonstrating a growing understanding across the state of the differing requirements and conditions of each of the four categories of assessment. The following advice may be useful to schools in order to maximise student success:

- Schools continue to experience difficulty in developing some of the skills required of Criterion 1. In particular, greater guidance is required in many cases to ensure that research evidence demonstrates a dynamic, evolving process of thinking and changes to thinking. Various aspects must be applied in strategic ways at particular points for particular purposes, and may need to be revisited again at later points as thinking evolves. This is what is meant by “interrelationships” in relation to the aspects of inquiry in this sub-criterion (see syllabus, p.52).
Schools are advised to guide students in using the aspects of inquiry as a focus of documentation of “valid choices about direction or emphasis” (see syllabus, p. 62). Critical reflections explore how a student’s thinking evolves as new evidence is evaluated and new questions are faced. Critical reflections should evaluate the nature of the evidence confronted, how this affects their developing argument and future directions for research.

While schools are commended for providing support or scaffolding mechanisms to students, it is vital that they also ensure students know how to use this wisely, and that more able students are actively encouraged to implement strategies that best reflect their learning needs and the needs of their inquiry.

Greater success in demonstrating the full range of indicators for Criterion 2 might be achieved with specific attention to the design of Category 4 tasks with questions explicitly based on the sub-criteria. Developing Category 4 tasks which explicitly require students to demonstrate particular sub-criteria, or aspects of these sub-criteria, will ensure students have the opportunity to attempt such evaluation. Two sub-criteria in particular might form the basis of questions on a Category 4 task: “Perceptively interpret values and motives and identify perspectives, while acknowledging the time period and context of the production of a source” and “evaluates the relevance, representativeness, likely accuracy and likely reliability of sources” (syllabus, p. 62), although all sub-criteria might be explicitly assessed.

All aspects of Criterion 2 must be assessed across each year, with students given several opportunities to demonstrate various skills.

Critical evaluation of sources needs to be integrated into the body of the finished product (in all categories of assessment) to satisfy the requirements of Criterion 2 and Criterion 3 “refer to evaluation processes without disrupting the argument” (syllabus, p. 62). While the use of annotated bibliographies and/or endnotes may supplement this, it does not replace the requirement to discuss problematic issues of evidence as an integral part of an argument.

Where large numbers of sources are provided in examinations, students must be provided with adequate perusal time to read both the sources and the task carefully. Adequate contextualising information for sources should be provided if students are to effectively evaluate these.

Tasks should clearly indicate which sources are seen and which are genuinely unseen — that is, appearing on the exam paper without prior notice.

To ensure student success in Criterion 3, it is important that students are explicitly taught the conventions of the essay genre prior to Category 1 tasks, and that these conventions are accurately evaluated.

It is also necessary where students select alternative genres for submission that schools explicitly teach the conventions of those genres, and evaluate their application accurately.

While the development of task-specific criteria matrices are required, schools are reminded that it is not appropriate to alter, delete or add sub-criterion to the standards matrix for specific tasks when so doing diminishes or changes the intent of the standard. Criteria must also be accurately named using the 2004 syllabus terminology. Tick boxes cannot replace a complete standards descriptors matrix.

Schools are reminded that Year 12 Category 2 and 3 tasks should include a rationale acknowledging the origins of the student’s research focus or question devised.

Student achievement in both High Achievement (HA) and Very High Achievement (VHA) levels is dependent upon the capacity to produce a good historical argument. Schools should not confuse fluency of expression with a good argument that explores concepts of change and continuity over time and refers to evaluation processes without disrupting the argument. Narrative descriptions, no matter how skilfully conveyed, do not represent HA or VHA standards.

Subject support

Subject workshops are planned for 2010 after the 2009 minor revision of the syllabus.

Sue Burvil-Shaw
State Review Panel Chair

Mary-Anne Vale
Senior Education Officer
BIOLOGY — A06

Syllabus

The Biology senior syllabus 2004 is in its fourth year of implementation. In 2008, the periodic revision of the syllabus also commenced with the formation of the subcommittee, whose work will continue in 2009.

The syllabus and support materials are available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Science > Biology (2004). All syllabus references in this section refer to this document.

Teachers of Biology had the opportunity to contribute to the syllabus revision through a survey on the website. They are encouraged to provide feedback on syllabus drafts throughout 2009.

Feedback from districts

Being the fourth year of syllabus implementation, there have been very few work program approvals or amendments.

Monitoring this year indicated that there was a much better understanding of syllabus requirements, assessment task design and criteria sheets. However, some criteria sheets are still poorly aligned with syllabus exit statements. In particular, decisions about the quality of student work in Biology should not be based on additional criteria that are not linked to exit criteria (such as handing in on time, presentation).

Verification meetings this year ran smoothly and panels were able locate evidence in order to reach agreement with the vast majority of schools. A higher than usual number of submissions were not-agreed-to on the day, however most of these were resolved during negotiations between district review panel chairs and schools.

The majority of not agreed-to submissions were linked to lack of evidence of higher-order thinking in student work. Assessment tasks must give students the opportunity to demonstrate these higher-order processes, which are clearly described in the syllabus exit standards. Without this evidence, panels may be unable to support decisions at the highest levels of achievement.

Statewide comparability

The state panel found evidence in the district samples to support the vast majority of school decisions and panel recommendations. There was some lack of comparability in the LA level of achievement due to the incorrect application of QSA policy on late and non-submission of student assessment (QSA 2005, Moderation processes for senior certification, p. 6, QSA, Brisbane, accessed 29 Jan 2007, <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> (select Assessment > Senior assessment > Forms and procedures > scroll to Atypical sample folios.

It was noted that some students are conducting investigations on vertebrates that may contravene the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001. Schools should carefully monitor student-designed investigations to ensure that the school is able to meet its responsibilities under the Act (syllabus, Section 6.5.3).

Course coverage

While the majority of schools include evidence of field work in their verification folios, some of this work did not include “an analysis of field work primary data” as required by the syllabus. Evidence of the analysis of primary field data must be evident in the verification folio (syllabus, Section 7.4).

Great care needs to be taken with the design of assessment tasks that are completed after verification. Even though the final unit of work may be quite short, the assessment associated with it must still address syllabus requirements. If these tasks require students to prepare and present charts, orals or PowerPoint presentations then there must be accompanying documentation to provide evidence of how criteria have
been met and how at least two of the general objectives have been covered. Without this evidence, it is very difficult to support post-verification changes to agreed-to distributions of levels of achievement.

**Quality of assessment**

It was pleasing to see a wide range of good-quality tasks being developed by some schools.

Aspects of tasks that assess *Evaluating biological issues* (EBI) must contain a clear biological issue and need to be structured so that students know what is expected of them when responding. The issues chosen and their assessment should be aligned with deliberate and explicit learning experiences for the unit.

Some confusion exists about the meaning of the term “complexity” in assessment tasks. It does not mean the ability to recall complicated subject matter, as recalling information is not a higher-order process. Tasks need to give students the opportunity to do things such as make links between related concepts, apply knowledge, critically analyse results, and evaluate information. Students need to be able to demonstrate these skills across all three general objectives and in a range of assessment situations.

The misuse of marks in written tasks continues to cause concern for state panel. Judgments about the quality of student work must be made using task-specific standards that are derived from and consistent with the syllabus exit standards, not the accumulation of marks. For example, if a student achieves 85% on a set of “recall and describe” type questions, this is not evidence of A–standard work because “recalling and describing” are lower-level processes that align more with C–standard descriptors. Many schools have developed very effective ways of determining standards from written tasks.

**Subject support**

Following the Moderation Conference this year, Advice for Teachers and Sample assessment items and instruments were added to the QSA website. Sample assessment items are annotated and include EBI items for written tasks, extended-response tasks and extended experimental investigations. Additional sample assessment instruments will be annotated and added to the website in 2009. The Advices for Teachers related to:

- the importance of criteria and standards
- strategies for developing instrument-specific criteria and standards
- one interpretation of the terms “complex” and “challenging”
- a strategy for developing assessment items address the EBI general objectives.

In 2008, we also conducted Year 4 panel training which focused on verification and the processes of finding evidence in student work to support school judgments.

Thanks must go to the very large number of people who have worked very hard and very professionally to deliver high quality Biology programs to students. The state review panel acknowledges and appreciates this effort.

Keith Prideaux
State Review Panel Chair

Rebecca Ryan
Senior Education Officer
BUSINESS COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGIES — B28

Syllabus

The Business Communication and Technologies (BCT) senior syllabus 2002 is in the sixth year of general implementation. In 2008, the syllabus underwent a periodic revision and is to be implemented with Year 11 cohorts in 2009. The 2008 syllabus reflects the new BSB07 Business Services Training Package.

The syllabus is available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Business and Commerce > Business Communication and Technologies (2002). All syllabus references in this section refer to this document.

Feedback from districts

District review panel feedback indicates that the majority of schools are effectively implementing the current syllabus.

Statewide comparability

In 2008, the state review panel found comparability across the levels of achievement for all districts. The state review panel also reviewed three submissions that were unresolved after verification.

Quality of assessment

There was a variety of innovative assessment instruments presented at the moderation meetings across the districts. It was noted that word length was not included on task sheets as a guide for student responses.

Assessment instruments should allow students to demonstrate understanding as well as knowledge, providing a balance of Knowledge & understanding over the course of study and increasing in complexity. Development of task-specific criteria sheets is encouraged and should be used to provide feedback to students on the standards awarded. Assessment of this criterion must take into account students’ use of the conventions of communication. Consideration of these conventions is designed to substantiate the awarding of a standard. Students also need to be provided with the opportunity to complete an extended written response (minimum 400 words) under supervised test conditions in the Knowledge & understanding criterion for the verification folio (syllabus Section 8.5, p. 43; Section 8.8, p. 48).

Schools are advised to ensure they provide opportunities for students to meet all elements of the exit standards in their assessment package, particular the Reasoning processes criterion, where some difficulties have been detected. In this criterion, the awarding of an A–standard to a student response requires evidence of the ability to analyse in detail (syllabus Section 8.6, p. 46). Schools are encouraged to continue their use of task-specific criteria sheets.

Schools are reminded that the significant aspects of their course of study will be determined by the context of the school and the needs of the student cohort and be reflected in assessment. The chosen learning experiences should be appropriate to the location of the school, the local environment and the resources available. The significant aspects must be consistent with the general objectives of the syllabus and complement the developmental nature of learning in the course over two years.

Subject support

Work program requirements for the revised syllabus have been posted on the QSA website. In early 2009, there will also be syllabus orientation workshops and panel training offered across the state.

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

Syllabus

The increase in students undertaking courses of study in Business Organisation & Management clearly illustrates the interest and demand that exists for the subject. In 2008, the last cohort of students exited from the course of study developed under the Business Organisation & Management senior syllabus 1998 (BOM 1998).

The Year 11 students in 2008 commenced courses of study developed under the revised Business Organisation & Management senior syllabus 2007 (BOM 2007). The 2007 syllabus now makes the business plan a verification folio requirement, all panels look forward to reviewing these assessment pieces in 2009. The business plan provides a real-life experience and demonstrates to the student the need to plan effectively prior to undertaking a business venture. The criteria of Propositional knowledge has been replaced with Knowledge and understanding. Greater emphasis is now placed on the notion of understanding.

The syllabuses are available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Business and Commerce > Business Organisation & Management (1998) or Business Organisation & Management (2007). All syllabus references in this section refer to these two documents.

Feedback from districts

The growth in Business Organisation & Management has lead to a new district panel being established in Far North Queensland.

Monitoring was generally successful in all districts with the most common advice relating to the need to ensure that adequate opportunities are provided for students to demonstrate their level of achievement in comparison to all elements of the syllabus standards.

Verification meetings ran smoothly with a lot of hard work done by panels to reach agreement with the majority of schools on the day. There were no unresolved submissions reviewed at state panel in 2008. Schools wishing to consult on changes to agreed-to distribution of levels of achievement should ensure that the Fax Form R7 is accompanied by detailed evidence. This detailed evidence may constitute a copy of the student profile, the Form R6, and latest assessment item. The panel chair uses this information in order to locate evidence to approve the school’s R7 proposal.

At both monitoring and verification, schools benefited from the detailed feedback, thanks to the expertise of the panellists.

Statewide comparability

The state panel found evidence to support school decisions and panel recommendations regarding Levels of Achievement. The misuse of marks in the allocation of standards, particularly in Propositional knowledge, continues to cause concern for state panel. Judgments about the quality of the student work must be made using task-specific criteria sheets that are derived from, and consistent with, the syllabus exit standards, not the accumulation of marks. Each assessment item must be accompanied by a task-specific criteria sheet that provides evidence of how students meet standards associated with assessment criteria.

Please note that under the BOM 2007 syllabus, it is a verification requirement that each assessment item must be accompanied by such a task-specific criteria sheet that provides evidence of how students meet standards associated with assessment criteria.

Course coverage

Course coverage continues to be achieved effectively.
Quality of assessment

The variety of assessment instruments continues to be a major strength in Business Organisation & Management. Forming partnerships with business, community and industry is a common thread coming out of assessment items, for example, business mentoring and site visits.

Task-specific criteria sheets continue to provide scaffolding and feedback to students. Students are able to revisit these criteria to view the requirements associated with a set standard.

Greater emphasis needs to be placed on enabling criteria for Reflection processes and Action skills. There needs to be a balance across assessment instruments so that a variety of opportunities within the enabling criteria can be evidenced (see BOM 1998, pp. 39–49; BOM 2007, pp. 24–27.)

The business plan continues to be a major piece of assessment in Year 12, and may be completed either as an individual or a group task. Teachers need to be aware that where the business plan is assessed within a group environment, there should be some way in which each student’s achievement can be assessed individually and that evidence should clearly differentiate between group members. Possible strategies include individual reflective essays or journals; peer assessment; teacher observation check lists or individual critical incident reports.

It has been pleasing to note the improvement in the quality of the Reflective learning journals across the state. This may have occurred as a result of the increased scaffolding provided by the teachers.

Subject support

It is anticipated that sample assessment items will be placed on the QSA website during 2009. Panel training will also be conducted around the state in 2009. The state panel encourages teachers not currently on panel to consider joining, as participation provides invaluable professional development and networking opportunities, particularly in the context of implementing the revised syllabus.

Brad Greene  Tammy Hope
State Review Panel Chair  Senior Education Officer
**CHEMISTRY — A04**

**Syllabus**

The Chemistry senior syllabus 1995 is in its thirteenth year of implementation. The 2009 Year 12 cohort will be the last to exit from courses developed under this syllabus. All schools are required to implement the Chemistry senior syllabus 2007 with their Year 11 cohort of 2009.

Chemistry syllabuses are available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Science > Chemistry (1995) and Chemistry (2007). All syllabus references in this section refer to these two documents.

**Feedback from districts**

There have been no new Chemistry 1995 work programs submitted for approval, as all new schools now implement the Chemistry senior syllabus 2007. Some schools have submitted amendments to existing approved work programs. Syllabus changes affect the range and balance of assessment instruments, coverage of the general objectives or the assessment plan. Schools are also reminded that irrespective of the status of any amendments, the school’s obligation is to satisfy the requirements of the syllabus.

Following monitoring and verification in 2008, district review panels found that school submissions generally conformed to syllabus standards. The most common advice related to inadequate coverage of the Complex reasoning processes (CRP) criterion and Part A syllabus topics.

Work programs indicate that most of the summative CRP assessment occurs in Semesters 3 and 4, but students need opportunities to develop and demonstrate CRP throughout the course. Although most schools indicate some formative CRP in Year 11, items may be limited and limiting in their treatment of this criterion. This denies students adequate preparation for the more demanding requirements of CRP assessment in Year 12.

Additionally, assessment items identified as CRP continue to consist of “closed” and algorithmic application of learned formulae and equations that do not represent the full set of complex reasoning processes described in the syllabus. The syllabus requires specific attention to Part A, which involves real-life contextual chemistry, and is a valuable learning bridge to the new 2007 syllabus. Although some student-centred research and assignments might be an appropriate way of meeting this syllabus requirement, formal tests items are generally lacking in this area. This may indicate the need for more explicit teaching of Part A topics, as well as more varied assessment opportunities.

At verification, all submissions were resolved at the district level. The role of district panels at verification is to search for evidence to support school judgments about the relative achievement of students and provide advice on the quality of a school’s decision making with respect to the sample folio. This task is assisted when schools provide criteria schema that indicate how standards of students’ responses are to be judged. This not only makes the processes of moderation transparent and accountable, but provides specific feedback for school moderators.

**Statewide comparability**

Generally, the state panel found evidence in the district samples to support the vast majority of school decisions and panel recommendations. Schools need to consider all the Principles of Assessment concurrently, including fullest and latest information, when assigning LOAs for verification. A number of folios were found by state panel to be a level of achievement lower than that assigned by the school because of this issue.

There were only a small number of threshold folios that caused some discussion. The one issue which continues to generate discussion is the breadth and depth of the assessment of the CRP objectives. All students must be given opportunities to display their “higher-order thinking skills” in the assessment of this general objective.
A new issue that has become apparent recently is the misclassification of SP questions. Some are actually K or simple CRP. Again schools are encouraged to look carefully at the general objectives of the syllabus when designing their assessment items. A praiseworthy aspect of the district samples was the number of schools that are using more open-ended, student-centred assessment instruments.

Schools should ensure that their submissions to the panels are comprised of the necessary folios wherever possible. In a number of district samples, the school submissions contain folios that were not threshold samples. If sample folios exist, even where they may be atypical, they should be submitted or their absence explained in a covering note.

It is also apparent that some schools are determining LOAs for students exiting the course after 1 or 2 semesters by considering only the summative assessment completed. It is, however, QSA procedure that judgments about LOA for these students be made based on “all information available at the time the student exited the course” (Verification procedures for subjects with discontinued students). Thus schools should consider all assessment, formative and summative, from Year 11.

Course coverage

It is important for schools still implementing the 1995 syllabus to ensure that they are familiar with the syllabus document. This document promotes a variety of learning experiences including Part A (contextual) and a variety of assessment opportunities to cover the full range of general objectives (pp. 4–7 of the syllabus). Schools should heed the advice provided by district panels at monitoring in order to ensure that syllabus requirements are addressed appropriately by verification. Greater scaffolding of early Year 11 tasks, with a significant decrease in leading or multi-part questions in Year 12, will also ensure students are given the opportunity to practice open-ended questions.

Quality of assessment

District panels look for evidence to substantiate the school’s judgments and offer advice to schools on the application of syllabus standards. The school has a vital role to play in ensuring that the professional advice given by the panel is given due consideration and acted upon for the benefit of future cohorts of students. The Senior Education Officer is a valuable resource for schools to access to assist the school in addressing the panel’s advice to the school.

There is a particular need for students to have access to the criteria by which assessment tasks are to be judged. Many schools are still using unexplained ‘marks’. Additionally, small numbers of ‘marks’ are still being used as a basis for ‘percentages’ that may disguise students’ true achievements. A one-mark-out-of-5 (20%) is not the same as 10-marks-out-of-50 (20%).

Subject support

Support was available from the SEO via phone, email, fax and the website.

The work of all review panels is to be commended and appreciated. Their tireless work ensures that schools are encouraged to think creatively when setting assessment tasks and to use task-specific criteria and standards sheets when making judgments. The state review panel thanks all of the teachers who participate on various panels and subcommittees for their ongoing commitment to the system of externally-moderated school-based assessment. Your 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.

Ian P. Buchan Susan Scheiwe
State Review Panel Chair Senior Education Officer
In 2008, the final cohort of students exited from courses of study developed under the Chemistry extended trial-pilot senior syllabus 2004. The extended trial-pilot syllabus and associated work programs are no longer current. All extended trial-pilot schools were required to implement the Chemistry senior syllabus 2007 with the Year 11 cohort in 2008. Many schools who had not previously been involved in the 2004 ETP also took up the opportunity to implement the 2007 syllabus with their Year 11 cohorts this year.

In 2009, all schools who have not already done so will be required to commence courses of study developed under the Chemistry senior syllabus 2007 with their Year 11 cohort.

Chemistry syllabuses are available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Science > Chemistry (2004 extended trial-pilot) or Chemistry (2007).

Feedback from districts

It was pleasing to see the many strengths of the submissions at verification. Of particular note were:
- the contextualisation of assessment
- the use of visual profiles
- the use of stages and/or phases to build quality assessment tasks
- the production of creative assessment tasks that allow students to demonstrate the interrelationships of a range of concepts within a context, and provide a variety of response opportunities
- tasks which, as a package, show good representation of the syllabus intent
- teachers’ successful and confident holistic judgments of student’s responses to tasks.

Statewide comparability

The folios reviewed by the state review panel at comparability supported the decisions made by the schools and the district review panels. The evidence in student work matched the exit criteria and standards as described in the syllabus.

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’s scripts. These annotations provide invaluable feedback to students and also aid clarity in sample folios.

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 was seen in the district samples through the engagement of students in substantial, meaningful tasks that can capture the depth, relationships and relevance of the whole experience.

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.
Quality of assessment

During the extended trial-pilot, teachers have developed good understandings of the syllabus and its language, and about making holistic judgments. Overall, schools are developing appropriate assessment tasks. Where concerns exist, they relate to the need to:

- provide a greater range of opportunities for students to analyse, synthesise and/or evaluate information, and allow clear opportunities for the students to demonstrate the complete investigative process;
- develop extended response tasks, that extend beyond information-gathering or cut-and-paste exercises and that require analysis and decision-making processes with support via logical arguments. The collection of information 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;
- ensure that criteria and standards sheets are both task-specific and derived from and consistent with the syllabus exit standards, with due consideration to the stage of the course. Descriptors should use syllabus language combined with task-specific language to detail the features of both successful responses and partially successful responses for a particular task in qualitative terms. They need to describe what the student knows and can do — not what the student does not know or cannot do — in language which is accessible to and has been explained to the student.

Subject support

In 2008, the QSA presented workshops to support the implementation of the Chemistry senior syllabus 2007. The first workshop was a repeat of the syllabus orientation workshop first offered in 2007. This repeat workshop allowed schools preparing work programs for 2009 to develop their understandings of the syllabus.

The second workshop was for schools implementing the revised syllabus in 2008 and focused on designing assessment, with sample supervised assessment items, extended experimental investigations and extended response tasks examined. This workshop is being repeated in Semester 1, 2009 (details are available on the QSA website, <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> Learning P-12 > Professional development and events > Workshops > Years 11–12 > Chemistry).

Later in 2009, the final workshop in the series will be offered, focusing on different approaches to developing supervised assessment instruments, as well as strategies for making judgments on folios of student work and awarding levels of achievement.

New support material has been added to the QSA website throughout 2008, including:

- sample work programs
- seven sample assessment tasks
- Advice for teachers documents, covering:
  - the importance of criteria and standards
  - strategies for developing instrument-specific criteria and standards
  - an interpretation of the terms “complex” and “challenging”.

Additional sample assessment instruments will be annotated and added to the website in 2009.

The work of all review panels is to be commended and appreciated. Their tireless work ensures that schools are encouraged to think creatively when setting assessment tasks and to use standards schema and criteria sheets when making judgments. The state review panel thanks all of the teachers who participate on various panels and subcommittees for their ongoing commitment to the system of externally-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.

Peter Moulds
State Review Panel Chair

Susan Scheiwe
Senior Education Officer
The revised Chinese senior syllabus 2008 will be implemented with the Year 11 cohort for the first time in 2009. Review panellists have submitted their work programs for approval, and the deadline for all schools is Term 1, 2009.

Chinese syllabus and support materials, including new work program requirements, are available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Languages > Chinese (2001) or Chinese (2008).

Changes to the syllabus include:
• new dimensions of the exit criteria that will require learning experiences that develop and demonstrate the ability to reason and respond (Comprehension), and create and respond (Conveying meaning), while knowing and understanding/using language in communicative contexts
• a reduction in the minimum amount of assessment required to:
  – two assessments per skill in Year 11
  – two assessments per skill before verification in Year 12.

Where there is a composite class, in 2009 Year 11 students must follow the new work program and be assessed against the standards in the 2008 syllabus, while Year 12 students must be assessed using the 2001 syllabus criteria and standards.

In 2008, 494 Year 12 students exited from 54 schools having studied Chinese. Of these, 47 students in 9 schools studied under a shared campus arrangement.

Feedback from districts
Moderation proceeded smoothly in 2008 with few issues arising at monitoring and all schools achieving agreement to their proposed levels of achievement and relative achievement of sample folios by the end of verification.

Work program approval for the new syllabus is progressing well. Generally, work programs are meeting requirements, however, there have been some issues, including:
• the range of topics in course overviews not allowing for sufficiently complex language features and functions to be demonstrated
• assessment plans not providing sufficient information about the task, topic, text type and/or technique.

Statewide comparability
Comparability is the process by which state review panels collect information about the extent to which judgments about levels of achievement are comparable across the state. The state panel was able to find evidence that there was comparability of judgments about levels of achievement in the sample submissions across the state.

Course coverage
As the syllabus is in the final part of the cycle of revision, assessment issues tend to be similar from year to year. Some of these issues include:
• a lack of clarity about the minimum requirements for writing. Students need write a minimum of 350 characters at least once prior to exit
• increasing complexity over the two-year course of study. Students should demonstrate, through more complex tasks, and in their own spoken and written texts, an understanding and use of language that matches exit standards descriptors and meets syllabus requirements
• assessment that allows all students in a cohort to be matched to the syllabus standards. Where first-language (L1) speakers are studying with second-language (L2) learners, all student work should be judged using the L2 syllabus exit standards descriptors and assessment instruments should be designed to allow both groups opportunities to demonstrate all aspects of the criterion.

• syllabus requirements for the use of simplified Chinese characters. The use of traditional characters would be judged using standards descriptors about range and accuracy of characters.

Quality of assessment

Quality assessment should be designed to allow students opportunities to demonstrate the criteria and standards. Key areas of concern identified through moderation processes include:

• spontaneous language use — tasks need to allow students to use language developed in rehearsed and/or familiar situations, and in unrehearsed and unfamiliar situations and contexts

• opportunities to demonstrate all aspects of the criterion in Listening and Reading assessment — higher-order thinking skills (deduction and appreciation) should be assessed on all tasks and require, for example, that students “collect, analyse, and organise information in order to make decisions” and, “evaluate … information” (2001 syllabus, Section 3, p. 6) and “infer the speaker’s intentions and attitudes” (2001 syllabus, Section 8.8, p. 49).

When implementing the 2008 syllabus for the first time, quality assessment design will ensure that sufficient opportunities are given to students when completing two assessments per skill in Year 11 and prior to verification in Year 12. A range of topics and text types must be covered, and reduced assessment requirements will mean careful planning is required. The requirement for an assessment plan in school work programs is intended as an appropriate response to this concern.

Subject support

The QSA conducted syllabus orientation workshops and review panel training across the state in 2008. Online syllabus support materials have also been developed and can be found on the QSA website.

Syllabus orientation workshops were presented by the Teaching and Learning Division of the QSA and held in all districts in Semester 1. These workshops provided information about the new syllabus and work programs requirements.

Review panel training was held in the second semester across three districts, with the focus being work program approval. Review processes were modelled through the review of a work program and the completion of the review notes. Panellists then reviewed each other’s programs and provided feedback.

Next year will be the first year for the implementation of the syllabus with Year 11 students. To support schools through this, there will be information about assessment practices on the QSA website in the form of an assessment-design toolkit.

The state panel would like to recognise the quality outcomes achieved by teachers of Chinese in Queensland and, in particular, the contributions of those teachers to promote, support and sustain the studying of Chinese in their schools. The state panel also recognises the contributions of all teachers involved in moderation processes. Panellists, state and district, and district panel chairs maintain the system of externally-moderated, school-based assessment, and their contributions enrich the practice of their colleagues and the outcomes of students across the state.

Winnie Edwards-Davis  Terry McPherson
State Review Panel Chair  Senior Education Officer
DANCE — B19

Syllabus

In 2008, the third cohort of students exited under the Dance senior syllabus 2004. Once again, district review panel chairs and the state review panel would like to congratulate schools on their continuing successful implementation of the syllabus.

In 2009, the Dance syllabus subcommittee will commence minor revision of the syllabus, informed by the survey responses received from Dance teachers around the state.

The syllabus is available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Arts > Dance (2004).

Feedback from districts

There was a high level of consistency of teacher judgments evidenced in district review submissions at both monitoring and verification.

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

Please ensure that video documentation samples are easily navigable on generic hardware devices.

Please also ensure that folio omissions are explained in an accompanying letter. Please refer to the Moderation procedures for atypical sample folios (QSA website > Assessment > Senior Assessment > Forms and procedures).

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 a variety of good student responses in the district samples.

To ensure statewide comparability, teachers need to apply standards in an on-balance way. To do this, teachers should take the entire work into consideration and apply the standard that best fits the whole response.

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

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. While the non-movement components of dance can convey a student’s choreographic intent, teachers should ensure that students also explore, select and manipulate movement components and skills to convey the intent. There were examples of students using relevant music and costumes, however the movement vocabulary did not support the choreographic intent.

The purpose of choreographic documentation is to inform the judgments being made about student achievement. This documentation should not exceed 300 words, and should be one succinct statement of
choreographic intent. Journals and choreographic folios are not required for verification, but may be used as learning experiences.

Opportunities should be given to allow students, particularly in Year 12, to move towards developing their own personal style of choreography, rather than merely replicating existing choreographic styles.

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, parameters or intent for panellists in review folios.

Please refer to Section 8.6.2 of the syllabus (p. 45) for video requirements for verification and documentation. The samples should be of the students whose folios are in the submission. 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. Teachers should include one piece of video evidence of the depth of performance challenge in the other performance task in their verification folio documentation. Please refer to syllabus Section 8.6, pp. 44–45.

While there is no requirement for students to meet a prescribed minimum standard of technique in Performance, the selection of danceworks should allow students to demonstrate the criterion, and be within their technique. For example, very simple danceworks may not allow students to demonstrate the range of dance components and skills or portray stylistic or expressive aspects, whereas highly complex danceworks could be beyond the student’s technique. Teachers should also ensure that the technical demands do not prevent students from engaging cognitively, physically and emotionally with the danceworks. Student-devised tasks assessed in Performance should be monitored by teachers to ensure that students are able to demonstrate the criterion and standards.

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 p. 40. As evaluation is an important aspect of the criterion and standards for Appreciation, teachers are encouraged to ensure that questions should be suitably challenging to allow students to demonstrate the standards. Importantly, teachers should ensure that irrespective of the amount of evaluation, it is the quality of that evaluation that forms the basis of decisions on student standards. For further advice regarding Appreciation tasks, please refer to the QSA website > Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Arts > Dance (2004) > Advice for teachers.

When selecting sections of danceworks for Appreciation tasks, teachers are encouraged to consider the extent to which that excerpt allows students to respond in depth. For example, highly complex danceworks, which include complex relationships between dance components and skills, may elicit deeper responses if studied across a shorter segment. In longer danceworks, students may not be able to discern and discuss the complex relationships in great depth, and the emphasis here may be on a few dance components and skills.

One aspect of communicating ideas about dance includes using dance-specific terminology to describe and evaluate danceworks. The syllabus highlights the need for students to “use specialist terminology which refers to the components of dance” (Section 7.1, p. 33). These dance components are identified clearly on p. 6, and teachers should ensure that students become familiar with and use this terminology in Choreography, Performance and Appreciation.

When working in Indigenous dance styles and genres, teachers are encouraged to consult the QSA Indigenous perspectives resources, available on the QSA website > Learning P-12 > Indigenous perspectives.

**Subject support**

Support materials for Dance are now available on the QSA website, including Year 11 and 12 annotated sample tasks for Choreography, Performance and Appreciation.

Sue Fox  
State Review Panel Chair  
Andrew Reid  
Senior Education Officer
**Drama — B22**

**Syllabus**

In 2008, the final cohort of Year 12 students using the Drama senior syllabus 2001 completed their studies. The Drama senior syllabus 2007 is in its first year of implementation and 2009 will see the first monitoring and verification meetings for this syllabus.

The Drama syllabuses are available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Arts > Drama (2001) or Drama (2007).

**Feedback from districts**

Approval of new work programs for the 2007 syllabus is progressing. District review panel chairs thank schools for their patience and willingness to meet the challenges of the new syllabus. The most common reasons for non-approval of work programs has related to:

- the lack of learning experiences in the unit features that would be necessary for suggested assessment, such as writing and oral skills
- an imbalance of tasks across the three objectives in Year 11
- insufficient learning across the range of skills of performance in the two-year course. Voice skills were often missing.

At verification, panel chairs noted incomplete folios and many cases where the standard of the work in the folders did not support the levels of achievement (LOA) awarded. In some, the samples did not meet syllabus requirements for verification, such as the number and balance of tasks. We remind schools that for the 2007 syllabus, for example, only one individual practical task is allowed before verification.

There were instances where appropriate documentation was not included for practical tasks, such as annotated scripts (see syllabus, p. 36) and that videos/DVDs were missing, badly labelled or could not be viewed on a standard DVD player.

Some district chairs are concerned that the assessment materials lack complexity, especially scripts for Presenting tasks. While the syllabus does not have a list of suggested scripts, the sample units and overviews, and even the possible learning activities and experiences for Forming, Presenting and Responding in the syllabus could be a helpful guide.

**Statewide comparability**

There was a high degree of comparability across districts regarding the application of standards and LOA decisions.

Schools should note that, in order to have an LOA verified, a sample of work from that LOA needs to be included in the verification submission — even if that means the folio may be that of a student who has exited the course with fewer than four semesters. In some cases, Limited Achievement (LA) or Very Limited Achievement (VLA) sample folios were not included in the submission even though there was a student exiting with that LOA.

When making LOA decisions it is important to match the folio of student work with the exit standards rather than making decisions based on the profile.

There are still some instances of students being given Es for non-submission of assessment. We remind schools that D and E are standards for which there are exit statements that reflect what you would typically find in work at that level where a student has made a fair attempt. For example, in Responding the student work has the following characteristics: “conveys an opinion; some description of dramatic action; sporadic use of some drama terminology” (syllabus, p. 35). We refer schools to the Student late and non-submission policy statement (QSA 2009, accessed 20 Feb 2009, <www.qsa.qld.edu.au>) (select Assessment > Senior assessment > Special provisions).
Course coverage

Although this was the last cohort studying under the 2001 syllabus, already some schools were looking towards the new syllabus and finding effective engagement between heritage and contemporary drama, especially in student-devised work. Equally noteworthy are the schools that chose political theatre practitioners other than Brecht and explored a range of comic drama beyond commedia dell’arte.

Quality of assessment

Teachers should review the language of the exit standards and make sure they create tasks that allow students to meet those descriptors. For example, in Responding tasks in Year 12, crafting a question with little scaffolding could allow students to demonstrate their own insight, remembering that Responding tasks in Drama always require students to analyse and evaluate dramatic action in either performance or script. Straight research questions are never appropriate. In this objective, plagiarism and referencing should be addressed.

In the Forming objective, there were examples from schools that reflect industry format and standards in scriptwriting, auditions and design folios.

In Presenting, the video evidence suggests that physical acting skills are privileged in teaching and learning over vocal skills.

Subject support

In 2009, the syllabus will be in its second year of implementation and panel training will occur around the state in Term 3 in preparation for verification.

It is also anticipated that support material, including annotated sample assessments, will be added to the QSA website during 2009.

Further support is available through the Senior Education Officer (Quality Assurance).

Shay Ryan Shauna Bouel
Acting State Review Panel Chair Senior Education Officer
**Earth Science — A07**

**Syllabus**

The Earth Science senior syllabus 2000 is in its eighth year of implementation. During 2009, the syllabus will undergo a periodic revision, with implementation planned for 2011. QSA has convened a subcommittee to work on this revision. Teachers of Earth Science had the opportunity to contribute via a survey, and they are encouraged to provide feedback on syllabus drafts throughout 2009.

The syllabus, teacher survey and other support materials are available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Science > Earth Science (2007).

**Feedback from state**

All schools currently offering Earth Science have an approved work program. For some schools, however, an accumulation of minor changes to assessment tasks and scheduling has meant that the overall assessment package no longer reflects the plan in the approved work program. It is recommended that all schools confirm their implemented assessment plan is consistent with the work program and, if needed, submit an amendment.

Monitoring was generally successful. The most common advice related to ensuring adequate opportunities are provided for students to demonstrate the level of their achievement in comparison to all elements of the exit standards (see syllabus Table 8.1, pp. 31–33).

Verification demonstrated that most schools endeavoured to implement panel’s monitoring advice. The most significant concerns — limited to only a few schools — related to the assessment package not addressing the mandatory requirements of the syllabus (see syllabus p. 27).

**Course coverage**

Subject matter coverage and implementation of electives continues to be achieved consistently. Despite the age of the syllabus, the major topics and electives continue to be relevant, while also allowing for the integration of emerging issues in the subject area. A recent meeting co-hosted by the QSA and the Queensland Resource Council provided industry representatives with an opportunity to discuss industry links. Their comments about the syllabus were positive and indicated that the major topics provided a broad foundation for people seeking employment in the resource industries.

**Quality of assessment**

Generally, task design and criteria are consistent with the syllabus. Standards schemas were typically consistent with the exit standards, although it is recommended that schools continue to endeavour to make these task-specific.

Analysis of submissions indicated that the following criteria aspects need to be taught and assessed in a more explicit fashion (see syllabus Table 8.1, p. 31):

- for the criterion *Knowledge, conceptual understanding and application*, the aspects:
  - recognises and explains relationships amongst straightforward and complex concepts, comparing and contrasting them where appropriate
  - successfully applies knowledge and concepts in most situations, including many that are novel and/or complex
- for the criterion *Working scientifically*, the aspects:
  - recognises and identifies investigation questions for a range of problems including those that are novel and/or complex
  - plans a range of scientific investigations of problems including many with elements of novelty and/or complexity.
Subject support

Subject support material has been identified and will be available on the QSA website in 2009. No panel training or workshops are expected for Earth Science in 2009.

Chris Blundell            Rebecca Ryan
State Review Panel Chair  Senior Education Officer
The Economics senior syllabus 2004 enters its fifth year of implementation in 2009. There will be a minor revision conducted in 2009 ready for general implementation in 2010.

The syllabus and support materials are available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Business and Commerce > Economics (2000).

Feedback from districts

All Queensland schools offering Economics as a senior course of study currently have an approved work program. Several schools have had work programs approved this year in preparation for the introduction of Economics into their curriculum in 2009. Congratulations are extended to the district panellists involved in the approval of work programs for their efforts to ensure statewide consistency within the scope of this syllabus.

District panel feedback through monitoring and verification indicates that the majority of schools are effectively implementing the Economics senior syllabus. While the effectiveness of task design and provision of task authentication materials continue to be identified at district panel meetings, it is evident that syllabus guidelines concerning word length and stated conditions of assessment are being more consistently implemented.

Statewide comparability

The comparability processes enable state panel to consider the quality of work at each level of achievement, within and between districts. In general, the district sample folios reflect appropriate and consistent application of standards in Economics.

There are, however, some differences in expectations between districts with regard to evidence of student involvement in the inquiry process. It is important to remember that these components of assessment form part of the conditions of the task, but are not represented directly in the exit standards. As such, decisions about the quality of work submitted must be made using on-balance judgments about the extent to which the evidence in student work matches the syllabus standards.

There continues to be variation in the quality and quantity of materials provided as evidence of student participation/engagement in the inquiry process across the state. The syllabus requires that that supporting material for Category 3 and 4 assessment tasks show evidence of student engagement in the inquiry process (see syllabus pp. 66–67). Additionally, teacher’s observational comments for Category 4 need to be provided. Schools are asked not to submit pages of photocopied material where this does not serve to show student engagement in the inquiry process. Evidence in the form of teacher checklists, student drafts, effective in-text referencing and bibliography of resources are sufficient to substantiate participation in the inquiry process.

Schools should ensure that adequate time is given for perusal or prior consideration of economic stimulus materials used in Category 2 assessment tasks. In all cases, perusal time and extent to which annotations are permitted must be clearly stated on the assessment task sheet.

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 utilising 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 by using increased levels of primary data within their courses.
Quality of assessment

The diversity and quality of assessment instruments developed by schools continues to provide interesting, topical, relevant and challenging tasks to students of Economics.

Effective task design will enable students to produce work that meets the exit standards for relevant criteria, particularly Interpretation and decision making. There is some variation in the interpretation of this general objective. Schools should make use of syllabus terminology associated with the general objectives as listed on pp. 5–7 and in the standards matrix, pp. 70–71.

Explicit use of the terminology listed below will enable schools to effectively design tasks and to ensure that the assessment reflects the breadth of the criterion’s dimensions.

Knowledge comprises:
- knowing information (refers to the retrieval of previously learnt factual materials)
- understanding (ability to explain economic concepts and principles).

Interpretation comprises:
- comprehension (translating or transferring information, constructing meaning from information and interpreting economic information)
- application (applying economic knowledge, concepts, model and skills to real or hypothetical situations, economic issues or problems and applying appropriate mathematical techniques and procedures)
- analysis (identifying trends, patterns, similarities and differences in economic data or information and recognising and explaining cause–effect linkages).

Decision making comprises:
- synthesis (drawing upon information and ideas from a variety of sources, constructing responses to issues, combining findings into a coherent whole)
- evaluation (using criteria to assess the appropriateness of economic decisions or policies, deriving responses to economic issues and policies, expressing opinions on various viewpoints using specific criteria).

Schools must ensure that tasks addressing Decision making enable students to appraise the extent to which alternative ideas are appropriate, effective or satisfying. Schools should also ensure that an appropriate selection of criteria for decision making are provided within the assessment task. Schools may also allow students to develop their own criteria as an alternative to those provided.

Research and communication comprises:
- research (framing and refocusing research questions, gathering and organising data and information, assessing the validity of data, displaying initiative and independence), and
- communication (translating economic language and meaning in written and non-written genres, using correct language and conventions, drafting, editing and reflecting).

Schools are encouraged to consider ways to scaffold assessment tasks to enable students to effectively work toward all standards associated with the assessment criteria. Scaffolding should be structured around the dimensions of the criteria rather than simply being a list of steps for students to complete. Scaffolding that is structured in order of the criteria tends to limit student responses to a wealth of information pertaining to the Knowledge and interpretation criteria, almost leaving the Decision making criteria response as an afterthought. Effective scaffolding would initially direct students to the overarching elements of Decision making (using syllabus terminology), then provide guidance linked specifically to the remaining criteria. Models for both task design and scaffolding will be posted on the QSA website in 2009.

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. Citation of sources within the student’s response can also be used as evidence of student engagement in the inquiry process.
Subject support

Annotated sample assessment items will be placed on the QSA website early in 2009. Panel training was conducted around the state in Semester 2. Panellists discussed the awarding of standards to student responses.

The state review panel encourages teachers not currently on a panel to consider joining a panel, as it is invaluable professional development.

Karen Swift	Tammy Hope
State Review Panel Chair	Senior Education Officer
The Engineering Technology senior syllabus 2004 is in the fourth year of implementation. In accordance with the current six-year cycle of review, a minor review of the syllabus will commence in 2009. The revised syllabus should be ready for general implementation with Year 11 students in 2011. Engineering Technology teachers are urged to contribute to the syllabus review by responding to the teacher survey and providing feedback on syllabus drafts throughout the year.

The popularity of the subject continues to grow, with over thirty schools offering Engineering Technology in 2008. The state review panel continues to contribute to the shared understanding regarding the objectives of the Engineering Technology course.

The syllabus, teacher survey and other support materials are available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Technologies > Engineering Technology (2004).

Feedback from districts

Due to the increase in the number of schools offering Engineering Technology, the state review panel is no longer involved in monitoring and verification. These moderation processes were undertaken by three new district panels in 2008. The three panels are combined district panels that are based in the districts of Brisbane Central, Gold Coast and Rockhampton. The Brisbane Central panel is combined with Brisbane North, Sunshine Coast and Toowoomba districts. The Gold Coast panel is combined with Brisbane East, Brisbane South and Brisbane Ipswich. The Rockhampton panel is combined with Cairns, Townsville, Mackay and Wide Bay.

School submissions for both monitoring and verification in 2008 were generally well planned and presented. Organised submissions assist review meetings considerably, allowing panellists to devote time to constructively looking for evidence to support the school’s placement of students. Advice offered to schools at 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 that some projects did not include evidence of extended reasoning (hypothesising, synthesising and evaluating).

Statewide comparability

The role of the state review panel has changed with the introduction of the new three district panels. In November each year the state review panel will meet to undertake the comparability exercise. Comparability is the process by which state review panels collect information about the extent to which judgments about levels of achievement are comparable across the state. The comparability strategy requires each state review panellist to review a single level of achievement across all samples and districts. For example, one state panellist reviewed all the threshold Very High Achievement (VHA) samples across all districts.

There was general consensus that school judgments in awarding levels of achievement matched syllabus standards in all districts. It should be noted that samples sent by district panels to the comparability meeting are not selected as exemplars, but are representative submissions that were agreed to at verification within a district. Information collected through the comparability process is primarily used by the manager of the Quality Assurance unit. The state review panel chair also writes a letter to each district review panel chair that contains advice regarding their panel’s judgments.

The comparability meeting also provides the opportunity for submissions that have been unresolved at verification to be resolved. No submissions were unresolved after verification. Panel chairs, panellists and staff at schools are congratulated for resolving not-agreed-to submissions in 2008.
Course coverage

Generally, schools are covering the four mandatory areas of study and their associated study topics to a satisfactory standard. There is varied depth of treatment of the areas of study, however the appropriate emphasis on materials and mechanics has been maintained across the state.

Quality of assessment

The state panel found that the best responses to Engineering Technology assessment tasks occurred when students were provided with challenging opportunities that required investigation and application of acquired knowledge to problem-solving situations. Some of the most effective tasks required students to perform some engaging hypothesising and construction in solving engineering briefs, with specifications clearly documented. In this respect, projects that require students to investigate, analyse, synthesise, hypothesise and then evaluate the hypothesis and the proposed solution have proved very successful. This has provided students the opportunity to clearly demonstrate their achievement in the Reasoning criterion. Conversely, tasks that merely require students to gather large quantities of data, without directing students to interpret and apply the data constructively, failed 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 and evaluation must be given adequate emphasis and tasks need to be suitably challenging to support level of achievement decisions, particularly at Very High Achievement (VHA) and High Achievement (HA) levels. Appropriate scaffolding assists student’s understanding of the task components and will assist in eliciting an in-depth response to the Reasoning criterion.

Subject support

Schools can expect to receive support through:

- QSA website
- anticipated external professional development days
- ongoing relationships with panel chairs and members.

Many thanks to all Engineering Technology teachers throughout the state for their ongoing commitment to high standards and 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 (from the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Assessment > Senior assessment > Information for panellists > Application form for membership of state or district review panel).

Danny Arrow
State Review Panel Chair
Roy Barnes
Senior Education Officer
ENGLISH — B35

Syllabus

The English senior syllabus 2002 completed its sixth year of general implementation in 2008. This syllabus was reviewed in 2008, resulting in the English (open trial) senior syllabus which will be trialled by participating schools in 2009.

The English Extension (Literature) senior syllabus 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 must be concurrently enrolled in English 2002.

All current English syllabuses and support materials are available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > English. All references in this section refer to the English (2002) syllabus document.

Feedback from districts

The state panel is pleased to report that 2008 monitoring and verification for the 390 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 to allow students to demonstrate achievement in accordance with the stated criteria.

Statewide comparability

Comparability is the process by which state review panels collect information about the extent to which judgments about levels of achievement are comparable across the state. The state review panel 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.

Course coverage

Schools are reminded to revisit the syllabus 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 defined as one that students have not previously sighted. The “unseenness” relates to the question and not the resources that may support the response. The task is to be completed in one uninterrupted session.” (Section 6.6, p. 30).

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. (Section 6.6, p. 29).

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:

- spoken and written modes (including multimodal)
- demonstrated control of genres and social contexts
- range of conditions under which the work has been completed, including reference to the nature and 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.

(Section 6.7.1, p. 33).
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

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, resumes, job applications and similar, tend to provide insufficient challenge.

Schools are reminded that Section 6.3 (pp. 24–25) 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
- a task-specific criteria and standards sheet
- the criteria and standards for each task are to be derived from the exit criteria and standards matrix.

Framing task descriptions so that the genre, purpose and audience, and social situation/context are clear enhances opportunities for students to demonstrate all three criteria, in particular Criterion 1: Knowledge and control of texts in their context and Criterion 2: Knowledge and control of textual features.

It is also worth noting that task-specific criteria and standards descriptors matrixes 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. (Section 6.4, p. 28).

Schools are reminded that “there is no expectation that students produce explications to accompany texts that they construct” (Section 6.3.2, p. 25), whether these tasks be written or spoken, analytical, imaginative, persuasive or reflective.

When designing task-specific criteria and standards sheets, teachers need to select and derive from the exit criteria and standards matrix those descriptors that are specific to the particular task (Section 6.3.2, p. 25), use the standards words from that descriptor that align to the syllabus 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 teachers and 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 in order to demonstrate the criteria.

Holistic judgment is mandatory in English (Section 6.4, p. 28). 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. … It is not appropriate to ‘add up’ or total grades to arrive at an overall judgment about the level of student achievement (Section 6.7.1, p. 33).

Schools are reminded that, in arriving at a holistic judgment of student achievement for a task, teachers are to use task-specific criteria and standards to make an informed holistic judgment of student achievement.
achievement, and that this judgment involves matching the student’s response against the stated task-
specific criteria and standards. (Section 6.4, p. 28). The syllabus makes very clear that, both in designing
assessment tasks and in arriving at a holistic judgment of student achievement for a task:

consideration should be given to the match among length and genre, task demands and conditions. Length should
not be considered separately (Section 6.3.4, p. 27).

It is highly inappropriate for schools to apply grade penalties to student responses that are outside the
length guidelines for the task, or to make judgments about student achievement on the basis of whether or
not the task response meets a minimum length.

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, as explained in the syllabus:

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. (Section 6.7.4, p. 39),

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 Achievement requirements in both modes cannot be placed any
higher than LA10 on the Verification Form R6.

Subject support

In 2008, the QSA launched its updated website. The inclusion of materials such as sample course
overviews and assessment tasks alongside the English syllabus aims to provide support for English
teachers throughout the state.

In 2009, panel training will be provided as ongoing support of the important role state and district panels
have in the processes of moderation and assessment and relationships with schools.

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.
Teachers are encouraged to contact their local QSA district coordinator or visit the QSA website for an
application form (from the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Assessment > Senior assessment >
Information for panellists > Application form for membership of state or district review panel).

Kerry Baumanis       Ellen Connolly
State Review Panel Chair   Senior Education Officers
ENGLISH EXTENSION (LITERATURE) — B37

Syllabus

The current English Extension (Literature) senior syllabus 2003 completed its fifth year of general implementation in 2008. The syllabus is available for schools that have implemented the English senior syllabus 2002 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.

All current English syllabuses and support materials are available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > English. All references in this section refer to the English Extension (Literature) 2003 syllabus document.

Feedback from districts

The state panel is pleased to report that 2008 monitoring and verification for the 59 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 to allow students to demonstrate achievement in accordance with the stated criteria.

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 rungs of Very High Achievement, 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.

Course coverage

The syllabus is, in the great majority of cases, being implemented by teachers in ways that are congruent with its underpinning principles and that conform to its mandated aspects. However, teachers should note the following issues arising from the work program approval process, verification and comparability meetings.

- 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 subsequent theoretical insights—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). In their responses to all three tasks, students need to show they are alert to the implications of this focus on reading practices when discussing and applying theoretical understandings to their selected texts. By so doing, students will be able to demonstrate the critical 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 these have produced different readings (Section 8.5.2, Tables 5 to 8, pp. 55–58). See also below, Framing and responding to Task 3.

- 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. Between Task 1 and Task 3 responses, panels expect to see an advance in the theories and theorists students draw on. Across the course, 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” (Section 4.1, p. 5). 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, 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. In this way students are more likely to be given opportunity to demonstrate Criterion 1 descriptor 1, Very High Achievement (VHA) level: “recognises and explains subtle similarities and differences across and within the four approaches” (Section 8.5.2, p. 52).

- Need to integrate theoretical understandings of reading practices and their application.

The Syllabus specifies 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 [emphasis added]” (Section 1, p. 1). Syllabus criteria can only be fully demonstrated by a sustained and nuanced 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” (Section 4.1, p. 5)

- 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” (Section 4.1, p. 5).

- 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 simply explicating the selected theorists’ ideas in Task 3(a), then having them only implicitly inform discussion in Task 3(b).

It is evident from the similarity of student responses to tasks in some school submissions that some teachers are promoting a narrow range of preferred theories for their students to engage with. It is the intention of the syllabus that by Task 3, students should, with appropriate mentoring from the teacher, be selecting their own theories and applying these independently. See Section 6.1, Increasing Independence, p. 26.

- Need for appropriate text selection and examination.

Teachers are reminded of the advice in the syllabus (Section 6.2.4, p. 30) 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). There is no provision in the course for students to study extracts of texts. 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 (Section 5, pp. 7–21). It is evident from some schools’ submissions of folios that a more narrow choice of “safe” and sometimes undemanding texts is being encouraged. This is sometimes compounded by framing assessment tasks in ways that circumscribe student’s responses rather narrowly. These can limit opportunities for students to demonstrate the assessment criteria in their readings and interventions. Schools need to be mindful that, by Task 3, students should be choosing their own texts, identifying the issue in that text or text they wish to investigate, and selecting the theorists and theoretical understandings that can best help them carry out their focused reading. Schools that specify a common text or texts for students, particularly in Task 3, are limiting opportunities for students to engage appropriately with this subject.

Quality of assessment

- Framing and responding to Task 1.

In some student’s responses to Task 1 the distinction between reading and defense is blurred. 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 that may reveal theoretical assumptions without explicating them. By contrast, the defense is a
Theorised analysis. That is, 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 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 (Section 8.2.2, pp. 41–42). Students need to set out carefully and explicitly the relationship of the intervention to the base text, to ensure that the transformation is a complex transformation that entails a discursive shift that makes possible a change in the invited reading. The point of the creative writing exercise is to open up a new reading of the text, not simply confirm (even by reversing) its existing assumptions. Mere transpositions, such as reversals of gender or plot outcome, or simple transformations, such as modernisations, do not themselves amount to complex transformations. Among other possibilities, a shift of genre can reframe the base text and introduce new discourses.

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.

Teachers should read this advice in relation to the comments above about appropriate text selection. Some simple texts may be inherently limiting in the range or complexity of interventions they encourage.

Framing and responding to Task 3(a) and 3(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 (Section 8.2.2, pp. 42–43)
- activities suitable for later in the course; Section 5.3.3 (p. 13), Section 5.4.3 (p.17), Section 5.5.3 (p. 21), and Section 5.6.3 (pp. 24–25)
- selected specific learning experiences generated from reading practices; (Section 7.2, pp. 32–35).

Task 3 requires students to choose a closely focused topic for investigation. In many cases, the text or texts students select will generate the problematic, which will be explored by means of an appropriate theory or set of theories. Selection of the most appropriate theories should be guided by the problematic. In other cases, students may begin with a theoretical issue, and then select the text or text that will enable them to investigate this issue. A thematic linking of texts is insufficient as a problematic, since it does not focus on reading practices as such or lend itself to a theorised inquiry, and it tends to gloss over the specifics of each text. Teachers are reminded that topics need to be specific, substantial and very well focused. Topics should be framed in such a way as to encourage a critical self-reflexivity (See first point in Course coverage above: Need to problematise reading approaches, to demonstrate critical self-reflexivity in reading). 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, p. 52).

Equally over-broad is a survey coverage of the syllabus framework of approaches or a diffuse exposition of an eclectic array of theorists. The relevance of the selected theorists to the student’s chosen problematic and text(s) should be argued for in Task 3(a). The syllabus notes that reference to the four approaches is only necessary “in so far as these complement or contrast with the chosen focus [emphasis added]” (p. 42). 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]” (Section 8.5.2, p.52). 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 consideration of their chosen theories and their application to the focus.

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

In Task 3(b), students need to demonstrate that they can apply theoretical understandings about reading practices to their selected texts by producing close, nuanced readings which necessarily include quotations from the text/s, if they are to demonstrate the criterion Application of knowledge and 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 …[and 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 [emphasis added]” (Section 8.5.2, p. 52). 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 (Criterion 2, descriptor 4). It might be said that the student is engaged in a conversation with selected theorists about the readings of their text(s) they produce, and evaluating these.

Increasing complexity of challenge.

The syllabus explains this as “the increasing conceptual demands made on the student over the one-year course through learning experiences and task requirements” (Section 6.1, 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. By the final task, students should be engaging with more substantial and complex texts than at the outset of the course.

Increasing independence.

Review panels expect to see evidence that a school is meeting the syllabus requirement of increasing independence. The syllabus specifies: “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” (Section 6.1, p. 26). Schools need to ensure that students are given opportunities and encouragement to explore their own areas of interest in all tasks, and particularly in 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. Teachers have an important mentoring role here, in providing constructive advice to the student. 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

Schools should ensure that task length is consistent with syllabus requirements (Section 8.2.4, p. 44). Where a student’s 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 (Section 8.4.2, dot-point 3, p. 49). A bibliography should be presented for each assessment task response, including the written form of Task 3(a). It also means attributing theoretical concepts to the originating theorist. District and state panels have observed that some students are still 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. Students should also 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.

Student’s 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 launched its updated website. It is planned that the updated English Extension page will include sample course overviews and assessment tasks. These materials should provide support for English Extension teachers throughout the state.

In 2009, panel training will be provided as ongoing support of the important role state and district 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. 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. Teachers are encouraged to contact their local QSA district coordinator or visit the QSA website for an application form (from the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Assessment > Senior assessment > Information for panellists > Application form for membership of state or district review panel).

Wendy Morgan
State Review Panel Chair

Ellen Connolly
Senior Education Officer
FILM, TELEVISION AND NEW MEDIA — B40

Syllabus

The Film, Television and New Media senior syllabus 2005 is in its third year of implementation in 2008. It is important to use the current syllabus as the main reference when enhancing the approved work program into a working curriculum document in the school. The focus of this syllabus, especially in terms of the criteria and standards, are quite different to the 1995 syllabus and it offers support and clear guidelines in the relationship between the key concepts and assessment.

The syllabus and support materials are available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Arts > Film, Television and New Media (2005). All syllabus references in this section refer to this syllabus.

Feedback from districts

The state review panel is pleased to report that 156 schools are offering Film, Television and New Media across Queensland. The requirements for work programs and amendment procedures have changed over the last few years. A work program is a brief document prepared by schools for QSA approval, and includes:

- a course overview
- a detailed Year 12 sample unit with all accompanying tasks and standards schema relevant to that unit
- an assessment overview
- a worked profile.

An amendment proforma that outlines amendment requirements is available on the website. Work program approvals have continued at a steady pace this year.

Schools should review their school work program to ensure it meets the verification folio requirements (Section 6.6, p. 44), and syllabus requirements, in particular that:

- a design suite consists of two design formats (a school may incorporate further formats in the learning experiences to support and enrich student’s understanding and assessment responses)
- at verification, each criteria should have been assessed twice: two design, two production and two critique
- an additional assessment piece is to be completed and assessed between verification and exit

When planning a program of study, refer to the advice in the syllabus beginning on p. 27.

Statewide comparability

Comparability is the process by which state review panel (SRP) collects information about the extent to which judgments about levels of achievement are comparable across the state. This year, the SRP was in agreement with both the schools’ and district panels’ application of syllabus standards based on these folios.

Students are being given opportunities through a variety of challenging assessment tasks. When writing task sheets, teachers are reminded to integrate the key concepts taught in the unit into the assessment, and advised to limit assessment to a maximum of two key concepts. This provides an opportunity for a student to demonstrate an effective understanding of the key concepts. Unpacking the relevant sections of the criteria on standard schema enables students to see the connection between the standards and the task.

Course coverage

The general objectives of Design, Production and Critique are assessed through the students understanding and knowledge of the key concepts, formats and contexts of production and use. These
three objectives form the basis of the exit criteria against which students’ work is assessed in relation to the standards. The exit standards are “typical” for each level of achievement.

Quality of assessment

The 2005 syllabus provides guidelines in relation to the conditions of assessment for this subject. These are designed to be used and adapted for specific tasks. For example, a group production of a narrative would be specified on the task sheet as 6 minutes (2 minutes per person), rather than the more general 5–9 mins. This begins to frame the students understanding of a relevant key concept.

Critique tasks should provide opportunity for students “to analyse and evaluate products and their contexts of production and use” (Section 3.2, Critique, p. 5). When formulating critique questions, the emphasis is on the product and their context of production and use. Provide opportunities for students to be thorough, analyse and evaluate products in context, and to substantiate their judgments, rather than to produce descriptive research alone.

The characteristics of each standard should be considered when marking. For example, for a student to demonstrate proficiency in their storyboard response, it would need to use appropriate film language to describe the shot types and angles being utilised. Clear highlighting of the standard achieved with accompanying teacher comments will give the student valuable feedback that can improve their learning.

In constructing task-specific criteria, consider the following guidelines:

- task conditions should be identified on the task sheet rather than in the assessment criteria
- the adjectives of the standards should not be altered or added to, as these are what distinguishes the characteristics across A to E grades
- each standard identifies certain characteristics, and should be maintained in identifying what they can do, not what they cannot
- the specific sections of the standards matrix that could be interpreted to suit the task relate to the general objective, the key concept/s, formats, conventions, practices, contexts of production and use, and terminology are the aspects that can and should be unpacked in detail
- the specificity of the criteria should not restrict students from responding in an individualised way
- consider the most relevant key concept/s (rather than all being taught in the unit) to enable effective understanding, to be demonstrated by the student.

In a submission, Production evidence of the individual’s role in a group production should be well identified, documented and accessible. Panels found it easy to identify this evidence when schools’ provided specifically the one-third of the production completed by the student within each sample folio. In other cases, schools provided detailed documentation outlining the students’ roles. The labelling of DVDs is important in order to identify the evidence so that reviewers understand how and on the basis of which characteristics decisions were made.

When planning an assessment task, consider the suggested times for design and productions outlined in the syllabus. If the design leads to the production, conditions for the design could align with the length of the production if appropriate. For example, a script for a two-minute narrative production would be the same length requirement. Schools should also consider offering a variety in the techniques used for assessment purposes.

Some work programs have included tasks that enable two criteria to be assessed. While this is appropriate in some cases, in others the process has become artificial, resulting in quite distinctly separate tasks. Schools always have the opportunity to amend work programs by submitting significant changes to QSA for approval. The syllabus provides guidelines for developing assessment tasks with particular reference to the key concepts across all objectives (Section 6.4, pp. 28–33).

Using tasks developed from the previous syllabus may lead to a mismatch with the current syllabus criteria and standards. Please ensure that all assessment is developed from the 2005 syllabus document, and refers to the 2005 syllabus general objectives, formats, conditions, standards and language.

When planning assessment in the course, consider the purpose of each instrument and how each piece contributes to coverage of the exit standards. Consider also, the key concepts in relation to moving image
media, and how a student can demonstrate their knowledge and understanding *effectively, thoroughly, proficiently* and with the ability to *exploit* practices across the assessment package. There are still schools setting tasks where three or four key concepts are expected to be addressed in one instrument. While there is an interrelationship between the key concepts, consider providing an opportunity for students to focus on one or two per instrument for assessment.

**Subject support**

As the year progresses, further support materials will be available on the QSA website, including sample work programs and assessment tasks, and guidelines for developing task-specific criteria and standards sheets. These materials will provide support for Film, Television and New Media teachers throughout the state in constructing tasks and criteria sheets.

In 2009, panel training will be provided to all Film, Television and New Media review panellists as ongoing support for the important role panels play in the moderation process.

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 Film, Television and New Media. Teachers are encouraged to contact their local QSA district coordinator or visit the QSA website for an application form.

Any school or individual teacher who would like to receive email updates throughout the year should forward email details to Susan Hollindale at <sao@qsa.qld.edu.au>.

Chris Hayward  
State Review Panel Chair

Susan Hollindale  
Senior Education Officer
Syllabus

The revised French senior syllabus 2008 will be implemented with the Year 11 cohort for the first time in 2009. Review panelists have already submitted their work programs for approval, and schools are reminded that the deadline for their submissions is the end of Term 1, 2009.

French syllabus and support materials, including new work program requirements, are available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Languages > French (2001), French (2008) and French Extension (2002).

The revised syllabus incorporates a number of changes, including:

- the introduction of a languages inquiry process that is centred on intercultural understanding
- new dimensions of the exit criteria that will require learning experiences that develop and demonstrate the ability to reason and respond (Comprehension), and create and respond (Conveying meaning), while knowing and understanding / using language in communicative contexts
- a reduction in the minimum amount of assessment required to:
  - two assessments per skill in Year 11
  - two assessments per skill before verification in Year 12 (three skills assessed in Term 3)
  - one or two assessments between verification and exit, in any combination of macroskills.

When designing assessments that allow opportunities to demonstrate the 2008 syllabus criteria and standards in the context of the new minimum assessment requirements, careful consideration will need to be given to:

- ensuring that sufficient opportunities are given to students to cover a range of topics and text types
- making decisions about student achievement based on evidence in the folio, rather than relying on grade summaries on profiles
- designing assessments based on the exit standards — determining firstly what needs to be demonstrated, and then the best manner of doing this in the context of the topic that has been studied, for example:
  - providing opportunities in Receptive skills for students to demonstrate analysis, evaluation, conclusions, and decisions
  - designing Speaking tasks that require the demonstration of spontaneity and the ability to sustain a conversation.

Where there are composite classes in 2009, the Year 11 students must follow the new work program and be assessed against the standards in the 2008 syllabus, while the Year 12 students must be assessed using the 2001 syllabus criteria and standards. Where new work programs have been developed with a new set of topics and a new progression of functions and grammar, flexibility will need to be exercised to ensure that, in the transition year, neither cohort is disadvantaged, for example, that the Year 12 students do not repeat content and texts already studied in Year 11. It would be valuable to include a covering letter so that review panels are made aware of how the composite class program has been organised.

In 2008, 611 Year 12 students exited from 81 schools having studied French. Of these, 40 students from 26 schools studied French through the Brisbane School of Distance Education. Additionally, 38 students in 3 schools studied French Extension.

Feedback from districts

Schools have, overall, a very good understanding of the requirements of verification, and student folios are predominantly matched correctly to the syllabus standards. In general, the breadth and depth of assessment items allows students to demonstrate their language skills.

It is important to design assessment that elicits evidence for all standards. A task that gives opportunities to demonstrate a C–standard may not allow the demonstration of A–standard skills. For example, a Listening text containing only present tense verbs, no subordinate clauses, and spoken at a slow rate,
would not allow the demonstration of deduction of meaning from context or the drawing of appropriate conclusions at an A–standard.

To access recordings of *Speaking* more readily, review panels would appreciate being advised of the recording format (e.g. mp3 or wav files).

**Statewide comparability**

Comparability is the process by which state review panels collect information about the extent to which judgments about levels of achievement are comparable across the state. The panel offers the following advice:

- To give students the best possible opportunity to demonstrate their language skills, they need to be exposed to a wide variety of text types and subject matter across the topic being assessed.
- Some assessment tasks and questions were not sufficiently complex and demanding to allow students to demonstrate all criteria descriptors for an A–standard. Conversely, outstanding achievement in response to challenging assessment should be recognised.
- Concerning thresholds, panels will find it easier to support school judgments where students have had multiple opportunities to demonstrate their language skills against the standards. School judgments on threshold folios are more difficult to support where tasks and text types do not allow this.
- When choice of text types is allowed in *Writing*, students may gravitate to a genre that is familiar to them rather than explore a range of text types. Learning experiences and assessment need to be planned so students work with a wide range of text types. While multiple options may be desirable in a final piece of assessment, earlier tasks need to specify certain text types.

**Course coverage**

Course coverage was, in general, comprehensive. Nonetheless, panel was concerned with the use of outdated texts, repetition of the same content in various formats, and *Speaking* and *Writing* tasks duplicating each other.

**Quality of assessment**

While some outstanding and imaginative examples of assessment were seen, the panel offers this advice:

- In *Speaking*, some teachers provide too much input, preventing students from expressing themselves fully.
- A variety of tenses is required in both *Speaking* and *Writing*; some tasks did not promote or allow this.
- While there are different ways of grading *Writing*, teachers need to carefully annotate, highlight or underline the task-specific criteria and standards schema to indicate how a judgment was made.

**Subject support**

Syllabus orientation workshops and review panel training were conducted in 2008, focusing on the requirements of work programs. Materials associated with these can be found on the QSA website <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Languages > French (2008) > Advice for teachers. Information to inform assessment design (that provides opportunities for students to demonstrate the criteria and standards) will also be developed and added to the website in 2009.

The state panel recognises the quality of outcomes achieved by teachers of French in Queensland, their tireless efforts, promotion and support of the study of French. It also recognises the work of all teachers, panellists and district panel chairs who maintain the system of externally moderated, school-based assessment and whose contributions enrich the practice of their colleagues and the outcomes of students across the state.

Philip Smith  
State Review Panel Chair

Lester Ford  
Acting Principal Education Officer
GEOGRAPHY — B34

Syllabus

The Geography senior syllabus 2007 is in its second year of general implementation, with all senior classes now studying courses developed under this syllabus. In 2009, the first cohort of students will reach exit. The Geography senior syllabus 1999 and associated work program are no longer current. The syllabus and support materials are available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Social and Environmental Studies > Geography (2007). All references in this section refer to the syllabus document.

Feedback from districts

The approval process for work programs based on the 2007 syllabus is proceeding well. At the time of writing, the majority of schools offering the subject had approval. The new format for work programs based on the 2007 syllabus has led to smaller documents with fewer issues arising in the approval process. Nearly all of the concerns that have resulted in programs being returned to schools for amendments are of a minor nature and have been quickly addressed by schools. The most common concerns relate to the need to ensure that:

• any elective units have distinctly different key questions and key ideas to the focus units. Most of the focus units have a broad range of key ideas that can accommodate a range of case studies. In some cases schools have confused the concept of a case study with an elective unit
• the outline of intended student learning (sample unit) in the work program includes:
  − topic specific key questions
  − a range of key ideas
  − sample learning experiences
  − geographic skills.
• syllabus terminology is used to describe assessment techniques and that conditions of implementation for each technique are consistent with syllabus advice
• the requirements of the verification folio (Section 8.8, p. 75) are met and included in the work program.

The reduced requirements for work program approval are accompanied by the expectation that teachers have reference to the syllabus at all times.

Statewide comparability

Comparability across the state in 2007 was generally good. This is especially true in the limited, sound and high levels of achievement. The state panel, however, found that in the area of very high achievements there was some variation across districts. With the 2007 syllabus now in general implementation, it is hoped that the increased detail in the standards matrix will assist schools in making judgments.

Course coverage

In terms of course coverage, some issues that were evident in student work based on the 1999 syllabus will continue to be relevant with the implementation of the 2007 syllabus. The most important of these is the need for student work to demonstrate geographic skills. The 2007 syllabus requires students to be proficient in the integration of high-quality maps, graphs, sketches or diagrams (Section 8.4, p. 68). Cutting-and-pasting maps into reports that fail to comply with basic geographic conventions and are not sourced should be avoided. The state panel commends those schools where tasks show evidence of students constructing maps using geographic information systems (GIS).
A small preview of student work based on the 2007 syllabus was provided by some schools with composite classes where latitude has been given in the implementation of the new units from the syllabus. In relation to this small sample, the state panel would like to provide the following advice:

- For **Focus unit 6: Sustaining biodiversity**, it is important to use case studies that expose students to the key ideas listed in the syllabus (pp. 49–50). In particular, it is important for students to grasp the concept of biogeographical areas and their distinctive and interrelated patterns of climate, topography, soil, etc. The extent of biodiversity should then be linked to the nature of the biogeographical area. This provides the context in which to examine the impact of human activity in these areas. To reduce this focus unit to a study of the introduction of exotic species or food webs in isolation, rather than a study of a biogeographic area, would greatly diminish the opportunities for students to engage with the key ideas.

- For **Focus unit 8: Exploring the geography of disease**, it is important to ensure that the approach is geographic and thus based on interrelated patterns. Students must be able to map the disease and other related phenomena such as wealth, education or access to clean drinking water and then examine these relationships. Once again, it is important for schools to select case studies that enable students to engage with the key ideas of the unit (see pp. 59–60).

### Quality of assessment

The following advice on assessment techniques will be relevant for the 2007 syllabus.

The quality of short response tests is still of concern. There was evidence of many tests lacking the rigour expected at Year 12 level. Questions that require students to match a term to a given definition are far too simple for Year 12 and should not be used. To enhance the rigour of these tests, schools are encouraged to include paragraph-length responses based on recall of components of case studies that link to the key ideas of the unit.

- The stimulus in many stimulus response essays contain too much text that is not referenced. The lack of overt use of the stimulus by students in their essay responses should lead schools to reflect on the structure of their questions and/or the nature of the stimulus provided.

- The quality of student reports varies significantly. This is often a reflection of the guidelines provided for students and the scope of the tasks they are given. Advice on the subheadings, length and necessary support material to be included by students in the report is provided in the 2007 syllabus (Section 8.5, Reports, pp. 69–70).

There are some significant differences between the 1997 and 2007 syllabuses in relation to assessment that schools should be aware of, including:

- Evidence of spatial knowledge is detailed as one of the descriptors in the Knowledge criterion in the standards matrix (Section 8.7, p. 73). Short-response tests must include questions requiring recall of places on maps and possibly some diagrams to provide students with opportunities to demonstrate spatial knowledge.

- In practical exercises, the Communication criterion only applies to the manipulation and presentation of data (Section 8.5, p. 69). In other words schools can only award a grade for the construction of maps and graphs and not for the written response section.

- In non-written responses students must use both primary and secondary data (syllabus, p. 70). This will have a significant impact on the structure of the tasks.

- Reports, in particular, need to provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate geographic skills as these are detailed as one of the descriptors in the Research and communication criterion in the standards matrix (Section 8.7, p. 74).

- Reports are still required to be based mainly on primary data (Section 8.5, p. 69). This will present challenges for their application in some of the focus units. Primary data should be relatively easy to collect for the new focus units such as Sustaining biodiversity, Sustaining communities, Connecting people & places as well as the traditional unit Managing catchments. New focus units such as Living with climate change and Exploring the geography of disease are possibly more easily assessed with other techniques.
• Schools are advised to check the syllabus terminology in designing assessment tasks based on the 2007 syllabus. In addition, the construction of task-specific criteria needs to maintain the spirit of the syllabus and be derived from the revised standards matrix (Section 8.7, pp. 73–74).

Subject support

This year will see panel training across all districts to support the first year of verification under the 2007 syllabus. Panellists will be informed of dates through their district offices.

Teachers are encouraged to check the QSA website for support materials. Updating of the website is ongoing. Teachers are also invited to provide feedback to the Senior Education Officer (Quality Assurance) at <sao@qsa.qld.edu.au>,

Jo MacDonald       Jackie Dunk
State Review Panel Chair       Senior Education Officer
The revised German senior syllabus 2008 will be implemented with the Year 11 cohort for the first time in 2009. Review panellists have already submitted their work programs for approval, and schools are reminded that the deadline for their submissions is the end of Term 1, 2009.

German syllabus and support materials, including new work program requirements, are available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Languages > German (2001), German (2008) and German Extension (2002).

The revised syllabus incorporates a number of changes, including:

- the introduction of a languages inquiry process that is centred on intercultural understanding
- new dimensions of the exit criteria that will require learning experiences that develop and demonstrate the ability to reason and respond (Comprehension), and create and respond (Conveying meaning), while knowing and understanding/using language in communicative contexts
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Where there are composite classes in 2009, the Year 11 students must follow the new work program and be assessed against the standards in the 2008 syllabus, while the Year 12 students must be assessed using the 2001 syllabus criteria and standards. Where new work programs have been developed with a new set of topics and a new progression of functions and grammar, flexibility will need to be exercised to ensure that, in this transition year, neither cohort is disadvantaged, for example, that the Year 12 students do not repeat content and texts already studied in Year 11. It would be valuable to include a covering letter so that review panels are made aware of how the composite class program has been organised.

In 2008, 530 Year 12 students exited from 91 schools having studied German. Of these, 40 students from 30 schools studied German through the Brisbane School of Distance Education, which also provided the Virtual Schooling Service for 4 students in 4 schools. Additionally, 52 students in 3 schools studied German Extension.

Feedback from districts

Schools have, overall, a very good understanding of the requirements of verification and student folios are predominantly matched correctly to the syllabus standards. In general, the breadth and depth of assessment items allows students to demonstrate their language skills.

It is important to design assessment that elicits evidence for all standards. A task that gives opportunities to demonstrate a C–standard may not allow the demonstration of A–standard skills. For example, a
Listening text containing only present tense verbs, no subordinate clauses, and spoken at a slow rate, would not allow the demonstration of deduction of meaning from context or the drawing of appropriate conclusions at an A–standard.

To access recordings of Speaking more readily, review panels would appreciate being advised of the recording format (e.g. mp3 or wav files).

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- Some assessment tasks and questions were not sufficiently complex and demanding to allow students to demonstrate all criteria descriptors for an A–standard. Conversely, outstanding achievement in response to challenging assessment should be recognised.
- Concerning thresholds, panels will be more able to support school judgments where students have had multiple opportunities to demonstrate their language skills against the standards. School judgments on threshold folios are more difficult to support where tasks and text types do not allow this.
- When choice of text types is allowed in Writing, students may gravitate to a genre that is familiar to them rather than explore a range of text types. Learning experiences and assessment need to be planned so students work with a wide range of text types. While multiple options may be desirable in a final piece of assessment, earlier tasks need to specify certain text types.

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Course coverage was, in general, comprehensive. Nonetheless, panel was concerned with the use of outdated texts, repetition of the same content in various formats, and Speaking and Writing tasks duplicating each other.

**Quality of assessment**

While some outstanding and imaginative examples of assessment were seen, the panel offers this advice:

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- A variety of tenses is required in both Speaking and Writing; some tasks did not promote or allow this.
- While there are different ways of grading Writing, teachers need to carefully annotate, highlight or underline the task-specific criteria and standards schema to indicate how a judgment was made.

**Subject support**

Syllabus orientation workshops and review panel training were conducted in 2008, focusing on the requirements of work programs. Materials associated with these can be found on the QSA website (go to > Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Languages > German (2008) > Advice for teachers). Information to inform assessment design (that provides opportunities for students to demonstrate the criteria and standards) will also be developed and added to the website in 2009.

The state panel recognises the quality of outcomes achieved by teachers of German in Queensland, their tireless efforts, promotion and support of the study of German. It also recognises the work of all teachers, panellists and district panel chairs who maintain the system of externally moderated, school-based assessment and whose contributions enrich the practice of their colleagues and the outcomes of students.

John Barker
State Review Panel Chair

Lester Ford
Acting Principal Education Officer
Syllabus

The Graphics senior syllabus 2007 is in its first year of implementation in 2008, with all Year 11 students now studying courses developed under this syllabus. The first cohort of students will reach exit in 2009. The 2008 Year 12 cohort are the final cohort to study the Graphics senior syllabus 2001.

The syllabus and support materials are available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Technologies > Graphics (2007). All syllabus references in this section refer to this document.

Feedback from districts

The approval process for work program developed under the 2007 syllabus is progressing well, much streamlined by the electronic work program submission tool, WPOnline. Most schools are now teaching Graphics from an approved work program. The reduced requirements for work programs are accompanied by the expectation that teachers will have reference to the syllabus at all times. As a working document in the school, the work program will become more detailed as each unit is developed and as schools reflect on their practices and assessment. Schools wishing to submit amendments to their work programs should add the amendment cover page (available from the QSA website, select Assessment > Senior assessment > Forms and procedures) before sending it to QSA using WPOnline.

The sample student profile provided in the work program on the QSA website has been used in most schools’ work programs. This profile provides a single column for the entry of an A to E standard in each criterion for the relevant assessment items. The use of this type of profile will assist in reducing the use of formulaic methods — such as averaging of standards or trending of ticks/dots on student profiles — to determine an overall standard in a criterion. 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 demands and conditions of the tasks and the six principles of assessment.

Submissions have reduced in size and weight, and packages are now more manageable. The 2007 syllabus does not require classwork in student folios (see Section 7.6.1, p. 27 and Section 7.7, p. 29) and it is therefore expected that moderation submissions will continue to reduce in size. Part or all of submissions may be submitted electronically.

When preparing an electronic submission for monitoring or verification, consider the following:

- trial a partial submission of work before submitting an entire electronic submission
- submit as a web or PowerPoint file to allow simple navigation to folios and assessment items
- drawing sheets should be in PDF or JPG format only (file types such as DXF, DWG, DGN are not to be provided)
- video files should be in AVI or MPEG format
- filenames should be consistent with the assessment item labels used in the school’s work program
- manual exam tasks and responses should be submitted in the original form
- where possible, provide evidence on a USB memory stick rather than a CD
- encourage students to use a 2B pencil for sketches, as these give better quality when scanned
- include a hard copy of the approved work program and all sample student profiles
- please check the submission and files for functionality and ease of navigation before sending the submission to the QSA.
**Statewide comparability**

Each year state review panel members review agreed samples from each of the 13 districts across the state to consider whether work and teacher judgments are comparable to the syllabus standards on a statewide basis.

Samples are selected at each district verification meeting as representative of the judgments being made by that panel, and are typical submissions that were agreed to at verification within a district, not exemplars. Generally, there was agreement with the application of standards across all districts.

The state review panel noted the limited evidence of Reasoning in the form of annotations and sketches relating to graphical representations in some of the threshold very high achievement (VHA) samples. In particular, this was due to poor task design in the Production graphics and Built environment contexts that directed students to use the cognitive processes of the implementation model to solve building design problems or a product design brief. Evidence of the use of the implementation model in planning, refinement, production and evaluation of graphical representations ensures that appropriate reasoning is demonstrated.

**Course coverage**

The contextual nature of assessment provides opportunities for students to experience industry-related learning experiences. Students are genuinely planning, refining, evaluating and producing quality graphical solutions to real-life situations. The emphasis of student work should be directed towards creating graphical communication for an identified target audience. To ensure full coverage of the course, students must be provided with opportunities to demonstrate the mandatory topics and a range of typical subject matter.

**Quality of assessment**

The quality of assessment across the state continues to improve as schools reflect on assessment tasks and processes and as understanding of the syllabus evolves. The use of task-specific criteria sheets is improving across the state. To assist schools implementing the Graphics syllabus 2007, the state panel offers the following elaborations of each of the assessment techniques listed in the syllabus:

- **Extended graphical response tasks** (Section 7.6.3, p. 28) include questions, challenges or briefs that may be in the format of an assignment or test and that provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate Knowledge, Reasoning and Presentation. The task should elicit a range of possible responses and require students to produce a reasoned graphical response.

- **Context-based folio** (Section 7.6.4, p. 28) is an assignment-based task that focuses on the production of a broad range of 2D and 3D graphic products. These are generated from a brief for a target audience in a given context, and require the use of the implementation model. Creating graphical representation of this nature, particularly for an identified audience, requires students to think about who they are presenting to, and how this will affect their presentation. Different audiences require different presentations. Students should clearly outline why they have chosen various aspects of their presentation and what convention or desired outcome they have addressed. 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. In any project work, the emphasis for assessment is on the graphical content of student work. The folio will comprise a compilation of work such as sketches, annotations, working drawings, plans, logos, 3D models.

  Please note: a context-based folio is not a set of class work exercises which loosely relate to a particular context.

- **Response to stimulus** (Section 7.6.5, p. 28) is generally a time-constrained task that provides stimulus material (information/data/images) as the initiator, followed by questions or tasks that directly link to the stimulus material. The questions should offer opportunities at a range of standards in Knowledge, Reasoning and Presentation, typically, increasing in complexity and culminating in a level of interpretation that would indicate that the student can respond to unfamiliar complex tasks. Responses may vary in form and length, short or extended, graphic as audiovisual or multimedia presentations.
The assessment package should provide depth and the opportunity for students to demonstrate the characteristics of an A–standard, even under test conditions. When planning supervised tests, ensure that challenging and unfamiliar/unrehearsed contexts are provided for students. Restricting opportunities where testing is of the same or similar rehearsed classwork, may contribute to non-agreement at verification.

Subject support

Resources are available on the QSA website to support the development and implementation of work programs for the 2007 syllabus. These include work program requirements, work program review notes and two sample work programs. Many schools have made use of the sample work programs and modified these to suit their particular school settings.

During 2008, a number of Graphics subject meetings were held in districts throughout the state. These were well-attended and supported, and provided opportunities for teachers to network and discuss aspects of the Graphics syllabus and its delivery.

Additional support and resources can be found through the Queensland Senior Graphics Syllabus 2007 group on the edna website <www.edna.edu.au>. Teachers are encouraged to use and share examples of assessment through the group.

To enrol in the group, follow this link: <www.groups.edna.edu.au/course/enrol.php?id=1507>.

Thanks to all the dedicated, enthusiastic and hardworking Graphics teachers whose work benefits the many students in classrooms across Queensland.

Larry Scaroni
State Review Panel Chair

Roy Barnes
Senior Education Officer
The Health Education senior syllabus 2004 is now in its fourth year of implementation. The periodic revision of the syllabus commenced at the end of 2008. Schools were able to comment on the current syllabus through an online survey. A draft of the revised syllabus will be available for comment on the QSA website in 2009. The revised syllabus is planned for release in 2010, ready for implementation with the Year 11 cohort in 2011.

The 2004 syllabus will remain in place until 2012 (when the final cohort of students will exit Year 12) and schools are encouraged to use the syllabus as a reference document in conjunction with their current work program.

The syllabus and support materials are available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Health and Physical Education > Health Education (2004). All syllabus references in this section refer to this document.

Feedback from districts

The state review panel is pleased to report that 2008 monitoring and verification for the 75 schools in Queensland under the 2004 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.

Due to an increase in the number of schools offering Health Education, the number of district review panels increased from four to six in 2008. For the first time a district review panel now exists outside of the south-east corner of the state. Panels are mostly adequately staffed and feedback from monitoring and verification meetings was positive.

While a number of submissions were not-agreed-to at verification, the vast majority of these were successfully negotiated and resolved by the district review panel chairs, post-verification. Professional development at the annual Moderation Conferences in recent years has focused on providing quality advice to schools. This, combined with well-attended assessment workshops, has no doubt contributed to such positive outcomes.

Schools are reminded to include all the required evidence to support their judgments at both monitoring and verification. When preparing submissions schools should refer to:

- Requirements for verification folio (Section 12.5, pp. 65–66)
- Moderation processes for senior certification (QSA 2005) which can be found on the QSA website <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> Assessment > Senior assessment > Forms and procedures.

Statewide comparability

Comparability is the process by which state review panels collect information about the extent to which judgments about levels of achievement are comparable across the state. The state review panel is pleased to report that there was general agreement with both the schools’ and the district review panels’ application of the syllabus standards to these folios.

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

Course coverage

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.
Quality of assessment

The quality of assessment across the state continues to improve. These enhancements have provided better opportunities for students to demonstrate their abilities across the three criteria.

District and state review panels note that many tasks are still too broad, requiring students to solve major public health issues. Feedback also indicates that many schools are still experiencing difficulty in providing appropriate evidence of integrated tasks. Student work is often narrative and lacks credible evidence and support for actions planned.

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 should match the syllabus requirements. Task composition should engage students in addressing a manageable slice of the unit’s health issue and be driven by the Synthesis and evaluation criterion. Language in the tasks 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 interagency health services and consider what is currently on the public health agenda.

Student responses should include a personal thesis and evidence to support arguments and proposed actions. Evidence should be drawn from primary and secondary data available within the local context of the focus health issue and national or international research and practice. In particular, the proposal, design and/or implementation of strategies should be reflective of research and practice informing current health promotion strategies, and should be evaluated in relation to the principles and objectives underpinning these practices.

Subject support

Panel training was conducted in all districts and was very well attended. Panel training focused on looking for evidence in submissions and providing quality advice to schools. A sample folio featuring evidence of threshold standards was considered. The discussions focused around evidence of standards particularly those of the Application and analysis criteria, often critical in decisions about threshold folios.

The state review panel thanks all of the teachers who participate on various panels for their tireless commitment to the system of externally 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 Health Education. Teachers are encouraged to contact their local QSA district coordinator or visit the QSA website for an application form (from the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Assessment > Senior assessment > Information for panellists > Application form for membership of state or district review panel).

The QSA website section on Health Education continues to be updated with annotated examples of assessment and work programs. Any school or individual teacher who would like to receive email updates throughout the year should forward email details to Kim Lavin at <sao@qsa.qld.edu.au>.

Pam Ruddell Kim Lavin
State Review Panel Chair Acting Principal Education Officer
Syllabus

The Home Economics senior syllabus 2001 is in its seventh year of implementation. The periodic revision of this syllabus commenced in 2008 with the formation of a subcommittee. Drafts of the revised syllabus will be available on the QSA website during 2009 and teachers are encouraged to contribute feedback.

The syllabus and support materials are available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Health and Physical Education > Home Economics (2001). All syllabus references in this section refer to this document.

Feedback from districts

All schools offering Home Economics in 2008 had an approved work program. New work programs and any amendments requiring approval are to be submitted via the QSA website. Schools are advised to check their approved work programs to ensure that their current teaching and learning, assessment and profiles match what is stated. As teachers adopt more varied and innovative approaches in lesson design and assessment techniques, amendments may be required.

Monitoring and verification ran smoothly in 2008. Assessment tasks generally provided opportunities for students to achieve the higher standards of the syllabus. Some submissions were bulky, especially from schools which used large project books for process journals. This made it difficult for panellists to handle and review submissions.

Schools are also asked to review the syllabus Requirements for verification folio (Section 8.8, p. 61). Schools must ensure any revision to the assessment program considers and meets syllabus and verification folio requirements. Profiles should also match assessment programs.

Statewide comparability

Comparability is the process by which state review panels collect information about the extent to which judgments about levels of achievement are comparable across the state. In 2008, panels agreed that standards were comparable across the majority of districts.

When developing task-specific criteria sheets, care needs to be taken to ensure the standards descriptors developed are consistent with 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 in the courses by schools. Two areas that may need to be revisited are practical performance and combining criteria.

The syllabus advises that assessment tasks may be combined (Section 8.8, p. 61). Some possibilities for this may be combining:

- an extended written response (criterion 2) and a practical performance task (criterion 3)
- a task representative of Knowledge and understanding (criterion 1) and a practical performance task (criterion 3)
- a task representative of Knowledge and understanding (criterion 1) and an extended written response (criterion 2).

It is a timely stage of the syllabus cycle to experiment with 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.
In this syllabus, the key concepts outlined for core and elective units encourage practical performance in relation to textiles and food preparation rather than house plans.

**Quality of assessment**

Assessment opportunities provide mostly varied and quality tasks which cover a range of topics and issues relevant to and appropriate for adolescents. Areas for improvement in assessment task design identified at monitoring, verification and comparability this year include:

- **Criterion 1: Knowledge and understanding**
  - The demonstration of “thorough understanding” (Section 8.9, p. 62) requires questions to be developed that allow students to match standards. Students need sufficient time and answer space in examinations to demonstrate thorough understanding. Some papers contained only four lines for students to express their answers.
  - Some schools are using outdated materials in their Criterion 1 instruments, and it is suggested that these questions be reviewed to include more current, relevant data.

- **Criterion 2: Reasoning processes**
  - Students’ responses to researching an issue may 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 (Section 3, p. 5). Issues need to be relevant to the students and their region. Issues should not be so complex or sophisticated that students cannot develop logically reasoned arguments and sustain them with evidence within the word limit. Conversely, some tasks are so narrow that they do not provide sufficient challenge or opportunity for students to meet the full range of exit standards.
  - When outlining an assessment instrument for this criterion, refer to the reasoning process model on p. 17 of the syllabus.
  - Students need to develop arguments, not just present information in order to match the standard descriptors. For students to present “logically reasoned arguments” (Section 8.9, p. 62) they need to develop an argument and have supporting evidence.
  - Ensure data is relevant and updated. American data, especially nutritional data, is usually not relevant to the issues presented.
  - When referencing, ensure an acceptable, consistent system is used.
  - It is not a requirement for students to include copies of articles used as reference material in appendices. Appendices should only contain collated statistics or primary data gathered by the student to support their arguments.
  - Word length, as stated in the syllabus (Section 8.5, Reports, p. 55), should be a minimum of 800 words and a maximum of 1000 words in Year 12. Some issues set are too broad and difficult to address within the word limits.
  - It is preferable for teachers to outline the issues rather than student’s developing their own, as this is not a requirement of the standard descriptors. Teachers may choose to set more than one issue to provide students with options to provide sufficient challenge to match the needs of the cohort.

- **Criterion 3: Practical performance**
  - Photographic evidence needs to have comments describing the “quality” of the technique. This must be photographs of student work from the current cohort (Section 8.5, p. 59).
  - It must be clear what the student has decided to produce for the final product. This product should be evident in the process journal and supported by teacher feedback and comments on the task-specific criteria sheet. If possible, a photograph or appropriate visual documentation could be included to assist panels.
  - The practical performance model (Section 6.3, p. 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.
  - Evaluations need to address the process, planning, product and recommendations to match the A–standard descriptors. An evaluation completed on a set template may not provide the opportunity for students to match the A–standard descriptors.
• While task-specific criteria sheets can be used to provide excellent feedback to the students, some teachers leave these sheets unannotated. 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.

• The language education statement in the syllabus (Section 4.1, p. 7) reminds us that we are responsible for developing effective language communication skills. In particular, teachers should help students to use the technical terms and specialised vocabulary of 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 was conducted for Home Economics in all districts. Support was available from the senior education officer via phone, email, fax and the website. Annotated sample assessment tasks and sample work programs are available on the website.

Thank you to all state and district review panel members for what has been a busy year.

Meredith Gleadhill Shauna Bouel
State Review Panel Chair Senior Education Officer
HOSPITALITY STUDIES — A22

Syllabus

Hospitality Studies is currently offered at 85 schools across the state. The publication of the new training package SIT07 Tourism, Hospitality and Events (replacing THH02 Hospitality) required all schools to register for the new training package for 2009 for Year 11 students. Schools may find that if module selection has changed they may have to submit an amendment to their work program, particularly if changing from one certificate to another. Details of how these changes may affect schools can be found in Memo 073/08 “Hospitality Studies”, 18 September 2008, available from the QSA website <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Publications > Memos.

The current syllabus is being reviewed and will be released early next year. QSA will notify schools of the release date of this syllabus via a memo. The syllabus will be implemented with all Year 11 students in 2010, and all schools will need to submit a work program by the end of Term 1, 2010.

The syllabus is available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Health and Physical Education > Hospitality Studies (2001). All syllabus references in this section refer to this document.

Feedback from districts

Monitoring and verification were completed successfully due to the diligence of all panellists, although many panels were short-staffed. Being a panellist provides an excellent opportunity for professional growth and a deeper understanding of the syllabus. Teachers are encouraged to contact their local QSA district coordinator or visit the QSA website <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Assessment > Senior assessment > Information for panellists > Application form for membership of state or district review panel).

Schools are reminded that verification and exit decisions should reflect the fullest and latest information available (Section 8.2, p. 37).

When submitting monitoring and verification submissions, the approved work program should be included. Any amendments to the work program should also be included to assist the review. Any other variations to the work program should be explained in a letter included in the submission. Schools need to be aware that significant changes to the course organisation or assessment plan may require an amendment. Schools wishing to submit amendments to their work programs should add the amendment cover page (available from the QSA website, select Assessment > Senior assessment > Forms and procedures) before sending it to QSA using the electronic work program submission tool WPOnline.

Video evidence presents complications for panels in terms of incompatibility of DVDs or faulty videos. Panels only require a short visual representation of the evidence of an A– and a C–standard, and a short script or voiceover to describe the standards. Glossy, professionally produced television programs are unnecessary. 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”. Refer to the syllabus, Section 8.7, Evidence from schools (p. 44) for full instructions for submitting video evidence.

Safety and hygiene considerations are crucial, and often in the video evidence presented, such issues are noted. Safety and hygiene must comply with industry standards. Schools should also consider industry standards for student dress and equipment used (Food Hygiene Standards).

Statewide comparability

Comparability was completed easily in 2008, as panellists were able to support the standards presented for each of the achievement levels by all four districts.

Moderation advice should be noted by schools for developmental purposes.
Course coverage

Schools are reminded that three topic areas are mandatory in this course of study and that the three criteria need to be addressed each semester. The course should be developmental in nature, with Year 12 assessments being more complex in nature than Year 11 assessments.

Quality of assessment

Quality of assessment is generally appropriate and able to provide opportunities for students to attain the range of standards.

Care must be taken to ensure Criterion 1 tasks allow students to demonstrate the higher standards. This is unlikely when test instruments have few understanding questions. Schools also need to nominate more clearly the knowledge and understanding questions on test papers and criteria sheets. Some schools need to consider the hospitality context of test instruments.

Criterion 2 tasks must also be developed using hospitality situations such as safety, productivity, cuisine styles and customer needs — not nutritional, public health or social gaming issues — which are not within the scope of hospitality.

In some cases, Criterion 2 and Criterion 3 tasks do not show progression from Year 11 to Year 12. Greater complexity and less scaffolding is required later in the course and greater or more complex dimensions need to be included in practical tasks to allow student to match to the higher standards.

This opportunity is not always evident in Criterion 3 tasks. Students who are able to show individual planning and decision making as well as group work have more opportunity to achieve the syllabus standards. Where students only work in teams and documentation is not individual, students may be denied this opportunity. Tasks should also mirror industry standards where possible. Hospitality relies on the central theme of client needs, and tasks which do not consider the service to customers in hospitality events are not fulfilling the ethos of Hospitality.

Subject support

Panel training was conducted in most districts in 2007, and focused on the role of panellists in matching exit standards to evidence in submissions and using the evidence to construct advice and make recommendations.

The introduction of the 2009 Hospitality Studies syllabus will be supported through syllabus orientation workshops in Term 2, 2009. These workshops will be conducted across the state, and information about these can be found on the QSA website, <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > PD and events > Workshops > Year 11-12 > Hospitality.

Given the introduction of the new syllabus, there will also be panel training throughout the state in Term 3, 2009. This panel training will prepare panel members for the process of work program review.

Further information and support is available on the website or through contact with the senior education officer by phone, email or fax.

Thank you to all state and district review panel members and chairs for your worthwhile efforts this year.

Penny Braithwaite
State Review Panel Chair

Shauna Bouel
Senior Education Officer
The revised Indonesian senior syllabus 2008 will be implemented with the Year 11 cohort for the first time in 2009. Review panellists have submitted their work programs for approval, and the deadline for all schools is the end of Term 1, 2009.

Indonesian syllabus and support materials, including new work program requirements, are available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Languages > Indonesian (2001), Indonesian (2008) and Indonesian Extension (2003).

Changes to the syllabus include:

- new dimensions of the exit criteria that will require learning experiences that develop and demonstrate the ability to reason and respond (*Comprehension*), and create and respond (*Conveying meaning*), while knowing and understanding/using language in communicative contexts
- a reduction in the minimum amount of assessment required to:
  - two assessments per skill in Year 11
  - two assessments per skill before verification in Year 12.

Where there is a composite class in 2009, the Year 11 students must follow the new work program and be assessed against the standards in the 2008 syllabus, while the Year 12 students must be assessed using the 2001 syllabus criteria and standards.

In 2008, 94 Year 12 students exited from 19 schools having studied Indonesian including some students who completed a further two semesters in Extension Indonesian.

**Feedback from state**

During monitoring and verification in 2008, the state panel engaged in many professional discussions with schools which promoted shared understandings across the state. The state panel noted the comprehensive and innovative nature of many school submissions and the increased flexibility afforded by the study of Indonesian through shared campus arrangements and/or extension courses.

**Course coverage**

As the syllabus is in the final part of the cycle, assessment issues tend to be similar from year to year. Schools are reminded:

- The syllabus requires increasing complexity over the two-year course of study. Students should demonstrate through more complex tasks, and in their own spoken and written texts, an understanding and use of language that matches exit standards descriptors and meets syllabus requirements.
- Student achievement is best judged by matching student work with the syllabus standards descriptors rather than using the record of student outcomes on the school profile to reach a decision. Performance at a standard must be consistent in order to achieve that standard at exit. Each assessment task should be judged in terms of a standard, not as a threshold judgment that combines standards (e.g. A/B).
- Flexible and original language use may not be demonstrated in spoken or written tasks if there is no requirement for knowledge and skills to be applied in unfamiliar and/or unrehearsed contexts.
- Folios of students who have exited the subject may be need to be submitted for monitoring or verification if they are the top-ranked student, the only example of a level of achievement and/or a required sample within a level of achievement.
- Appropriately cued and labelled recorded evidence (audio or video) provides evidence of school’s decisions about standards for *Speaking*. Decisions about relative achievement may not be supported by the panel where recorded evidence and evidence in the folio of student work do not match the standards awarded. All *Speaking* tasks should be recorded to ensure that evidence is available when negotiating with review panels. Open-ended questions promote discussion and allow conversation to be initiated and sustained.
• Student-written text at an A–standard 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.

• The process of reviewing is often more straightforward when schools provide specific additional advice to panel which:
  − outlines changes to a course of study. Schools sometimes make temporary changes to their work programs; permanent changes may require an approved amendment, but a “one-off” change may be explained by a letter to the panel signed by the principal or the school moderator
  − explains any adjustments to the conditions and/or design of assessment.

• An E–standard must not be awarded for non-submission of student work, as this is inconsistent with QSA policy. Schools should seek to find additional evidence to support judgments when formal assessment has not been completed.

Quality of assessment

Quality assessment should be designed to allow students opportunities to demonstrate the criteria and standards. Some concerns identified through moderation processes include:

• spontaneous language use. Tasks need to allow students to use language developed in rehearsed and/or familiar situations, as well as in unrehearsed and unfamiliar situations and contexts. Schools should be able to clearly identify what aspects of an assessment task provide this opportunity

• demonstration of all aspects of the criteria in Listening and Reading. Higher-order thinking skills (deduction and appreciation) should be assessed on all tasks and require, for example, that students “collect, analyse, and organise information in order to make decisions”, “evaluate … information” and “infer intentions and attitudes” (see Sections 3 and 8 of the 2001 syllabus).

• use of authentic materials in order to provide students with opportunities to draw on their own interests and experiences and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in a realistic context.

• use of open-ended questions to assess comprehension. A list of questions sometimes gives clues about information in a text. To avoid this, a more general task or set of questions could be used.

Subject support

The QSA conducted syllabus orientation workshops and review panel training across the state in 2008. Online syllabus support materials have also been developed and can be found on the QSA website.

Syllabus orientation workshops were presented by the Teaching and Learning division of the QSA and held in all districts in Semester 1 2008, and provided information about the new syllabus and work programs requirements.

Review panel training was held in Semester 2 2008 at the annual Moderation Conference, with the focus being work program approval. Review processes were modelled. Panellists reviewed each other’s programs and provided feedback.

Next year will be the first year for the implementation of the 2008 syllabus with Year 11 students. To support schools through this, there will be information about assessment practices will be developed and added to the website in 2009.

This year has been a very challenging year for the Indonesian state review panel, as we saw the passing of our dedicated panel colleague and friend, Carolyn Townsend. Carolyn’s interest in and enthusiasm for the teaching of Indonesian is to be truly admired. Her innovative and creative work has provided an opportunity for all of us to professionally develop and learn. Carolyn will be greatly missed.

The state review panel also thanks Karen Barnes for her dedicated work and friendship while on panel and wishes her every success in her retirement. The state review panel also recognises the efforts of the teachers of Indonesian throughout the state. 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 submissions in 2008.

Kath Symmons
State Review Panel Chair

Terry McPherson
Senior Education Officer
INFORMATION PROCESSING AND TECHNOLOGY — A16

Syllabus

This is the fourth year of implementation of the Information Processing and Technology (IPT) senior syllabus 2004. A syllabus subcommittee formed to prepare the 2010 syllabus has begun its deliberations, with Jason Zagami as convenor. As part of the IPT syllabus revision, the QSA sought feedback through a survey from schools on the syllabus. Teachers of IPT are encouraged to provide feedback on syllabus drafts as they become available in 2009.

The syllabus is available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Technologies > Information Processing and Technology (2004).

Feedback from districts

Minor work program amendments were processed from a few schools, and more appear to be adopting an A/B model to adapt to falling student numbers.

Monitoring and verification were conducted successfully across the state. Submissions were generally well prepared but instances were noted of incomplete submissions, where required items were missing.

Two district panels welcomed new chairs in 2008. The staffing of A16 panels remains an issue with some districts reporting high turnover and continuing loss of experienced panellists, coupled with difficulty in recruiting panellists with sufficient experience or subject knowledge. New panellists were welcomed but their relative inexperience has placed an additional burden on more experienced panellists and chairs.

Four state panellists supplemented numbers and expertise on three verification panels. Concerns were raised in some districts about the experience and knowledge of those teaching the subject, particularly in smaller schools. Teachers are encouraged to seek permission to attend monitoring meetings as observers.

Continuing use of electronic comments for R6 forms has reduced the workload for chairs and has made information to schools more consistent and more closely aligned to QSA protocols.

Statewide comparability

A high level of comparability was noted at Limited Achievement (LA), Sound Achievement (SA) and High Achievement (HA) levels, and it would seem that there is a clear understanding of these exit levels across the state. Less comparability was noted in Very High Achievement (VHA) samples, with a particular area of concern being the restricted justification provided in students' evaluations of completed tasks. Despite this, some excellent folios were viewed which clearly met syllabus standards.

The state panel noted that SA folios were typified by inconsistency which led, in turn, to generally subjective placement within the band. Clearer discernment between SA folios might be achieved through an adjustment of the balance between supervised and unsupervised assessment. The placement of folios at LA seemed indicative of student disengagement with course content, and was typified by incomplete assessment. Syllabus standards, rather than task completion, must form the basis of decisions.

Five unresolved submissions were received and satisfactorily resolved through negotiation with the schools.

District review panel chairs, panellists and schools should be familiar with procedures for atypical sample folios, variable progression rate students, and special provisions. Information is available on the QSA website under Assessment > Senior assessment.

Course coverage

The reviewed submissions all satisfied syllabus requirements, however the issues reported in previous years persist, namely:

- the inaccurate assessment of conceptual schema diagrams within the Information and intelligent systems (IIS) topic
• the integration of Human-computer interaction (HCI) into assessment rather than its being identified and explicitly assessed
• the absence of scaffolding for student evaluation of completed project work. The use of self-determined criteria was rarely seen, representing a critical oversight, as it is a clear discriminator between levels of achievement.

Quality of assessment

The reviewed submissions included a wide range of assessment items. These were generally appropriate and met the demands of the syllabus. However, the state panel were concerned with the frequent use of stock assessment tasks drawn from older textbooks or where students were given little or no choice in the problem underlying their major projects. These tasks were unsuitable for lower-achieving students because of their inherent difficulty. In all cases, the tasks denied higher-achieving students the opportunity to display their ability to make original design decisions and to develop novel solutions.

A concern raised in previous years, and again noted in 2008, was that group work was awarded a universal mark, thus preventing differentiation between individuals.

In some cases, schools had adopted exit criteria and had used these for each task the students completed. This reveals a misunderstanding of syllabus requirements in terms of continuous assessment. It needs to be understood that not all items demonstrate all exit criteria. There was little consistency in standards schema and there were instances where marks were used with little or no indication as to how these were translated into A–E standards.

Subject support

Support materials for IPT are now available on the QSA website with annotated sample tasks for major projects and writing tasks.

Teachers of IPT are encouraged to use these online sites for sharing and developing of assessment and resources, and fostering professional discussions:

• QSITE — Queensland Society for Information Technology in Education <www.qsite.edu.au>
• the Information Processing and Technology group on the edna website <www.edna.edu.au>.

To enrol in the group, follow this link: <www.groups.edna.edu.au/course/enrol.php?id=489>.

Margaret Lloyd
State Review Panel Chair

Trish Haupt
Principal Education Officer
Syllabus

This is the second year of implementation of the Information Technology Systems (ITS) senior syllabus 2006 (amended November 2008). The syllabus amendment was in accordance with the changes to Certificate II in Information Technology ICA20105. No other changes were made, and no adjustments to work programs were required. The amended syllabus will be used for the first time with Year 11 students in 2009. Memo 095/08, Information Technology Systems senior syllabus, 1 December 2008, advised schools about the amended ITS syllabus. Schools offering ITS should have received the new ITS senior syllabus.

It is important that all schools use the syllabus titled:

Information Technology Systems 2006 (amended November 2008)

and not the earlier amended syllabus titled:

Information Technology Systems 2006 (amended 2008)
as this version contained incorrect information for awarding exit level of achievement.

The correct version of the amended syllabus has the table titled “Awarding exit levels of achievement” on page 43. This table is the same as Table 3 (p. 42) from the 2006 syllabus.

Teachers of ITS should be aware of the information about the competencies for Certificate II in Information Technology. Syllabus information regarding the Required competencies from Certificate II in Information Technology (ICA20505) are listed on pp.14–24, and it is important to note that not all of the competencies listed in the respective sections are compulsory. Schools need to refer to pp. 25–26, where the explanation is provided for the prerequisite, required and other competencies. Schools are required to achieve all the required competencies and choose a minimum of three and maximum of five from the other competencies.

Feedback from districts

Throughout 2008, the work program approval process has achieved 95 per cent of schools with approved work programs. However, there is continued misinterpretation by schools of the allocation of time to core and extension material. The syllabus states: “The course of study in ITS consists of Core and Extension material. The core is mandatory and occupies 70 per cent of course time. Extension material occupies 30 per cent of course time allocation” (Section 4.2, p. 5). Schools must organise subject matter for the five interwoven threads accordingly. It is pleasing to note that misunderstandings have been worked through with schools to ensure the approval of work programs.

District review panel chairs indicated that both monitoring and verification meetings operated effectively, with the continued commitment and hard work of panellists. New panellists were welcomed, but their relative inexperience places a burden on more senior panellists and state panel members co-opted to assist with monitoring and verification meetings. Some district review panel chairs highlighted difficulties when reviewing student folios at verification because of electronic submissions being corrupted, and files being disorganised and not user-friendly to access.

The state panel was concerned with the inconsistency of judgments across districts with some schools using the incorrect syllabus version to determine and award exit levels of achievement. It was evident that two district review panels did not note this discrepancy, but have now been alerted with procedures to action the problem.

Statewide comparability

Overall, there was comparability with judgments across the state in the application of standards and differentiation between levels of achievement. This indicated that teachers have engaged well with the descriptors and, for the most part, are making appropriate decisions about student achievement. There were only two unresolved submissions this year, which clearly confirms the consistent work being conducted by the district review panels.
The comparability process highlighted some notable trends in 2008. District panel chairs, panellists and schools should be aware of the importance of applying exit level of achievements (VHA, HA, SA, LA, VLA) in the student profile’s Level of Achievement column. Schools are also discouraged from applying plus (+) and minus (–) measure of difference, and A, B, C, D and E standards in the exit Level of Achievement column.

District review panel chairs, panellists and schools should be familiar with procedures for atypical sample folios, variable progression rate students, and special provisions. Information is available on the QSA website under Assessment > Senior assessment.

The district review panel has a pivotal role in ensuring that effective communication occurs between the panel and schools. The state review panel encourages district review panels to place an important emphasis on building effective relationships and partnerships with schools.

**Course coverage**

It is important that schools use a balance of assessment techniques and conditions over the developmental four semesters of an ITS course.

The syllabus states that: “It is essential that a project is documented through all of its phases, as outlined in the project development model” (Section 7.5, Projects, Documentation, p. 35). To ensure syllabus requirements are met, projects and the full implementation of all phases of the project development model should be adhered to in school assessment plans.

If the project development model is divided into two or more separate assessment items (for example, the design–develop–evaluate (D–D–E) cycle of the extended major project), then it is recommended that another opportunity should be provided that incorporates all phases of the project development model.

Schools need to become fully aware of the importance of implementing the contexts, inputs, processes and products (CIPP) model in the evaluation dimension of the Problem solving criteria. Schools should refer to the syllabus (p. 41) for practical advice on the model, and visit the ITS edna online community site for examples of good practice and student responses using the CIPP model.

**Quality of assessment**

Comparability highlighted that most schools are consistently refining their assessment practices, resulting in varied, challenging and appropriate assessment instruments that meet the demands of the syllabus. There are exceptions, with schools’ misinterpretation of the importance of the CIPP model in the evaluation dimension of the Problem solving criteria.

To facilitate effective review processes, state and district panels would appreciate, as a minimum, a hardcopy of each student profile, and clean assessment instruments.

**Subject support**

Support materials for ITS are available on the QSA website, with annotated sample tasks for minor projects and a written task.

ITS teachers are encouraged to use these online sites for sharing and developing of assessment and resources, and fostering professional discussions:

- the Information Technology Systems group on the edna website <www.edna.edu.au>
  To enrol in the group, follow this link: <www.groups.edna.edu.au/course/enrol.php?id=865>

Lee-Ann Barton                Trish Haupt  
State Review Panel Chair      Principal Education Officer
Syllabus

The revised Italian senior syllabus 2008 will be implemented with the Year 11 cohort for the first time in 2009. Review panellists have already submitted their work programs for approval, and schools are reminded that the deadline for their submissions is the end of Term 1, 2009.

Italian syllabus and support materials, including new work program requirements, are available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Languages > Italian (2001) and Italian (2008).

The revised syllabus incorporates a number of changes, including:

- the introduction of a languages inquiry process that is centred on intercultural understanding
- new dimensions of the exit criteria that will require learning experiences that develop and demonstrate the ability to reason and respond (Comprehension), and create and respond (Conveying meaning), while knowing and understanding / using language in communicative contexts
- a reduction in the minimum amount of assessment required to:
  - two assessments per skill in Year 11
  - two assessments per skill before verification in Year 12 (three skills assessed in Term 3)
  - one or two assessments between verification and exit, in any combination of macroskills.

When designing assessments that allow opportunities to demonstrate the 2008 syllabus criteria and standards, in the context of the new minimum assessment requirements, careful consideration will need to be given to:

- ensuring that sufficient opportunities are given to students to cover a range of topics and text types
- making decisions about student achievement based on evidence in the folio, rather than relying on grade summaries on profiles
- designing assessments based on the exit standards; determining firstly what needs to be demonstrated, and then the best manner of doing so in the context of the topic that has been studied, for example:
  - providing opportunities, in Receptive skills, for students to demonstrate analysis, evaluation, conclusions, and decisions.
  - designing Speaking tasks that require the demonstration of spontaneity and the ability to sustain a conversation.

Where there are composite classes in 2009, the Year 11 students must follow the new work program and be assessed against the standards in the 2008 syllabus, while the Year 12 students must be assessed using the 2001 syllabus criteria and standards. Where new work programs have been developed with a new set of topics and a new progression of functions and grammar, flexibility will need to be exercised to ensure that, in this transition year, neither cohort is disadvantaged, for example, that the Year 12 students do not repeat content and texts already studied in Year 11. It would be valuable to include a covering letter so that review panels are made aware of how the composite class program has been organised.

In 2008, 158 Year 12 students exited from 26 schools having studied Italian.

Feedback from state

Schools, overall, have a very good understanding of the requirements of monitoring and verification and sample folios are predominantly matched correctly to the syllabus standards. In general, the breadth and depth of assessment items allows students to demonstrate their language skills. The panel offers the following advice:

- It is important to design assessment that elicits evidence for all standards. A task that gives opportunities to demonstrate a C–standard may not allow the demonstration of A–standard skills. For example, a listening text containing only present tense verbs, no subordinate clauses, and spoken at a slow rate, would not allow the demonstration of deduction of meaning from context or the drawing of appropriate conclusions at an A–standard.
To give students the best possible opportunity to demonstrate their language skills, they need to be exposed to a wide variety of text types and subject matter across the topic being assessed.

Some assessment tasks and questions seen were not sufficiently complex and demanding to allow students to demonstrate all criteria descriptors for an A–standard. Conversely, outstanding achievement in response to challenging assessment should be recognised.

Concerning thresholds, panel will be more able to support school judgments where students have had multiple opportunities to demonstrate their language skills against the syllabus standards. School judgments on threshold students are more difficult to support where tasks and text types do not allow this.

When choice of text types is allowed in Writing, students may gravitate to a genre that is familiar to them rather than exploring a range of text types. Learning experiences and assessment need to be planned so students work with a wide range of text types. While multiple options may be desirable in a final piece of assessment, earlier tasks need to specify certain text types.

To access recordings of Speaking more readily, review panels would appreciate being advised of the recording format (e.g. mp3 or wav files).

**Course coverage**

Course coverage was, in general, comprehensive. Nonetheless, panel was concerned about the use of outdated texts, repetition of same content in various formats, and with Speaking and Writing tasks duplicating each other.

**Quality of assessment**

While some outstanding and imaginative examples of assessment were seen, the panel offers this advice:

- In Speaking, some teachers provide too much input, preventing students from expressing themselves fully.
- A variety of tenses is required in both Speaking and Writing; some tasks did not promote or allow this.
- While there are different ways of marking/grading Writing, teachers need to carefully annotate, highlight or underline the task-specific criteria & standards schema to indicate how a judgment was made.

**Subject support**

Syllabus orientation workshops and review panel training were conducted in 2008, focusing on the requirements of work programs. Materials associated with these can be found on the QSA website <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Languages > Italian (2008) > Advice for teachers. Information to inform assessment design (that provides opportunities for students to demonstrate the criteria and standards) will also be developed and added to the website in 2009.

The state panel recognises the quality of outcomes achieved by teachers of Italian in Queensland, their tireless efforts, promotion and support of the study of Italian. It also recognises the work of all teachers and panellists who maintain the system of externally moderated, school-based assessment and whose contributions enrich the practice of their colleagues and the outcomes of students across the state.

Sarina Kearney
State Review Panel Chair

Lester Ford
Acting Principal Education Officer


Syllabus

The revised Japanese senior syllabus 2008 will be implemented with the Year 11 cohort for the first time in 2009. Review panellists have already submitted their work programs for approval, and schools are reminded that the deadline for their submission is the end of Term 1, 2009.

Japanese syllabus and support materials, including new work program requirements, are available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Languages > Japanese (2001) and Japanese (2008).

There are a number of changes to the syllabus, including:

- new dimensions of the exit criteria that will require learning experiences that develop and demonstrate the ability to reason and respond (Comprehension), and create and respond (Conveying meaning), while knowing and understanding / using language in communicative contexts
- a reduction in the minimum amount of assessment required to:
  - two assessments per skill in Year 11
  - two assessments per skill before verification in Year 12.

Where there are composite classes in 2009, the Year 11 students must follow the new work program and be assessed against the standards in the 2008 syllabus, while the Year 12 students must be assessed using the 2001 syllabus criteria and standards.

In 2008, 1353 Year 12 students exited from 196 schools having studied Japanese. Of these, 34 students from 26 schools studied Japanese through the Brisbane School of Distance Education, which also provided the Virtual Schooling Service for 22 students in 6 schools.

Feedback from districts

Moderation proceeded smoothly in 2008. Few significant issues arose at monitoring, and almost all schools achieved agreement to their proposed levels of achievement and relative achievement of samples folios by the end of verification.

Work programs of state and district panellists for the 2008 syllabus are currently required. Other schools have also submitted work programs. Generally, work programs are meeting requirements.

Statewide comparability

Comparability is the process by which state review panels collect information about the extent to which judgments about levels of achievement are comparable across the state. The state panel was able to find evidence that there was comparability of judgments of levels of achievement in the sample submissions across the state.

Course coverage

As the syllabus is in the final part of the cycle of implementation, issues about course coverage have been similar from year to year, and have related to certain understandings and practices. Schools are reminded that:

- the syllabus requires increasing complexity over the two-year course of study through less-scaffolded tasks
- judgments about student achievement are made by matching student work with the syllabus standards descriptors rather than using the record of student outcomes on the school profile to reach a decision about an interim or exit level of achievement. Schools should look for evidence of the match of student work with a particular syllabus standard, not as a threshold judgment that combines standards (e.g. A/B)
students should demonstrate range and depth of language use by applying knowledge and skills developed in both familiar contexts with rehearsed tasks and unfamiliar contexts with unrehearsed tasks.

Quality of assessment

Quality assessment should be designed to allow students opportunities to demonstrate the criteria and standards. Key areas of concern identified through moderation processes include:

- spontaneous language use — tasks need to allow students to use language developed in rehearsed and/or familiar situations, as well as in unrehearsed and unfamiliar situations and contexts. Schools should clearly identify what aspects of an assessment task provided these opportunities.

- opportunities to demonstrate all aspects of the criteria in Listening and Reading assessment. Higher-order thinking skills (deduction and appreciation) should be assessed on all tasks and require, for example, that students “collect, analyse, and organise information in order to make decisions” and, “evaluate … information” (2001 syllabus, Section 3, p. 6) and “infer the speaker’s intentions and attitudes” (2001 syllabus, Section 8.8, p. 48).

When implementing the 2008 syllabus for the first time, quality assessment design will be needed to ensure that sufficient opportunities are given to students when completing two assessments per skill in Year 11 and in Year 12, prior to verification. A range of topics and text types must be covered, and reduced assessment requirements will mean careful planning is required. The requirement for an assessment plan in school work programs is intended as an appropriate response to this concern.

Subject support

The QSA conducted syllabus orientation workshops and review panel training across the state in 2008. Online syllabus support materials have also been developed and can be found on the QSA website.

Syllabus orientation workshops were presented by the Teaching and Learning Division of the QSA and held in all districts in Semester 1, 2008. These provided information about the new syllabus and work programs requirements.

Review panel training was held in the second semester across three districts, with the focus being work program approval. Review processes were modelled through the review of a work program and the completion of the review notes. Panellists then reviewed each other’s program and provided feedback.

Next year, to support schools through the implementation of the 2008 syllabus, there will be information about assessment practices on the QSA website in the form of an assessment-design toolkit.

The state panel would like to recognise the quality outcomes achieved by teachers of Japanese in Queensland, and the contributions of all teachers involved in moderation processes.

Jody Friend            Terry McPherson
Acting State Review Panel Chair   Senior Education Officer
LEGAL STUDIES — B21

Syllabus

The implementation of the Legal Studies senior syllabus 2007 has been very successful. Positive feedback has been received regarding the clarification of the general objectives which align very clearly with the standards matrix. It is important that these changes in the syllabus are evident in assessment tasks for the new syllabus.

The syllabus is available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Business and Commerce > Legal Studies (2007). All references in this section refer to this document.

Feedback from districts

The majority of schools within each district have an approved work program. Some schools have already begun the process of fine tuning work programs and are submitting amendments to make minor changes. Schools wishing to submit amendments to their work programs should add the amendment cover page (available from the QSA website, select Assessment > Senior assessment > Forms and procedures) before sending it to QSA using the electronic work program submission tool WPOnline.

Monitoring is the process by which review panels consider the school’s implementation of a course and the standards of assessment in Authority subjects after approximately half of the course of study has been completed. It is very important that feedback and recommendations from monitoring are implemented by the school to help ensure that syllabus requirements are addressed prior to verification.

Design of assessment instruments is a very important process in the development of a course of study. It is vital that a check is made to ensure that the general objectives being assessed are evident in the assessment instrument. Task-specific criteria sheets can assist teachers in this process, as they provide feedback about the depth of the criteria being assessed and ensure that grades are awarded that meet with the syllabus standards.

Verification is the process by which review panels advise schools on standards of Year 12 student achievement relative to syllabus descriptors of standards. Atypical sample folios may be encountered in verification submissions when a school is obliged to submit all student folios in small groups or where a school has no typical sample that would demonstrate a required mid- or threshold-level of achievement. Atypical folios should take into account the stage of the course reached, using exit standards descriptors as a guide and considering the opportunities presented to a student up to that stage. It is unlikely that the student would have been given opportunities to demonstrate all aspects of the exit standard descriptors to the same depth or degree as a student who has studied four semesters.

Statewide comparability

Comparability is the process by which state review panels collect information about the extent to which judgments about levels of achievement are comparable across the state.

Schools are reminded that it is the students’ work — not standards on the profile in isolation — that form 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 evident in students’ work as it is reflected in the standards matrix, with consideration of the six Underlying principles of exit assessment (Section 8.1, p. 42), and demands and conditions of the task. Formulaic methods, including the averaging of standards, should not be used.
Course coverage

Legal Studies is principally intended to help students develop knowledge, skills and attitudes to enhance their ability to participate as informed, proactive and critical members of society. Students are encouraged to understand the impact of the law, legal system and legal processes in their daily lives (Section 1, p. 1). When designing tasks it is important to consider the global aims of the course. Assessment items should not focus on very narrow aspects of the law but rather allow for students to develop informed commentaries about aspects of the legal system.

Schools are implementing a variety of interesting and innovative courses. A few schools have chosen to offer students a school based elective with the most popular choice being International law. It is important to note that when students choose to select an international topic for their Independent study it must focus on an issue facing Australian society (Section 7, Independent study, p. 39).

Quality of assessment

The quality of assessment tasks remains very high throughout the state. Schools are challenging students with innovative assessment items that allow abilities to be demonstrated in the general objectives. However, teachers should be careful to frame assessment items so that the stated assessment criteria are actually being assessed. When framing evaluation questions, simply using the word “evaluate” in the stem of the question does not necessarily mean that the criterion is being assessed. It is more effective to give specific instructions based on the general objectives and examples (Section 3, pp. 3–5).

It is important to ensure that the assessment task suits the current cohort of students. Using the same assessment from year to year is not always an effective way to allow students to demonstrate their ability in the general objectives of the course. Particular cohorts may respond very differently to assessment instruments from previous cohorts. Interruptions to class schedules, time available and the focus of the section of study may also impact how assessment instruments are implemented.

The objective Communication and research skills has been redefined the 2007 syllabus, and teachers need to be aware of this change. Communication and research skills encompasses:

- the research process
- the organisation and presentation of information
- proficient use of legal and law-related terminology, definitions and documents
- proficient use of appropriate modes, forms and styles of communication.

(Section 3.4, p. 5)

Some assessment instruments have not allowed students to demonstrate their ability to provide convincing and detailed conclusions due to poor task design. An area of concern is that students are not given sufficient opportunities to demonstrate their ability in Evaluation due to the design of the task or the expected length of the response. The syllabus provides suggested word lengths for assessment techniques and this should assist teachers to design assessment (Section 8.3, pp. 46–47).

The 2007 syllabus requires assessment tasks to be accompanied by a task-specific criteria sheet that provides evidence of how students meet standards associated with assessment criteria (Section 8.5, p. 48). Task-specific criteria sheets set out the requirements of the task in terms of the syllabus standards. The extent to which the syllabus standards are used in a task-specific criteria sheet will vary according to the general objectives associated with the task and according to the stage in the course. Descriptors in task-specific criteria sheets need to be reflective of what the students know and can do. Task-specific criteria sheets do not describe what students can not or did not do.

Task-specific criteria sheets support teacher judgments on the quality of student work, rather than the quantity. The syllabus standards discriminate on the basis of qualities and quality. Teachers of Legal Studies use qualitative professional judgments when marking student work according to the standards of the syllabus.

Using marks to award grades for Knowledge and understanding on short responses is inconsistent with our standards-referenced system. Teachers of Legal Studies consistently make good judgments by applying the standards. With the introduction of the new syllabus, it is timely to consider the consistent
application of standards for all criteria in assessment items and the cessation of the use of marks for all assessment instruments.

Subject support

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 Legal Studies. Teachers are encouraged to contact their local QSA district coordinator or visit the QSA website for an application form (from the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Assessment > Senior assessment > Information for panellists > Application form for membership of state or district review panel).

Panel training for all districts will occur during 2009 in preparation for the first verification of the 2007 syllabus. Any school or individual teacher who would like to receive email updates throughout the year should forward email details to Bernadette Stacey at <sao@qsa.qld.edu.au>.

Karyl Young Bernadette Stacey
State Review Panel Chair Senior Education Officer
The Marine Studies senior syllabus 2004 (amended 2006) enters its fifth year of implementation in 2009. The 2006 amendment was principally to update Qualifications for teachers of Marine Studies and Requirements for vessels for Marine Studies (Section 9, pp. 68–69).

The syllabus is available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Science > Marine Studies (2004). All references in this section refer to this document.

Feedback from districts

A small number of new schools or schools taking up Marine Studies for the first time presented work programs for approval this year. The subject continues to attract students who value the practical aspects of the course and the integration of these with the more theoretical aspects.

As some schools experience changes in staffing and availability of resources, schools are taking the opportunity to submit amendments to approved work programs, refining the assessment program and the sequence of units offered. This process allows schools to ensure that the program being offered optimises the learning experiences for the students and continues to be relevant to the cohort. Schools wishing to submit amendments to their work programs should add the amendment cover page (available from the QSA website, select Assessment > Senior assessment > Forms and procedures) before sending it to QSA using the electronic work program submission tool WPOnline.

In 2008, monitoring and verification submissions generally reflected syllabus requirements and, in most cases, submissions included the required items as described in the syllabus (Section 7.7, pp. 62–63), and reflected careful attention to compiling appropriate folios. Verification proceeded smoothly with only minor issues identified. The common themes in advice provided to schools related to task design and the construction of task-specific criteria sheets. The state panel was not required to consider any unresolved submissions in Marine Studies this year.

Statewide comparability

The district samples presented at comparability provided a clear overview of the standard of student work across the state. State panel found sufficient evidence of the match of the qualities of student work with the appropriate syllabus standards descriptors to support the judgments of the interim levels of achievements as proposed in the sample district submissions.

It was noted that within the levels of achievement there was some variability across the state, particularly at the Very High Achievement (VHA) and High Achievement (HA) levels, and schools are encouraged to ensure that their student folios provide sufficient evidence to support the decisions related to placements that have been made.

Course coverage

The submissions examined at comparability demonstrated that schools have effectively covered the mandatory aspects of the syllabus, while at the same time utilising unique features of their local environment to develop engaging and effective elective units. Manipulative skills are being successfully developed utilising features of the local marine environment. Most schools undertake a substantial field trip during the two years and this provides excellent opportunities to develop rich learning experiences in the Skill dimension. Those schools that rely on shorter but more frequent trips to develop skills are, in most cases, still able to provide appropriate opportunities for students to develop the skills described in the syllabus.
Quality of assessment

Schools continue to develop a wide variety of tasks that effectively align with the syllabus. There are some concerns that while most schools are developing criteria to inform decisions that are made against student work, the criteria in some cases are not sufficiently aligned to the syllabus standards to allow these decisions to appropriately support exit decisions. Schools need to use the exit standards to inform the development of task-specific criteria. Issues remain with some schools providing tasks with sufficient challenge and complexity to demonstrate A– and B–standards descriptors, particularly in the understanding subject matter component of Knowledge and understanding. In the Information processing and reasoning criterion, submissions provided some excellent examples of effectively scaffolded extended responses. Schools are advised that, while scaffolding of tasks is important in Year 11, the level of scaffolding is expected to reduce as the students progress through Year 12. Submissions provided some effective integrated tasks, generally accompanied by criteria that are both task-specific, and closely aligned to the syllabus standards. A number of schools are extensively annotating these to provide further evidence of the standard of the student responses. This practice is to be encouraged as it provides further evidence connecting the observed performance to the standards described in the syllabus.

Subject support

Panel training was conducted in Semester 1, 2008, with emphasis on the protocols associated with monitoring and verification and the importance of providing evidence-based feedback to schools.

Kathy Steggles               Bill Wilson
State Review Panel Chair    Senior Education Officer
**MATHEMATICS A — A36**

**Syllabus**

The sixth cohort of Year 12 students exited under the Mathematics A senior syllabus 2001 in 2008. Following a periodic revision, the 2008 syllabus has been released for implementation in 2009.

Mathematics A syllabuses and support materials are available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Mathematics.

**Feedback from districts**

All schools completed the verification process with approved work programs for the 2001 syllabus. 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 2008 verification process. District review panel chairs again performed a remarkable job, providing high-quality evidence-based feedback in terms of syllabus requirements. Most not-agreed-to submissions were satisfactorily resolved in post-verification negotiations between schools and district review panel chairs.

**Statewide comparability**

Comparability is the process by which state review panels collect information about the extent to which judgments about levels of achievement are comparable across the state. State panel found sufficient evidence of comparability across the state.

Schools are reminded of the necessary procedures for variable progression rate students, as this is an area needing attention. Details can be found on the QSA website under Assessment > Senior assessment > Forms and procedures > Variable progression rate students.

**Course coverage**

In most cases, coverage of the course content is thorough, with sufficient depth and scope and appropriate treatment of elective material. Mandatory aspects of the course continue to be covered to an appropriate level.

**Quality of assessment**

Generally, assessment packages provided students with opportunities to display the attributes required in each standard at each level of achievement. In some cases however, the opportunity to display complexity and initiative at the very top end was lacking due to the leading nature of the discriminatory *Modelling and problem solving* questions. Students need to have opportunities to decide what needs to be done and determine how to proceed by analysing a situation, rather than being given a specific direction to follow.

The state review panel is concerned about the lack of feedback to students detailing what was lacking in responses to questions. In more instances than in past years, responses were merely ticked or crossed with no indication of flaws. This also makes it more difficult for district review panels to find evidence to justify the school’s decisions.

In many instances again the threshold students were not submitted as per QSA requirements (refer to Memo 065/08, “Year 12 verification for authority subjects”, 21 August 2008). No additional information was provided by schools to explain the omissions. Such omissions are becoming more widespread and may prevent panels from verifying levels of achievement.

Both schools and district review panels are encouraged to consider the contribution of all three criteria to the determination of the relative levels of achievement. In some cases, it would appear the *Knowledge and procedures* and *Modelling and problem solving* are being used to make the major decisions, with
little consideration given to *Communication and justification*. Other cases show that teachers have twinned the *Communication and justification* result with the *Modelling and problem solving* result rather than making a judgment on the quality of work in the sample folios. This has disadvantaged some students resulting in a reduced rung placement, particularly at the threshold Sound Achievement (SA) level.

**Subject support**

Syllabus orientation workshops were held in Semester 1 2008. This was followed by panel training in Semester 2, focusing on the requirements for work program approval for the 2008 syllabus. The Mathematics senior subject area of the QSA website has been reconfigured so that it is consistent with other subjects, and additional support materials will be added during 2009.

Andrew Foster
State Review Panel Chair

Wayne Stevens
Senior Education Officer
MATHEMATICS B — A37

Syllabus

The sixth cohort of Year 12 students exited under the Mathematics B senior syllabus 2001 in 2008. Following a periodic revision, the 2008 syllabus has been released for implementation in 2009. Mathematics B syllabuses and support materials are available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Mathematics.

Feedback from districts

All schools with exiting students are operating from approved work programs developed under the 2001 syllabus. District review panel chairs indicated that monitoring and verification days generally ran smoothly. Many district panel chairs continue to work long hours to finalise advice to schools and their efforts are highly valued and greatly appreciated. Feedback provided to schools by district panels has targeted:

- verification — decisions about interim levels of achievement
- school’s judgments about responses in sample folios relative to the syllabus standards descriptors
- the effectiveness of assessment in allowing opportunities for students to demonstrate the criteria across the range of standards,
- coverage of the course.

Statewide comparability

State panel found sufficient evidence of the match of the qualities of student work with the appropriate syllabus standards descriptors to support the judgments of the interim levels of achievement as proposed in the sample submissions from all districts.

Course coverage

Issues such as providing opportunities for challenge and initiative were discussed by the state panel. This included providing opportunities for students to achieve in the higher-order attributes of Modelling and problem solving and Communication and justification. In some cases this was dependant on the nature of the cohort at the individual school, however opportunities to address these higher-order dimensions are needed to enable students to obtain the higher levels of achievement.

Quality of assessment

At the Very High Achievement (VHA) level, there are instances of students not being provided with sufficient opportunities to address the higher-order attributes of Modelling and problem solving and Communication and justification, thus preventing students from achieving A–standard in these criteria. In some assessment items, particularly but not limited to Alternative assessment, there is a tendency to over-assess through the quantity of questions asked. This can negatively impact upon Sound Achievement (SA) and Limited Achievement (LA) students, and does not assist the High Achievement (HA) and Very High Achievement (VHA) students considerably due to the syllabus descriptors being assessed in that particular question or instrument.

Subject support

Syllabus orientation workshops were held in Semester 1 2008. This was followed by panel training in Semester 2, focusing on the requirements for work program approval for the 2008 syllabus.

The Mathematics senior subject area of the QSA website has been reconfigured so that it is consistent with other subjects, and additional support materials will be added during 2009.

Megan Ball Wayne Stevens
Acting State Review Panel Chair Senior Education Officer
MATHEMATICS C — A38

Syllabus

The sixth cohort of Year 12 students exited under the Mathematics C senior syllabus 2001 in 2008. Following a periodic revision, the 2008 syllabus has been released for implementation in 2009.

Mathematics C syllabuses and support materials are available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Mathematics.

Feedback from districts

The few programs from the 2001 syllabus that required amendments were approved without any concerns. Monitoring and verification were completed successfully. The most common area for disagreement was in high Limited Achievement (LA) samples that provided evidence to justify threshold Sound Achievement (SA) levels. This was evident in high-performing cohorts.

Statewide comparability

The state panel found sufficient evidence to be confident that the overall statewide comparability is excellent. There was widespread agreement about the match of the qualities of student work with the appropriate syllabus standards descriptors to support the judgments of the interim levels of achievement as proposed in the sample submissions from all districts. Some disagreement was identified in the High Achievement (HA) band, where schools didn’t give sufficient opportunities for students to demonstrate the required attributes.

Course coverage

After reviewing the district samples, the state panel was concerned about coverage of dynamics in the required syllabus context of vectors and calculus. Additionally, a balanced assessment plan, as described in the syllabus (Section 7.5, p.35) was not found in all samples. This can make it more difficult for student to provide A–standard evidence “across topics”, as required for Very High Achievement (VHA) (Section 7.7, pp. 39, 40). Schools that leave large amounts of assessment until after verification may also similarly disadvantage their students.

Quality of assessment

Some excellent examples of assessment were reviewed which allowed students opportunities to exhibit the higher-order attributes of refining a model, extending and generalising from solutions, and exploring strengths and limitations of models (Section 7.7, p. 40). However the practice of take-home tests as alternative assessment has limited value in providing a balanced assessment program.

Care must be taken by schools to ensure that the attribute recorded on the profile is exhibited in the folio of student work. The averaging of recorded standards from profiles is not recommended. Schools should always compare the student work with the syllabus standards descriptors before making judgments.

Subject support

Syllabus orientation workshops were held in Semester 1 2008. This was followed by panel training in Semester 2, focusing on the requirements for work program approval for the 2008 syllabus.

The Mathematics senior subject area of the QSA website has been reconfigured so that it is consistent with other subjects, and additional support materials will be added during 2009.

Bevan Penrose  Wayne Stevens
State Review Panel Chair  Senior Education Officer

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MODERN HISTORY — B39

Syllabus

The Modern History senior syllabus 2004 is in its fourth year of implementation. In 2009, a minor revision of the syllabus will be conducted as per the planned syllabus revision cycle.

The syllabus and support materials are available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Social and Environmental Studies > Modern History (2004).

Teachers of Modern History have been given the opportunity to provide feedback on the 2004 syllabus via a survey available on the website.

Feedback from districts

All schools with students exiting in Year 12 2008 had approved work programs in Modern History 2004. Work program approvals are ongoing for schools with student cohorts exiting in 2009. Work programs continue to provide range and scope when it comes to themes and inquiry topics. The elements of historical literacy evident in work programs enable students to make connections between content and concept, understanding and explanation, empathy and judgment.

In 2008, monitoring and verification of sample folios revealed a high level of agreement between schools and panels about the standard of student work. A small number of submissions were unresolved following verification, and were negotiated at state-panel level in November during comparability.

Statewide comparability

The level of agreement between state and district panels was, once again, high. Of 94 folios reviewed, state panel agreed with district panel decisions on 86 occasions. The broadest agreement was apparent in the Very High Achievement (VHA), Sound Achievement (SA) and Limited Achievement (LA), with some variation occurring in High Achievement (HA). As a quality assurance exercise, the comparability meeting revealed high levels of consistency in schools and district panels in judgments about standards and levels of achievement across the state. However, a number of important issues were identified by state panel and require schools’ attention. These are discussed below.

Course coverage

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 (Section 6, pp.19–20; Section 7, pp.26–43, and Section 8, pp.57–59). It is essential for schools to provide evidence in student folios of the implementation of the Aspects of inquiry and to apply the standard descriptors relating to the Aspects of inquiry when assessing student work. Where research booklets are used by students, it would be appropriate to design sections compatible with the Aspects of inquiry.

A second issue to emerge from the review process was the tendency of some schools to amend or alter the syllabus standards descriptors. While it is a requirement for schools to develop task-specific criteria sheets for each assessment instrument (by 2009), it is not appropriate for schools to amend, delete or alter the core language of the standards descriptors. Schools should also apply the full range of descriptors when assessing Year 12 work. Without doing so, there may be insufficient evidence available to verify decisions made about levels of achievement.

A third issue identified was the tendency to over-scaffold student research tasks in Year 12. The widespread use of research booklets seems, in many instances, to limit and constrain student performance by their prescriptive nature. Schools are directed to pp. 50–51 of the syllabus where advice is provided regarding teacher involvement, in Category 2 and Category 3 assessment types. While schools are commended for providing support or scaffolding mechanisms to students, it is vital that they also ensure
students know how to use this wisely, and that more able students are actively encouraged to implement strategies that best reflect their learning needs and the needs of their inquiry.

Quality of assessment

State panel was encouraged by the quality of student responses assessments under Category 1, Extended written response to historical evidence. However, it noted that in some cases, the scope and scale of the questions being asked were unreasonable, as were the number of sources with which students were required to engage. Schools are asked to consider carefully the design of this instrument. It is also imperative that schools indicate which sources have been seen by students prior to the exam and which are genuinely unseen – that is, appearing on the exam paper without prior notice.

State and district panels were concerned about the number of VHA and HA research assignments awarded for Category 2 and 3 assessments that were narrative, descriptive, or based on contemporary social issues with little or no historical context. Close application of the Aspects of inquiry, with sub-questions derived from aspect 3, Backgrounds, changes and continuities: motives and causes and aspect 4 Effects, interests and arguments, will ensure that responses fulfil the stated standards. Evidence of reflection during the research process can be provided by students synthesising each sub-question and rough drafting.

Schools are encouraged to use creative formats, but are reminded that such work must demonstrate the relevant standards. This can be evidenced in students’ research materials, annotated bibliography or annotated footnotes. State panel also directs schools to pp. 50–51 of the syllabus, where students are required to provide a rationale that acknowledges the origins of the research focus or question devised.

State panel again reminds schools that all essay tests in Category 4 are unseen and without notes or sources (Section 8.5, p. 52). 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 cannot be used as a post-verification assessment instrument. Some short response tests in Year 12 lacked rigour and therefore contributed little to the summative assessment program. The panel suggests that “Response to stimulus” questions might be set in conjunction with the subset of Criterion 2 (e.g. question types that specifically require source evaluation).

In the application of each of the standards, schools must ensure that students are providing clear and identifiable evidence of the subset of criteria for which they are being credited.

Subject support

Subject workshops are planned in 2010 after the 2009 minor revision of the syllabus.

Kevin McAlinden
State Review Panel Chair

Mary-Anne Vale
Senior Education Officer
MULTI-STRAND SCIENCE — A08

Syllabus

The Multi-Strand Science senior syllabus 1998 is in its ninth year of implementation.

The syllabus and support materials are available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Science > Multi-Strand Science (1998).

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. A number of schools have expressed an interest in taking up Multi-Strand Science in 2009.

Statewide comparability

District samples displayed a high degree of comparability of standards across the state. It was also apparent that district panels are working well with the schools in their districts, with only two unresolved submissions referred to state panel.

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 great flexibility 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 four to ten summative tasks is met (Section 8.7, p. 39).

Quality of assessment

Many schools are successfully using criteria and standards schemas, providing clear links between the syllabus general objectives and the assessment task. The following areas of concern, in terms of assessment allowing opportunities for students to demonstrate the criteria across the range of standards, were identified in district samples:

- lack of variety in tasks
- large numbers of lightly weighted assessment items addressing Complex reasoning processes (CRP)
- lack of adequate detail in task-specific criteria and standards schemas
- unclear or inconsistent application of task-specific criteria and standards schemas
- difficulty relating assessment items to student profiles
- awarding of grades that do not match syllabus descriptors for CRP, i.e. a number of schools are using grades to define Limited Achievement (LA) and Very Limited Achievement (VLA) standards for CRP, however the syllabus does not have any CRP requirements at the LA or VLA levels.

Subject support

As schools are continuing to show interest in the introduction of Multi-Strand Science for the first time in 2009, the QSA website is being updated to include sample work programs, revised work program review notes and sample assessment tasks.

Gordon Power Bill Wilson
State Review Panel Chair Senior Education Officer
Music — B26

Syllabus

In 2008, the second cohort of Year 12 students exited under the Music senior syllabus 2004. The syllabus and support materials are available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Arts > Music (2004).

The state review panel would like to acknowledge the efforts of teachers and panellists in ensuring the success of monitoring and verification in these initial years of implementation. At comparability, it was evident that schools have engaged well with the syllabus framework and the standards matrix.

Feedback from districts

District panels noted that a broader range of repertoire, task design and student response was seen in folios this year.

While there was considerable non-agreement between initial school proposals and panel advice at verification, there was significant agreement reached at the district level, indicating that schools and panels were able to negotiate resolutions according to syllabus standards. Schools are encouraged to consult the support materials on the QSA website for further guidance on task design and advice.

Section 6.6.1 of the syllabus outlines the nature of the post-verification task. 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 stated on p. 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 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 about the student’s overall achievement within the one criterion of the selected task, considering the Underlying principles of exit assessment (Section 6.1, pp. 18–20). Teachers should then consider how this impacts upon students’ exit placements, along with achievement in the other criteria, again considering the Underlying principles of exit assessment. 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, available from <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> Assessment > Senior assessment > Forms and procedures.

Statewide comparability

Overall, there was comparability across the state in the application of standards and differentiation between different 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.

Course coverage

For the most part, sample folios demonstrated that the requirements for verification folios are 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

There was an interesting variety of tasks in *Analysing repertoire*, with the state panel noting some good student responses in the district samples. The most effectively designed *Analysing repertoire* tasks clearly asked students to deconstruct and evaluate repertoire and apply their understanding to unstudied repertoire, and clearly stated the requirements for students.

As deconstruction and evaluation are integral to effectively assessing student abilities in *Analysing repertoire*, assessment tasks must allow students to demonstrate both aspects, as stated in syllabus Section 6.4.1, p. 22:

… 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.

The syllabus states that student responses to *Analysing repertoire* tasks are to be accompanied by the score(s) and/or sound recordings(s) (p. 23) and that sound sources or scores that accompany *Analysing repertoire* tasks should be included in student folios (p. 29). If the response is multimedia, a record of the presentation should be made and submitted (pp. 23, 29).

Where there are a number of questions in examinations, there are a variety of ways that teachers can arrive at a standard. Irrespective of the methods used for arriving at a standard for *Analysing repertoire*, teachers should ensure that the student response matches the descriptors in the standards statements.

In *Composing*, there was an interesting variety of compositional styles, genres and presentation formats, indicating a thorough understanding and effective implementation of syllabus requirements. The broader scope of composing possibilities under the revised syllabus has elicited a high quality of compositional work from a larger number of students.

When evaluating the *Performing* criterion, the state panel noted several excellent performances in the district samples across a wide variety of styles and genres. Where a student elects to perform on more than one instrument, for example, a singer accompanying themselves, both parts may be marked as a unified performance. Alternatively, in this situation the student may nominate the instrument that they will be assessed on. Teachers are reminded that audiovisual recordings of presentations and performances should be clearly annotated and easily navigable on generic hardware.

Subject support

The Music senior subject area has been redeveloped and expanded to include:

- sample work programs
- advice for teachers
- annotated sample assessment tasks for Year 11 and 12 students in *Analysing repertoire, Composing* and *Performing*.

Helen O’Neill  Andrew Reid
State Review Panel Chair  Senior Education Officer
Syllabus

In 2008, the Music Extension senior syllabus was in its final year of trial-pilot implementation. A total of 143 schools offered the course — either as providers or under shared campus arrangements — to a total of 919 students. The increase in the number of students undertaking the Music Extension (Trial-pilot) syllabus is indicative of the document’s relevance, flexibility and inclusivity. Thank you to all schools who participated in the two-year trial pilot, and to the syllabus subcommittee for generating the revised syllabus.

The revised Music Extension senior syllabus 2008 will be in general implementation in 2009, and hard copies have already been delivered to schools.

The syllabus and support materials are available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Arts > Music Extension (2008).

Feedback from districts

Most schools engaged well with syllabus, and there was a marked increase in the level of understanding of the syllabus following the initial year of the trial-pilot. This was reflected in the diversity of approaches to assessment tasks and the overall high quality of student responses.

While most students continued to present Performance for their realising tasks, the increasing number of students who presented Composition and Musicology tasks demonstrated confidence and creativity in their approaches.

Feedback from districts following monitoring and verification indicated that most schools have a thorough understanding of task requirements and the application of standards.

Advice given at monitoring did not always appear to be addressed by schools in verification folios. Teachers are reminded that the Investigating task is summative. Where advice on the Form R3 suggests that the standard of the Investigating task may negatively impact on the student’s overall result at verification, teachers should carefully consider the merit of suggesting that students undertake a replacement Investigating task (see syllabus Section 7.5.2, p. 21).

Overall, teachers engaged well with the language of the standards matrix, and district samples indicated that there was general correlation between the student work and the standards awarded.

Teachers are reminded that both Realising tasks 1 and 2 need to be included in verification folios. Particular care should be taken when the sample folios submitted at verification are different from those submitted at monitoring to ensure that both tasks are from the same sample student, and are on the DVD/CD. When the order of students changes between monitoring and verification, the labelling of DVDs/CDs should be checked to ensure that the correct students are identified and included in the submission.

Statewide comparability

The state panel congratulates teachers on the supportive, positive and constructive comments provided to students accompanying standards of student work. However, care should be taken to ensure that the comments and the standards correlate.

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.

Teachers and panels are reminded that it is the student’s work, not the profile in isolation, which forms the basis of decisions about levels of achievement and placement on the Form R6. Teachers should consider the student folio as a whole together with the Principles of exit assessment, including “fullest and latest information” when arriving at levels of achievement (see syllabus Section 7.1, p. 19).
Quality of assessment

Responses to Investigating tasks indicated an exciting diversity of topics and approaches. Teachers are encouraged to direct students to present the Investigating task in the format that best suits the nature of their investigation. This is best achieved with an open-ended task sheet, rather than stipulating the presentation format. Refer to Section 7.5.2, Table 1 (p. 22) for assessment techniques and conditions of assessment for the Investigating criterion.

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 the standards descriptors. There was an exciting variety of styles, genres and presentation formats across all specialisations indicating a thorough understanding and implementation of the course requirements. Teachers are reminded of the importance of ensuring that all audiovisual materials in submissions are easily viewed, navigable and compatible with generic hardware.

Subject support

Subject support materials for Music Extension will be posted on the QSA website throughout 2009.

Lois Kavanagh
State Review Panel Chair

Andrew Reid
Senior Education Officer
Syllabus

The revised 2008 senior syllabuses for Korean, Latin, Modern Greek, Polish, Russian, Spanish and Vietnamese will be implemented with Year 11 cohorts for the first time in 2009. Review panellists have already submitted their work programs for approval, and schools are reminded that the deadline for their submission is the end of Term 1 2009.

Language syllabuses and support materials, including new work program requirements, are available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Languages.

There are a number of changes to the language syllabuses, including:

- new dimensions of the exit criteria that will require learning experiences that develop and demonstrate the ability to reason and respond (Comprehension), and create and respond (Conveying meaning), while knowing and understanding/using language in communicative contexts, and
- a reduction in the minimum amount of assessment required to:
  - two assessments per skill in Year 11
  - two assessments per skill before verification in Year 12.

Where there is a composite class, in 2009, the Year 11 students must follow the new work program and be assessed against the standards in the 2008 syllabus, while the Year 12 students must be assessed using the 2001 syllabus criteria and standards.

Feedback from state

Moderation proceeded smoothly in 2008. Few significant issues arose at monitoring and almost all schools achieved agreement to their proposed levels of achievement and relative achievement of samples students by the end of verification.

Work programs for the 2008 syllabuses are currently required from state and district panellists.

Course coverage

As the syllabus is in the final part of the cycle of implementation, assessment issues have tended to be similar from year to year. Schools are reminded that:

- the syllabus requires increasing complexity over the two-year course of study. Students should demonstrate, through more complex tasks, and in their own spoken and written texts, an understanding and use of language that matches exit standards descriptors and meets syllabus requirements
- student achievement is best judged by matching student work with the syllabus standards descriptors rather than using the record of student outcomes on the school profile to reach a decision about an interim or exit levels of achievement
- panels seek to support school judgments about standards by looking for evidence of the match of student work with the syllabus standards descriptors. Each assessment task should be judged in terms of a standard, not as a threshold judgment that combines standards (e.g. A/B)
- a student may complete assessment as required and achieve a particular standard, however, if the task does not require knowledge and skills to be applied in unfamiliar and unrehearsed contexts, sufficient depth may not be demonstrated even though all the requirements of the assessment instruments have been achieved.

Quality of assessment

Quality assessment should be designed to allow students opportunities to demonstrate the criteria and standards. Key areas of concern identified through moderation processes include:
• Spontaneous language use. Tasks need to allow students to use language developed in rehearsed and/or familiar situations, and in unrehearsed and unfamiliar situations and contexts. Schools should clearly identify what aspects of an assessment task provide this opportunity.

• Demonstration of all aspects of the criterion on Listening and Reading assessment. Higher-order thinking skills (deduction and appreciation) should be assessed on all tasks and require, for example, that students “collect, analyse, and organise information in order to make decisions”, “evaluate … information” and “infer intentions and attitudes” (See Sections 3 and 8 of syllabuses.

• Assessment design. When implementing the 2008 syllabus for the first time, quality assessment design will ensure that sufficient opportunities are given to students when completing two assessments per skill in Year 11 and in Year 12, prior to verification. A range of topics and text types must be covered and reduced assessment requirements will mean careful planning is required. The requirement for an assessment plan in school work programs is intended as an appropriate response to this concern.

Subject support

The QSA conducted syllabus orientation workshops and review panel training across the state in 2008. Online syllabus support materials have also been developed and can be found on the QSA website.

Syllabus orientation workshops were presented by the Teaching and Learning Division of the QSA and held in all districts in Semester 1. These workshops provided information about the new syllabus and work programs requirements.

Review panel training was held in the second semester at the annual Moderation Conference, with the focus being work program approval. Review processes were modelled through the review of a work program and the completion of the review notes. Panellists then reviewed each other’s programs and provided feedback.

Next year will be the first year for the implementation of the syllabuses with Year 11 students. To support schools through this, there will be information about assessment practices on the QSA website in the form of an assessment-design toolkit.

The state panel would like to recognise the quality outcomes achieved by teachers of other languages in Queensland and the contributions of all teachers involved in moderation processes.

George Orfanos            Terry McPherson
State Review Panel Chair  Senior Education Officer
Syllabus

The Philosophy and Reason senior syllabus 2004 was introduced with Year 11 students in 2005, and 2008 was its fourth year of implementation. A total of 310 students from 16 schools completed the subject. In 2008, Year 12 exiting students were made up of eight large groups (14 or more OP-eligible students) and three small groups (9 or less OP-eligible students).

The syllabus and support materials are available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Social and Environmental Studies > Philosophy and Reason (2004).

Feedback from state

Work programs for new schools and amendments for existing schools have been approved by panellists this year. The course continues to evolve in many schools as the expertise and confidence of teachers grows, as does the enrolments within schools. Monitoring and verification have revealed that schools are consolidating and developing their approach to the subject, with understandings of the syllabus and its implementation that permit varied and exciting courses and assessment materials.

Verification review notes were revised this year to place the emphasis on the review folio as the place where evidence of demonstration of the standards is to be found. Should the design of an assessment task not require A–standard performance, it is not the case that A–standard work cannot be produced, depending on the work actually produced by individual students. As verification is about the student achievement, panels look for evidence of that. Advice at monitoring focuses more on course implementation, which includes assessment, and this is the time when there may be more advice and recommendations about instrument design.

Progress is being made towards all schools reaching a consistent and shared understanding of the application of syllabus standards to sophisticated philosophical writing, and this will continue to be a focus in 2009.

Course coverage

Schools are continuing to exercise their options, as outlined in the syllabus, to explore aspects of philosophy which suit the expertise of teaching staff and student interest. While this means a wide variety of material is apparent between schools, the mandatory requirements of the syllabus continue to be met. To assist schools in maintaining this, further work will be undertaken in 2009 by the state panel.

Many schools now focus more on the critical thinking and/or philosophy strands, with fewer schools devoting large sections of the course to deductive logic. While each has its advantages, schools are making these decisions based on student interest and staff resources, and are taking full advantage of the flexibility offered in the syllabus.

Quality of assessment

The panel continues to be impressed with the quality of the assessment instruments being developed by schools: much of it is central to the course, topical, and useful in discriminating between students at all levels. These fresh and innovative approaches are increasingly original, novel in presentation, and contribute to keeping the subject relevant, vibrant and growing.

Schools share assessment through email networks and websites set up by teachers. New schools have the opportunity to ask established teachers for resources, both in terms of assessment pieces and other comprehensive support material. As the breadth of the syllabus allows for a diversity of philosophical and critical thinking topics, schools are encouraged to seek support when making decisions about course design and implementation.
Schools are asked to design assessment that explicitly addresses the standards descriptors. When making judgments about student work, or designing assessment that allows students to demonstrate syllabus descriptors, schools should be able to clearly show how that assessment has addressed each of the descriptors over the range of instruments in the verification submission. This should be observable by panellists at monitoring and verification meetings.

When making judgments about standards, schools are reminded about the elements they are to assess, and the degree to which the student is to demonstrate these elements.

In the Application criterion:
- at a B–standard, students explain intrinsic concepts and simple and complex relationships between theories
- at an A–standard, students explain, discern and describe the application of theories in different contexts.

In this context, the element is philosophical theories and concepts. The degree is explanation at a B–standard, and discerning and describing at an A–standard.

Assessment needs to allow students the opportunity to demonstrate work at all standards. If there is no opportunity to discern, the task is unlikely to elicit A–standard work from students.

Subject support

Panel training was conducted at the annual moderation conference. The purpose of this professional development was to support moderation processes and, in particular, verification. Panel training focused on developing panel’s capacity to find evidence in student responses that matched the awarded syllabus standards. This provoked considerable discussion about syllabus exit standards descriptors and the relationship between written descriptions of student work and the use of marks in the grading process.

Information about assessment practices will be available on the QSA website in 2009, including an assessment-design toolkit to assist teachers to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate the criteria and standards.

The state panel thanks schools and teachers for their support of Philosophy and Reason in 2008. The state panel would like to recognise the quality of outcomes achieved by teachers, their tireless efforts and, in particular, the contributions of those teachers to promote, support and sustain the studying of our subject in their schools.

Peter Ellerton  
State Review Panel Chair

Terry McPherson  
Senior Education Officer
Syllabus

The Physical Education senior syllabus 2004 is now in its fourth year of implementation. The process for a periodic revision of the syllabus commenced at the end of 2008. Schools were able to comment on the current syllabus through an online survey. A draft of the revised syllabus will be available on the QSA website in 2009. The revised syllabus is expected to be released in 2010, ready for implementation with the Year 11 cohort of 2011.

The 2004 syllabus will remain in place until 2012 (the last year for Year 12 students) and schools are encouraged to use the syllabus as a reference document in conjunction with their current work program.

The syllabus and support materials are available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Health and Physical Education > Physical Education (2004).

Feedback from districts

The state review panel is pleased to report that 2008 monitoring and verification for the 367 schools in Queensland offering Physical Education demonstrated successful uptake of the 2004 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.

While a number of submissions were not agreed-to at verification, each of these were successfully negotiated and resolved by the district review panel chairs. Professional development at annual Moderation Conferences in recent years has focused on leadership and resolution strategies. This, combined with well-attended assessment workshops, has no doubt contributed to such positive outcomes.

Schools are reminded to include all the required evidence to support their judgments at both monitoring and verification. When preparing submissions schools should refer to:

- Requirements for a verification folio (syllabus Section 7.6, pp. 57–58)
- Appendix: Video evidence in physical education (syllabus Section 11, pp. 66–68)
- Moderation processes for senior certification (QSA 2005) which can be found on the QSA website <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> Assessment > Senior assessment > Forms and procedures.

Statewide comparability

Each year, state panels review samples from each of the districts to consider whether work in Physical Education is comparable to the syllabus standards on a statewide basis. It should be noted that these samples are not exemplars, but submissions typically agreed to within a district. The state panel is pleased to report that there was general agreement with both the schools’ and the district panels’ application of the syllabus standards to the reviewed folios.

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 and written/oral tasks and responses. Progress continues to be made in these areas through assessment workshops and schools acting on panel feedback. Further support is required in personalisation in Focus area C: Sport, physical activity and exercise in the context of Australian society.

Of the mandatory objectives, Criterion 3: Evaluating remains the strongest indicator of performance in both physical responses and written/oral responses. Feedback continues to indicate that this will remain one of the major areas for interpretation at assessment workshops in the future.
Schools may provide supplementary learning experiences for students, enabling students to maximise their strengths without compromising the integrity of the syllabus. A small number of schools have taken the opportunity to utilise supplementary evidence for students in 2008.

**Quality of assessment**

The quality of assessment across the state continues to improve. These enhancements have provided better opportunities for students to demonstrate their abilities across the three criteria.

District and state review panels note that many tasks still require the students to address breadth rather than depth, and step the students through *Acquiring* and *Applying* before addressing the *Evaluating* criterion. To assist students, tasks should include one main task requirement, and an indication of the genre and conditions under which the task will be taken. Tasks should match the syllabus requirements and engage students in addressing a manageable aspect of the unit. Tasks should be integrated and personalised and focus students on the *Evaluating* criterion.

It is worth noting that many schools require students to complete essays in exam conditions without the opportunity to bring in notes and/or supporting materials. The syllabus criterion requires that students are able to provide credible and convincing evidence to support their conclusions. It is very difficult for students to demonstrate this if students are unable to refer to appropriate notes. Schools are encouraged to consider the task requirements and demands when planning the conditions of a task.

Many schools are utilising criteria sheets as expected responses rather than sample responses that illustrate specifically what an A–standard response might look like. The purpose of an expected response is to assist in task design and should be more than a modified criteria sheet.

Inconsistencies with syllabus criteria appear on many task-specific criteria. Schools are reminded that in constructing task-specific criteria, they should consider the following guidelines:

- Task conditions should be identified on the task sheet rather than in the assessment criteria.
- The adjectives of the standards should not be altered or added to.
- Each standard identifies certain characteristics, and this should be maintained in identifying what students can, rather than what they cannot, do.
- The specific sections of the standards matrix that could be adapted to suit the task relate primarily to the physical responses, terminology, modes and genres, focus area, rehearsed and unrehearsed strategies, simple and complex relationships. These are the aspects that can and should be unpacked in detail.
- The specificity of the criteria should not restrict students from responding in an individualised way.

**Subject support**

Panel training was conducted in all districts in 2008 and was very well attended. Panel training focused on “looking for evidence” and providing advice to schools. Sample video evidence featuring common physical activities, such as touch and volleyball, were examined. The discussions focused around evidence of standards in videos and the construction of simple and complex performance environments for physical activities.

The state review panel also thanks all of the teachers who participate on various panels for their tireless commitment to the system of externally 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 Physical Education under the 2004 syllabus. Teachers are encouraged to contact their local QSA district coordinator or visit the QSA website for an application form.

The Physical Education senior subject section of the QSA website continues to be updated with annotated examples of assessment and work programs.

Michael Kiss Kim Lavin
State Review Panel Chair Acting Principal Education Officer
**PHYSICS — A05**

**Syllabus**

The Physics senior syllabus 1995 is in its thirteenth year of implementation. The Year 11 cohort of 2008 will be the last to exit from courses developed under this syllabus. In 2009, all schools will implement revised Physics senior syllabus 2007.

The syllabus and support materials are available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Science > Physics (1995). All references in this section refer to the syllabus document.

**Feedback from districts**

Feedback from district panels indicated there were no major issues evident at both monitoring and verification. There were no unresolved submissions for state panel consideration following verification this year.

**Statewide comparability**

In November, the annual comparability exercise was undertaken by the state panel. This task involved viewing two sample submissions from each of the 13 districts. District panels provided sample agreed-to submissions following the verification meeting. At least 104 folios were reviewed and comparability across the state was found to be excellent. District panels, under the guidance of dedicated and experienced chairs, continue to do an outstanding job of interpreting the standards and requirements of the syllabus.

The following points relating to statewide comparability were noted:

- Summative assessment, including any Year 11 summative assessment which contributes to exit levels of achievement, must be presented in the verification folio (Section 8.7, p. 37).
- Procedures regarding trade-offs must be correctly and consistently applied (Section 8.5, p. 36).

**Course coverage**

Generally, all mandatory aspects of the 1995 syllabus are being correctly implemented in all districts, and all core topics are represented to an appropriate breadth and depth. While supervised assessments and practical reports still predominate, the range and style of assessment is widening, with increasingly sophisticated criteria sheets being developed.

**Quality of assessment**

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 points for consideration:

- Tasks assessing Scientific processes continue to be predominantly graphical in nature. Schools need to consider the full breadth and depth of the general objectives.
- Marking schemes need to be detailed to allow consistency and transparency in the marking process. It would also assist panels to follow accurately the evidence presented by schools.
- Student responses should be matched to the exit criteria in the syllabus. It is insufficient to just look at the number of marks gained without considering the quality of the responses.
- Lack of challenge in Complex reasoning processes (CRP) continues to remain an issue for assessment programs. CRP should increase in complexity across the course and if the level of challenge does not cover the full range of depth and breadth, it may be difficult to verify school decisions, particular at the highest levels of achievement.
- Criteria sheets, when developed, should be task-specific.
• Marks allocated to tasks in *Knowledge of subject matter* and *Scientific processes* assessment need to reflect the complexity of what is required in the task.

**Subject support**

Support was available from the Senior Education Officer via phone, email, fax and the website.

The work of all review panels is to be commended and appreciated. Their tireless work ensures that schools are encouraged to think creatively when setting assessment tasks and to use task-specific criteria and standards sheets when making judgments.

The state review panel thanks all teachers who participate on various panels and subcommittees for their ongoing commitment to the system of externally 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.

Brian Wolff  
Acting State Review Panel Chair

Susan Scheiwe  
Senior Education Officer
In 2008, the final cohort of Year 12 students exited from courses developed under the Physics (extended trial-pilot (ETP)) senior syllabus 2004. The ETP syllabus and associated work programs are no longer current. Many schools have already implemented the 2007 Physics syllabus with this year’s Year 11 students and, from 2009, all schools will implement the 2007 Physics senior syllabus with their Year 11 cohorts.

The syllabus is available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Science > Physics (2004 extended trial-pilot). All references in this section refer to the syllabus document.

Feedback from districts

All schools in the ETP have approved work programs, with schools now developing work programs for the 2007 syllabus. Of those programs which are yet to be approved, the most frequent advice related to the need to:

- explicitly describe with sufficient depth and scope of treatment the general objectives and learning experiences in the two contextualised units
- provide sufficient opportunities for students to demonstrate evidence of all aspects for each general objective.

Some issues noted at monitoring do not appear to have been acted on by some schools. Persistent concerns relate to:

- the need for task-specific criteria sheets to match task expectations while still being consistent with the syllabus exit standards
- the inclusion of more challenging and complex questions in Written tasks (WTs), in-text referencing in Extended response tasks (ERTs), and more in-depth analysis in both ERTs (some analysis of second-hand data rather than simply collecting facts) and Extended experimental investigations (EEIs). In EEIs, both algorithmic and graphical analysis of data is needed.

Statewide comparability

Overall, there was comparability across the state in the application of standards and differentiation between different 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.

Schools are reminded that the syllabus exit standards must form the basis of decisions about standards in each criterion and level of achievement (LOA). Mapping a student’s performance on assessment tasks against the exit standards may be far more valuable than relying on a student profile in ensuring an appropriate LOA is awarded (see Section 7.1, Table 7.1, p. 30).

Course coverage

The mandatory aspects of the syllabus, namely the general objectives and key concepts, have been covered by all schools. However, schools need to review their assessment tasks to ensure they provide opportunities at all standards in both the expectations and criteria used to grade them.

Quality of assessment

The syllabus states that an EEI is an investigation with research component that extends over at least two to three weeks (section 7.4, p. 24). It is not a collection of short experiments with a single discussion. Students must be able to:

- design and carry out an investigation with an experimental core
• use scientific methodology to isolate variables
• analyse primary data and compare this to theory and physics concepts
• discuss sources of error and suggest methods to reduce these
• suggest possible further experiments.

These tasks must have justified conclusions, based on background research carried out throughout the investigation as well as valid collected data. Straightforward validation of a known law is not necessarily a good topic, unless the experimentation on the law or data is extended.

ERTs require in-text referencing and need to direct students to go beyond collecting data. They must require, for example, analysis of data to present an argument or comparison with known opinions. These tasks should have justified conclusions that link physics concepts to the information collected. Teachers are urged to advise students to use in-text referencing in ERTs as it contributes to the authentication of student work.

WTs must address the full range of both knowledge and application in both complex and challenging situations for students to achieve an A–standard on such tasks. The method of linking grades to the exit standards needs to be transparent. While most WTs allow students to demonstrate a range of abilities in the questions asked, there needs to be more than one opportunity for students to demonstrate this on each WT.

There is still some concern that task-specific criteria sheets do not adequately match the task expectations, and so do not allow the full range of standards to be awarded for tasks, in particular some WTs and some EEIs, due to lack of challenging and complex questions (in WTs) and lack of in-depth analysis (in EEIs). All tasks need to allow for the full range of standards to be accessed by students; and it is suggested that teachers consult these sections of the syllabus document when developing assessment tasks and criteria sheets:

• Section 4: General objectives
• Section 5.3: Course structure, Key concepts
• Section 7.4: Assessment task categories
• Section 7.9, Table 7.1, Standards associated with exit levels of achievement.

Subject support
During 2008, the QSA presented workshops to support the implementation of the 2007 Physics syllabus. The first workshop was a repeat of the syllabus orientation workshop first offered in 2007. This repeat workshop allowed schools preparing work programs for 2009 to develop their understandings of the syllabus.

The second workshop was for schools implementing the revised syllabus in 2008 and focused on designing assessment, with sample supervised assessment (SA) items as well as EEIs and ERTs examined. This workshops is being repeated in Semester 1, 2009 (details are available on the QSA website, <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> Learning P-12 > Professional development and events > Workshops > Years 11–12).

Later in 2009, the final workshop in the series will be offered, focusing on different approaches to developing SA instruments, as well as strategies for making judgments on folios of student work and awarding LOAs.

New support material has been added to the QSA website throughout 2008. Several sample work programs are now available, as well as sample assessment tasks and advice for teachers to assist with the interpretation of the syllabus. Additional sample assessment instruments will be annotated and added to the website in 2009.

The Advice for Teachers relates to:
• the importance of criteria and standards
• strategies for developing instrument-specific criteria and standards
• one interpretation of the terms complex and challenging,
The work of all review panels is to be commended and appreciated. Their tireless work ensures that schools are encouraged to think creatively when setting assessment tasks, and to use task-specific criteria and standards schema when making judgments.

The state review panel thanks all of the teachers who participate on various panels and subcommittees for their ongoing commitment to the system of externally 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.

Megg Kennedy
State Review Panel Chair

Susan Scheiwe
Senior Education Officer
STUDY OF RELIGION — B20

Syllabus

The Study of Religion senior syllabus 2001 is in its seventh year of implementation, and 2009 will be the last year of implementation for Year 12 students. A minor revision of this syllabus was undertaken in 2007, and the revised 2008 syllabus will be in implementation with all Year 11 students in 2009.

The syllabus is available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Social and Environmental Studies > Study of Religion (2001). All references in this section refer to the syllabus document.

Feedback from districts

This year saw the commencement of work program approval for the 2008 syllabus. At this stage, approvals have been slow as we work through issues associated with changing from the 2001 syllabus to the 2008 syllabus. Some minor changes are still being made by schools to 2001 syllabus work programs. Some of these changes will aid schools in the development of their new work program.

Generally, monitoring occurred quite smoothly with constructive advice given to schools, especially in relation to the implementation of the general objectives of the syllabus. Given that the 2001 syllabus is in its final years, no significant issues were highlighted at monitoring.

While verification also went smoothly, a number of unresolved submissions were referred to the state review panel, where negotiations yielded agreement.

Statewide comparability

Through the process of comparability it was evident that syllabus standards are not being applied consistently across the state. The 2008 syllabus identifies the characteristics of the exit standards in more detail than the 2001 syllabus. It is hoped that this increased detail will support the making of more accurate judgments in the future.

Course coverage

As has been the case in previous years, there is very good coverage of the course across the state. Schools have ensured that they have applied local circumstances to their courses of study so that students have a variety of learning experiences. Schools will need to be aware that they will not be able to recycle their current work program to meet the requirements of the 2008 syllabus. This will also be the case with assessment instruments.

The new syllabus has moved away from the ability of schools to use one main tradition for a significant part of the course. The explicit study of the major traditions will mean that schools will need to carefully plan for the 2008 syllabus requirements.

Quality of assessment

Schools need to ensure that assessment instruments are clear and allow students the opportunity to demonstrate their ability across the range of criteria and standards. Task-specific criteria sheets should be derived from the Minimum standards associated with the exit criteria (Section 8.6.1, p. 50) and should be relevant to the specific task. The 2008 syllabus again requires criteria sheets to be task-specific.

Conditions on task sheets also need to be explicit. In some instances, it was difficult to ascertain under what conditions tasks were completed by students. The Evaluative processes criterion continues to be the most problematic from the perspective that tasks do not allow students the opportunity to adequately demonstrate the higher-order skills. The Stimulus response task is one example where this has been an issue. A number of Stimulus response tasks require simple recall of knowledge and little or no opportunity is afforded to students to interpret, analyse or synthesise ideas from information.
Of some considerable concern to the state panel was the number of students’ scripts where there was little or no feedback given. Whilst it is important to acknowledge that students should be working more independently throughout Year 12, feedback is appropriate on the completion of tasks in order for students to be able to use this to improve in subsequent assessment tasks.

**Subject support**

School support is being directed towards new work programs that schools will be implementing in 2009 for Year 11.

The Study of Religion senior subject area on the QSA website will continue to be updated through 2009, and will include sample work programs and assessment tasks.

Teachers are invited to provide feedback to the Senior Education Officer (Quality Assurance) on support materials they would value. Any school or individual teacher who would like to receive email updates throughout the year should forward email details to Jackie Dunk at <sao@qsa.qld.edu.au>.

The state review panel for Study of Religion thanks all teachers involved in the process of moderation. Their efforts and professionalism are widely valued and appreciated. The panel is particularly grateful for the dedication of teachers who give their time and expertise to ensure the best outcomes for their students.

John Thomas
State Review Panel Chair

Jackie Dunk
Senior Education Officer
STUDY OF SOCIETY — B11

Syllabus

The Study of Society senior syllabus 2001 was first implemented in 2002. All schools currently offering Study of Society have approved work programs based upon the 2001 syllabus.

The syllabus is available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Social and Environmental Studies > Study of Society (2001). All references in this section refer to the syllabus document.

Feedback from districts

Monitoring is the process by which review panels consider the school’s implementation of a course and the standards of assessment in Authority subjects after approximately half of the course of study has been completed. Monitoring was conducted with two district panels this year, however the lack of availability of teachers to support the continuation of two panels has meant this subject is now moderated by a state-only panel.

Verification is the process by which review panels advise schools on standards of Year 12 student achievement relative to syllabus descriptors of standards. 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.

In most instances, panel found evidence in the sample folios to support schools’ proposed levels of achievement.

One issue identified at verification was the inconsistent application of standards, especially for Critical processes and Research. It is vital that standards awarded to student work are consistent with Table 13: Minimum standards associated with exit criteria (Section 8.9, pp. 60–61). The use of task-specific criteria sheets which are based on the syllabus standards will help ensure that the standards of the syllabus are maintained.

Schools are reminded that it is the students’ work, not standards on the profile in isolation, which forms the basis of decisions about 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 (Section 8.1, pp. 50–52), and demands and conditions of the task. Formulaic methods, including the averaging of standards, should not be used.

Course coverage

Schools must endeavour to ensure that students demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of major social theories. Students should be encouraged to take some facet of society and discuss it from the viewpoint of as many theoretical perspectives as possible, both historical and contemporary. Similarly, given a statement about society and how it functions, students could be encouraged to recognise the theoretical standpoint of the speaker/writer. These activities could be part of learning experiences or assessment items.

When planning assessment programs, it is important to ensure that the verification folio requirements 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 (Section 8.8, p. 56).
Quality of assessment

The general objectives of the syllabus (Section 3, pp. 5–7) outline what students should know and be able to do by the end of a two-year course of study. The first four objectives, Knowledge and understanding, Critical processes, Research and Communication, are linked to the criteria. The general objectives should be evident in assessment tasks. It is very useful when writing assessment items to align the questions with the specific objectives being assessed.

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 giving active feedback to ensure students understand the exit standards as evidenced through criteria sheets.

Subject support

The Study of Society senior subject area on the QSA website has samples work programs, assessment items and other support materials. 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.

Deborah MacDonald is stepping down after over 18 years in a variety of roles with the QSA. Deborah has been panel member, district and state panel chair, and a member of the Study of Society subcommittee during this time. We take this opportunity to thank her for the insightful guidance she has provided over these years, and for her leadership, expertise, diplomacy and encouragement. The state panel wishes Deborah the best for all her future endeavours.

Deborah MacDonald Bernadette Stacy
State Review Panel Chair Senior Education Officer
This year was the final Year 12 cohort to study courses developed under the Technology Studies senior syllabus 1999. From 2009, all students studying Technology Studies will do so under the 2007 syllabus. The syllabuses are available from the QSA website. From the home page <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select Learning P-12 > Years 11 and 12 > Technologies > Technology Studies (1999) and Technology Studies (2007). All references in this section refer to the 2007 syllabus document.

Teachers need to remember the critical differences between the 1999 and 2007 syllabus documents, including:

- revised general objectives. *Knowledge and understanding* is now *Knowledge and application* and *Practical skills* is now *Production* (Section 3, p. 4)
- changes to the exit criteria, such that they are now all equal (Section 7.7, p. 29). Aspects of higher-order thinking are required to be demonstrated by students in all three criteria, not just in the *Reasoning* criterion. The implications for determining exit levels of achievement are that a student at exit can achieve a Very High Achievement (VHA) with a B– standard in *Reasoning*. However, please note the changes to the other two exit criteria now require:
  - evidence of application and investigation to be demonstrated in the *Knowledge and application* criterion
  - evidence of application of sustainable practices, production management and considered selection and use of manufacturing resources to be demonstrated in the *Production* criterion.
- placement of Year 11 as a developmental year, in which students are involved in a variety of situations relating to design and production. Learning experiences are scaffolded for students to demonstrate the objectives. (Section 4.9, p. 10.)
- four revised assessment techniques. These are: Project proposal and development (Design folio), Project design realisation, Project appraisal and Investigative analysis (Section 7.5, pp. 23, 24). Please note that tests are not identified as an assessment technique.
- changes to the nature of *Design projects* as an assessment technique (Section 7.5.1, p. 23). A design project is a term used to describe a design task that is assessed using three assessment techniques: 1, Project proposal and development, 2, Project design realisation, and 3, Project appraisal. Students undertake a minimum of two design projects in Year 12. It is recommended that students are given the opportunity to experience a design project in Year 11.
- *Design realisation* should be assessed using all three criteria, where evidence collected includes a student logbook of production. The logbook may be in the form of a journal and should include progressive photographic evidence along with photographic evidence of the finished project. The student logbook is not an additional item of assessment with a separate entry on the student profile (Section 7.5.2, p. 24).
- *Project realisation* refers to the completion or production of an engineered product, prototype or model in response to the design specifications and contextual considerations. A variety of methods and types of realisation may be used, provided that over the two-year course of study students are provided with opportunities to demonstrate the *Production* objectives and coverage of the mandatory areas of Safety and Manufacturing resources.
- The *Investigative analysis* (IA) is not necessarily related to a particular design task. The IA should have a primary focus on a social, ethical or environmental issue specifically related to past, present and future technologies (Section 7.5.3, p. 25). Students should be given the opportunity to experience an *Investigative analysis* in Year 11 (Section 7, p. 19).
- Discussions have been held at both a district and state level to clarify the definition of the Design Task and the following has been developed to assist schools in making this clearer:

A design task is an organising framework for a unit of work that is usually only delivered in Year 11, the foundation year. The task may include some or all of the Product Design sequence that is defined
in Section 4.4 on page 7 of the syllabus. The design task may not be assessed, or aspects of it may be formatively assessed using one or more of the assessment techniques referred to in Section 7.5 on page 23 of the syllabus. For example, a Year 11 design task may be to analyse and evaluate the human-powered vehicle raced in the previous year. If this task was assessed, then only the Project appraisal technique would be required.

Feedback from districts

The annual Moderation Conference in July provided an opportunity for collegial sharing and professional development. The district review panel 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 2008, two new district review panel chairs were appointed. New leadership at district level during the implementation of the new syllabus should provide consistency in leadership for the critical early years of syllabus interpretation and implementation.

The approval process for work programs developed under the 2007 syllabus is progressing well, much streamlined by the electronic work program submission tool, WPOnline. Most schools are now teaching Technology Studies from an approved work program. The reduced requirements for work programs are accompanied by the expectation that teachers will have reference to the syllabus at all times. As a working document in the school, the work program will become more detailed as each unit is developed and as schools reflect on their practices and assessment. Schools wishing to submit amendments to their work programs should add the amendment cover page (available from the QSA website, select Assessment > Senior assessment > Forms and procedures) before sending it to QSA using WPOnline.

Statewide comparability

Comparability ensures that the 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. The comparability strategy requires each panellist to review a single level of achievement across all samples and districts. For example, one panellist would look at all the threshold Very High Achievement (VHA) samples across all districts. It should be noted that samples sent by district panels to the comparability meeting are not selected as exemplars but are representative of the typical submissions that were agreed to at verification within a district. Information collected through the comparability process is primarily used by the manager of the Quality Assurance unit. The state review panel chair also writes a letter to each district review panel chair that contains advice regarding their panel’s judgments.

The state review panel noted that generally school judgments in awarding levels of achievement matched syllabus standards. 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 levels of achievement are determined.

This meeting also provides the opportunity for submissions that have been unresolved at verification to be reviewed. One submission was unresolved after verification. Panel chairs, panellists and staff at schools are congratulated for resolving not agreed-to submissions in 2008.

Course coverage

The samples from across the state have shown good coverage of the six areas of study. Assessment techniques in general cover areas evenly rather than focusing on individual aspects.

Quality of assessment

Throughout the state, it is apparent that there is a continued focus on developing students’ thinking, particularly in the area of Reasoning process. Higher-level reasoning is best demonstrated in student work through the use of sketching and associated notation, justification of decisions, concept maps and comparing and contrasting ideas. This needs to be continued throughout the implementation of the new syllabus.
At times, the topics selected for the Related research report do not allow students to develop this reasoning to an appropriate level.

To be awarded a standard, there needs to be evidence matched to the syllabus standards to support that decision.

Criteria sheets must reflect the typical standards detailed in the syllabus. Criteria sheets should not resemble a check sheet.

Subject support

In 2008, there were a number of Technology Studies subject meetings held in five districts throughout the state. These meetings were very well attended and supported by teachers of the subject. These meetings provided opportunities for teachers to meet and discuss aspects of the Technology Studies syllabus that affect its delivery.

Additional support and resources can be found through the Queensland Senior Technology Studies Syllabus 2007 group on the edna website <www.edna.edu.au>. Teachers are encouraged to use and share examples of assessment through the group.

To enrol in the group, follow this link: <www.groups.edna.edu.au/course/enrol.php?id=1514>.

Tim Osborne  
State Review Panel Chair

Roy Barnes  
Senior Education Officer
The final cohort of Year 12 students exited from courses developed under the 2001 Visual Art senior syllabus in 2008, and the syllabus and associated work program are no longer current. From 2009, all students studying Visual Art will use the 2007 syllabus. Next year will see the first exiting cohort of students who to have studied Visual Art from an approved work program written using the 2007 syllabus.


It will be exciting to see the depth of knowledge and understanding of visual art that students reveal in their bodies of work

QSA review panels are committed to best practice review processes founded upon a positive culture, quality relationships and responsible decision making. To support this practice, all Visual Art district review panel chairs and state panel members collectively agreed on these following key statements for visual art panels at the 2008 annual moderation conference.

Visual Art panel key statements

Principles
- To ensure equity and comparability of standards and develop shared understandings of syllabus statements and standards.
- To work collaboratively to support the Queensland system of school-based assessment.
- To demonstrate support for authentic classroom practice based on school-based assessment.

Values and Beliefs
- We value respectful negotiation to develop stronger working relationships between colleagues.
- We believe that Visual Art is integral to our past history, present culture and future aspirations.
- We value quality assessment.

Behaviours
- To play a significant role in mentoring and professional development for Visual Art teachers.
- To be honest and open to new ideas and change.
- To encourage authenticity in decision making.
- To facilitate a mentoring process.

The 2007 syllabus (p. 31) provides detailed advice about submitting evidence for Making for a moderation submission. If a school is submitting images on CD, the images should be formatted as jpeg files in a word document, and able to be opened on any computer. Do not submit a CD or DVD that require specific software. Documentation to accompany each image includes size indicators and descriptions of media and materials as well as identified individual samples. Please do not submit as a PowerPoint as the content is a linear format and not easily viewed across the submission and individual samples. If the Making evidence is submitted on a DVD, it should be formatted to play on any DVD player. The electronic element for a moderation submission will only replace the photos, schools submission must still comprise all the other information and requirements in hard copy. Check with your District Coordinator well in advance before submitting electronic images to ensure that the reviewers in your district have the facility to pre-review the digital images and that there will be facilities at the meeting to review the work. It may be that you are required to print the images as the electronic facility is not available. It is important to have clear and descriptive images that identify the characteristics and signpost the evidence on which the school has made judgments. While it is understandable that digital images can be clearer, closer to the real work and economical, the evidence should be easily accessible to...
the reviewer in their circumstances. In some districts, panel members are bringing along their own laptops to enable the work to be reviewed. This will be an ongoing difficulty for us, and again we will rely on teachers individually assisting where they can at this time. The opportunity for complete electronic submissions are being investigated.

**Feedback from districts**

The state review panel is pleased to report that 379 schools are offering Visual Art in Queensland. Approval of work programs for the 2007 syllabus is progressing well. The reduced requirements for approval carries with it the expectation that each teacher of Visual Art will have reference to the syllabus at all times. As a working document in the school, the work program will become more detailed as each unit is developed and as schools reflect on their practices and assessment.

After reviewing programs, the biggest issue impeding approval relates to the information in the course organisation. The syllabus states that students should, through an individual focus/s, "define interpretations and responses to the concepts" (Section 5.3.1, p. 8). Frequently, a concept is listed, but the elaborated focus bears 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 made explicit the link between the concept and the potential focuses that students could pursue, the intention of the syllabus is evident.

At verification, district review 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 with the provided evidence rather than the schools’ understanding of the standards. In Visual Art, evidence relates to 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. When selecting the evidence to show a reviewer how a decision was reached in relation to the standards, consider the characteristics noted while marking the work — these are the signposts and evidence to show in the submission.

To provide quality evidence that supports school judgments in a submission, follow these guidelines:

- Identify clearly and consistently each sample throughout the submission.
- Provide fully completed profiles for each sample that is accurately transcribed from task sheets.
- Use clear and consistent labels to indicate where evidence begins and ends for each summative assessment instrument, and for each sample.
- Ensure that clear images of the final resolved work(s) as either good-quality colour printouts or JPEG files are provided. The images of resolved work should be clearly identified and distinguished from any process or developmental work. To better support student evidence, include:
  - an indication of scale
  - an image showing the work hanging or installed in a space
  - close-up images of details of the work
  - a clear artist’s statement identifying key media and materials
  - a brief statement of the intent of the student.
- Select 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
  - 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, resolution and reflection, the school has the opportunity to underscore and present the actual decision making they themselves undertook when determining a student’s proposed level of achievement.
Despite the high number of not agreed-to submissions, district panel chairs worked to negotiate with schools and 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 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 given on assessment and standards is greatly valued.

Statewide comparability

Comparability is the process by which state review panels collect information about the extent to which judgments about levels of achievement are comparable across the state.

The state review panel saw the need for teachers to continue to renew their understanding of the Visual Literacy dimension in the Making general objective. The 2007 syllabus exit standards identify the characteristics from A to E in more detail than the 2001 syllabus.

Course coverage

Schools have developed work programs for the 2007 syllabus that support students in working towards developing and resolving bodies of work successfully. Programs offer students the opportunity to “develop their ideas over time, exploring and experimenting with concept, focus, contexts and media area(s)” (Section 5.4, p. 9). Submissions show that schools have transitioned from assessment instruments using folios of work alone that consisted of Making and Appraising tasks (which may not have shown a connected sequence or cohesion of ideas or explorations), to bodies of work where assessment in both objectives are connected. This assessment instrument and the teaching and learning processes that support assessment establish the potential for student responses in Year 12 to represent “a coherent journey which may attempt divergent paths but eventually moves towards resolution” (Section 5.4, p. 9).

Work programs for the 2007 syllabus show schools are selecting two or three concepts as broad organisers for student learning in both Year 11 and Year 12. This approach may now enable students time to engage in broad and innovative explorations in response to the stated concept through one or more nominated focuses, progressing to the evolution of a body of work that interrelates both thinking and working practices inclusive of Making and Appraising. Assessment is based on the teaching and learning that has taken place in the unit, and the way r students demonstrate their understanding of the general objectives. Teaching must continue through to the end of the two-year course, and while the syllabus refers to students working in an individualised way and encourages independence, this relates to their problem solving and decision making, not all of their learning. Not all students will or are able to work in this manner, and the standards characterise this.

A feature of approved school programs is that following the submission of two resolved bodies of work for verification, there is a subsequent summative assessment item to be completed for exit. Schools in general have indicated that there will be an additional Making or Appraising opportunity for a student that “contributes to one of the verification bodies of work” (Section 9.8.1, p. 31). Schools are reminded to ensure that this additional summative assessment is not evidence that has been reworked from verification, but evidence that demonstrates how the student has continued to work through the inquiry learning model in relation to the stated concept. Post-verification assessment is in “addition to the contents of the verification folio” and “contributes to one of the verification bodies of work” (Section 9.8.1, p. 31). The summative evidence at verification will also be the summative evidence at exit, with the addition of the post-verification evidence.

Quality of assessment

Scaffolding tasks

The 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” (Section 5.2.2, p. 10). Increasingly, schools are supporting student achievement by improving the design of tasks and criteria and standards sheets for Year 11 and 12 students in the general objectives, Making and Appraising.
Improved scaffolding on *Making* tasks:

- identifies the concept students are ultimately responding to (including a brief explanation of the concept for students to understand)
- outlines 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
- scaffolds a task-specific (rather than 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, which includes the four interrelated processes: researching, developing, resolving and reflecting (Section 4, p. 6). The processes should be non-hierarchical and non-sequential, and any point in the process could be the initial stimulus point. It should ensure that students are provided with scaffolding that does not restrict them to a particular way of responding and is appropriate for the stage of the course
- suggests specific 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 distils the nature of the concept, rather than giving exhaustive lists of artist’s names when only a single work may be relevant.

This degree of scaffolding is encouraged for all Year 11 tasks but is 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 guidance of students in Year 12 (without being prescriptive) will be essential. While teachers and schools often provide this same type of supportive teaching on a day-to-day basis, improving the quality and clarity of task design will contribute to continual improvements in outcomes for students.

**Awarding standards**

The standards described in the 2007 syllabus are “typical” rather than the “minimum” matrix of the 2001 syllabus, so when making decisions about a grade, schools are reminded to award the standards in this way.

**Subject support**

As the year progresses, support materials will be added to the Visual Art senior subject section of the QSA website, including advice on monitoring and verification submission evidence. These materials will provide support for Visual Art teachers throughout the state.

Panel training will be provided in all districts in 2009, focusing on the important role of review panels. Any school or individual teacher who would like to receive email updates throughout the year should forward email details to Susan Hollindale at <sao@qsa.qld.edu.au>.

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State Review Panel Chair

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