

Languages



CS Languages and the new HSC

The principles underpinning the new HSC include:

Fairness: Students will be marked against a predetermined performance scale and will receive the mark they earn

Relevance to the needs of senior school students
Continuing quality of the HSC

Clearer reporting that parents, students and the wider community can understand. The new HSC will clearly report student outcomes against a predetermined performance scale.

Some things won't change

While there are new syllabuses for some languages and for some courses, some fundamentals will remain. In implementing the new languages syllabuses, the core business remains the same—teaching the language. The changes will be concerned primarily with how teaching is organised. For some courses, the shift may mean a change in emphasis to accommodate an approach that integrates the macro skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing and to focus on the purposeful use of the language. However, language teachers will still be teaching the language.

Which syllabuses are new?

The following table shows which languages and courses have new syllabuses.

Language	Continuers 2 Unit	Extension	Background Speakers 2 Unit
Arabic	x	x	
Chinese	x	x	x
Classical Greek	x	x	
Classical Hebrew	x	x	
French	x	x	
German	x	x	
Indonesian	x	x	x
Italian	x	x	
Japanese	x	x	x
Korean	x		x
Latin	x	x	
Modern Greek	x	x	
Spanish	x	x	
Vietnamese	x		

New Beginners level syllabuses have not been developed for the 2001 HSC. Existing Beginners (2 Unit Z) syllabuses have been amended to comply with the new HSC requirements. These amendments include revised or new aims, objectives and outcomes, and a draft performance scale. Beginners level syllabuses are available for Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Modern Greek and Spanish.

The total number of HSC languages courses in the new HSC is 65 and, of the 18 extension courses that are available, 12 are in languages.

How the new languages syllabuses were developed

Draft frameworks were sent to schools for consultation in Term 4, 1998 (Continuers) and Term 1, 1999 (Background Speakers). The frameworks were amended to incorporate the feedback.

Writing teams then developed language- and course-specific draft syllabuses that were sent out to schools for comment during Term 1 this year.

The completed syllabuses have been written to take into account the concerns expressed in the responses.

Consultation about the extension courses will take place over Terms 3 and 4 this year.

Some benefits

- The new syllabuses are more contemporary.
- They incorporate current thinking, pedagogy and design.
- They provide flexibility and an organisational focus under the *Themes and Topics* to address students' needs and incorporate issues as they emerge in the 21st century.
- They have a stronger emphasis on the communicative approach and on the use of language for meaningful purposes.
- The new syllabuses are coherent and consistent across the languages.
- They will assist with planning and programming.
- They will provide clearer understandings of what students are expected to learn.
- They have been developed to address the needs of a standards-referencing approach rather than a norm-referencing one.



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What's included in the new Continuers syllabuses?

Aims, objectives and outcomes

The aims, objectives and outcomes are common across the Continuers syllabuses. They describe the knowledge, skills and understandings that students will achieve by the end of the HSC course.

(There will be different objectives and outcomes for Beginners, Continuers and Background Speakers courses, reflecting the differences in the student groups.)

Themes and topics

Topics and suggested sub-topics are organised around the three themes of *The individual*, *The language-speaking communities* and *The changing world*. In treating these topics, many resources that are currently used will be appropriate for developing language skills in and understanding of the topic area. A significant amount of the current option materials can be used in teaching the topics or sub-topics. As it will not be necessary to treat technical aspects, such as music and cinematography, there will be more time for the study and use of the language.

The following two extracts from the German and Indonesian syllabuses clearly demonstrate the links with current content with the italicised topics and subtopics showing those contained in the present syllabuses.

German

Theme: the individual

Topics:

- *personal identity*, e.g.
 - *self*
 - *my home and community*
 - *family and friends*
 - *relationships*
- *education and aspirations*, e.g.
 - *school*
 - *education system*
 - *future plans*
 - *further education*
- *leisure and lifestyles*, e.g.
 - *holidays and travel*
 - *sports*
 - *hobbies*
 - *keeping fit and healthy*.

Indonesian

Theme: the changing world

Topics:

- the world of work, e.g.
 - *jobs and careers*
 - the search for work
 - the workplace
 - technology/equality
 - *links with Indonesia*
- youth issues, e.g.
 - drugs
 - unemployment
 - conflict between generations
- issues in today's world, e.g.
 - *urbanisation*
 - *environment*
 - *impact of tourism*
 - *the changing face of Indonesia*.

Text types

The text types that students are expected to recognise and those that they are expected to use in the external exam are identified in the syllabuses.

Vocabulary

For syllabuses, apart from Japanese, there are no prescribed vocabulary lists. Students will be expected to be familiar with a range of vocabulary and idiomatic expressions relevant to the prescribed themes and topics. With the new syllabuses, the use of dictionaries becomes an important adjunct to learning.

Grammar

The grammatical structures that students are expected to recognise and use are identified in the syllabuses. Examples of the use of the grammatical items are given.

At the time of writing, the Background Speakers and classical languages syllabuses were awaiting final approval.

What about assessment and reporting?

The comprehensive *assessment and reporting* section provides:

1. advice on internal assessment and external examinations
2. details of the assessment components, weightings and tasks for the Preliminary and HSC courses

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3. details of the external examination specifications
4. criteria for judging students' performance.

Some implications for teaching and learning

The new syllabuses focus on:

- **the communicative use of language**

The real and purposeful use of language is emphasised and will be reflected in the exam. Teaching time that was previously devoted to the options can be used to develop and enhance students' communicative skills.

- **the combination of skills to achieve objectives**

The syllabuses move away from the artificial separation into four discrete macro skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) that previously existed in many syllabuses. The syllabuses recognise that in real life we combine listening and responding, reading and writing, listening and writing.

The importance of **tasks** as a learning tool is recognised in the syllabuses. Tasks are broadly defined as "opportunities for the purposeful use of language." They have four elements:

1. a purpose that is greater than mere practice of the language
2. a context
3. a process: thinking, problem solving, creating
4. a product or result.

Examination, assessment and reporting supplement

In addition to the new syllabus documents, the Board of Studies will be providing an *Examination, Assessment and Reporting Supplement* for the new courses. These contain:

- a sample examination paper
- HSC marking guidelines
- draft performance bands that have been identified by using students' past performance in the HSC. The performance bands illustrate the typical performance of students.

Further support

In addition to articles in **CURRICULUM SUPPORT** you can gain further information about the new HSC from:

www.newhsc.schools.nsw.edu.au

which features the latest information about initiatives, activities and resources for the new HSC and provides a forum to share issues, questions and ideas on-line with others across the state.

The newsletter, *Enhancing Learning through the New HSC*, will be sent directly to schools each term.

Language-specific bulletins will give further details relevant to that language.

Project Officer, HSC Syllabus Implementation



At the beginning of Term 3, Jacqueline Koob joined the Languages Unit at Ryde to take up the position of project officer responsible for coordinating the development of support materials for implementing the new HSC languages syllabuses.

Jacqueline is Head Teacher, Languages at Auburn Girls High School and has many years' experience as a teacher of languages in NSW schools. She has taught French, German and Japanese. Jacqueline was previously at Blaxland High School and has worked with the Languages Unit as a presenter for an HSC marking workshop in French. She also contributed to the development of the video, *Speaking Skills for Senior French Students*, and was part of the writing team for the French literacy booklet.

Jacqueline can be contacted by fax on (02) 9886 7514 or by writing to

HSC Project Officer
Languages Unit
Private Bag 3
RYDE NSW 2112



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CS New HSC workshops

Copies of the new 2 Unit Continuers syllabuses, together with the corresponding *Examination, Assessment and Reporting Supplements*, arrived in schools at the beginning of Term 3.

The 2 Unit Background Speakers syllabuses will be in schools later this term.

The framework for the 1 Unit Extension course is still being developed by the Board of Studies. A draft framework for discussion will be sent to schools this term.

To assist teachers in the implementation of the new syllabuses, a series of workshops has been planned for various parts of the state during Term 4. These workshops will cater for teachers from government,

independent and Catholic schools. Preliminary information about dates is included in this supplement.

The major focus of the workshops will be on programming. To make the day as productive as possible, teachers are being asked to bring along any samples of programming or units of work they have developed for the new syllabus.

Application forms for the workshops are in all schools and colleges. They are also available on the New HSC web site

www.newhsc.schools.nsw.edu.au

Completed applications should be faxed to the Training and Development Centre, (02) 9569 3998. You are required to fill in an application form to register for all languages workshops. On receipt of your application, you will receive a fax confirming you have been accepted in the workshop.

Timetable

Subject	Locations	Dates
Chinese Continuers level	Ryde	22 October
Italian Continuers level	Leichhardt Queanbeyan Nowra	25 October 27 October 8 November
Indonesian Continuers level	Ryde Nowra Lismore	26 October 8 November 19 November
German Continuers level	Ryde Newcastle Queanbeyan Orange Armidale	14 October 25 October 27 October 2 November 22 November
French Continuers level	Randwick Newcastle Dubbo Orange Port Macquarie Ryde Armidale	21 October 25 October 1 November 2 November 9 November 15 November 22 November
Japanese Continuers level	Sutherland Newcastle Dubbo Orange Coffs Harbour Wagga Wagga Lismore Ryde	13 October 25 October 1 November 2 November 8 November 15 November 19 November 23 November

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Arabic Continuers level	Kogarah	16 & 23 October * 1.30-4.30
Chinese Background Speakers	Ryde	16 & 23 October * 1.30-4.30
Indonesian Background Speakers	Sydney	11 November
Japanese Background Speakers	Chatswood	16 & 23 October * 1.30-4.30
Korean Background Speakers	Chatswood	16 & 23 October * 1.30-4.30
Modern Greek Continuers level	Kogarah	16 & 23 October * 1.30-4.30
Spanish Continuers level	Liverpool	16 & 23 October * 1.30-4.30
Vietnamese Continuers level	Liverpool	16 & 23 October * 1.30-4.30
Classical languages	Sydney	17 November

* Participants in the Saturday afternoon seminars need to attend both sessions.

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Frequently asked questions about the new HSC

Teachers who attended the new HSC information sessions held during the second half of Term 2 posed a wide variety of questions to the presenters. The following are some of those questions for which the Board of Studies has provided responses.

How do teachers in schools access VET modules? How can teachers in schools be accredited to teach the VET module?

The Board of Studies, in collaboration with TAFE, is preparing a leaflet for teachers.

How many indicative hours is each languages course worth?

It is indicated in the syllabuses that the Preliminary courses are 120 indicative hours and the HSC courses are 120 indicative hours.

What is the time organisation for the themes? How deep or broad is the treatment of each topic?

It is indicated in the syllabus that not all topics will require the same amount of study time. The length of time and depth of treatment determined for each topic will depend on a number of factors, including:

- the particular objective/s being covered
- the needs and interests of the students
- the linguistic and cultural complexity of the texts selected for study
- the tasks set for completion
- the language of response
- the nature of the language itself.

How do teachers find out more about what is involved in the speaking examination?

Further advice regarding the conduct of the speaking examination will be provided by the Board of Studies at a later date.



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What about changes to Beginners courses?

The Beginners syllabuses have not changed other than to incorporate aims, objectives, outcomes and performance scales. These syllabuses will be revised in future years.

Will the eligibility criteria for Beginners courses change?

The current eligibility rules will continue to apply to Beginners languages courses until these syllabuses are revised.

How will the eligibility criteria for the Background Speakers courses change?

At the time of writing, the Background Speakers syllabuses in Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese and Korean are awaiting final endorsement by the Board of Studies. Issues concerning these syllabuses will be addressed after the documents have arrived in schools.

Is there a limit on the number of Extension courses a student can do in languages?

Commencing in Year 11, 2000, candidates for the HSC must undertake a program of study comprising at least 12 units of Preliminary courses and 10 units of HSC courses. Both the Preliminary course pattern and the HSC course pattern must include:

- at least 6 units of Board developed courses
- at least two units of a Board developed course in English
- at least three courses of 2 units in value
- at least four subjects.

The Preliminary (Language) Continuers is a prerequisite for the Extension courses. HSC Continuers is a co-requisite.

* * *

Are there other issues that have not been raised here? Do you have any other questions?

For the Languages Unit to be able to address questions and issues more comprehensively at the New HSC workshops in Term 4, please fax your questions to:

The New HSC Coordinator
 Languages Unit
 Fax: (02) 9886 7514.

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Taking a look at assessment and reporting in 2000

Q. What does a standards-referenced approach mean?

- A. The new Higher School Certificate (HSC) will use a standards-referenced approach to assessing and reporting student achievement.

This means that the achievements of students are assessed and reported against specified standards that are established for each course. In a standards-referenced approach, students are recognised for what they know, understand and can do. The mark they receive will reflect the standard which the student has achieved in the course.

The current HSC uses a norm-referenced approach. In this approach, fixed percentages of students are placed into bands of marks according to a pre-determined distribution. This occurs regardless of what students know, understand and can do, and fails to recognise the standard which the student has demonstrated in terms of achievement of course outcomes.

Q. What are the "standards"?

- A. In the new Higher School Certificate these standards are:

- the knowledge, skills and understanding expected to be learned by students as a result of studying the course, referred to as the *syllabus* standards
- the levels of achievement of the knowledge, skills and understanding (reported in six bands), referred to as the *performance* standards.

Syllabus standards and *performance* standards are based on the aims, objectives, outcomes and content of a course. Together, they specify what is to be learned and how well it is to be achieved.

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Q. How will the changes to the new HSC affect school policies and procedures?

- A.** The Board of Studies ACE Manual remains current for the year 2000. Schools should ensure that they are familiar with the HSC requirements concerning policy and procedures, as set down in this manual.

School policies and procedures will need to reflect the Board's requirements for the HSC internal assessment, as stated in the ACE Manual (check with the Board of Studies).

Aspects of policy and procedure which must be developed and implemented by schools include:

- informing students in writing of the assessment requirements for each course before the commencement of the HSC course
- ensuring that students are given adequate written notice of the nature and timing of assessment tasks
- providing meaningful feedback on students' performance in all assessment tasks
- maintaining records of marks awarded to each student for all assessment tasks
- addressing issues relating to illness, misadventure and malpractice in assessment tasks
- addressing issues relating to the late submission and non-completion of assessment tasks
- advising students in writing if they are not meeting the assessment requirements in a course and indicating what is necessary to enable the students to satisfy the requirements
- informing students about their entitlements to school reviews and appeals to the Board
- conducting school reviews of assessments when requested by students
- ensuring that students are aware that they can collect their Rank Order Advice at the end of the external examinations at their school.

Schools will need to ensure that they understand the new mandatory assessment requirements of different courses by checking the relevant syllabuses. These changes to requirements need to be incorporated into school policy and procedures.

The Board still requires schools to develop an internal assessment program that:

- specifies the various assessment tasks and weightings allocated to each task
- provides a schedule of the tasks designed for the whole course.

Q. How will changes to the new HSC affect my assessment practices?

- A.** The white paper envisaged that changes to assessment practice would occur over several years, commencing in 2001.

Teachers should follow school policies and procedures and syllabus guidelines for assessment and reporting. They need to ensure that course requirements are followed in terms of the balance and weighting of components and types of tasks. What is important is that the strategies used to assess students are appropriate to the outcomes being assessed.

Teachers need to provide a mark for internal assessment tasks. These marks should be derived from the students' achievement against specified criteria.

Appropriate feedback should be given to students to inform them about what they need to learn and do in order to improve their achievement in a subject.

Q. What are good assessment practices?

- A.** Teachers demonstrate good assessment practices when they:
- design and use assessment strategies which are directly linked to and reflect the course outcomes and the standards expected
 - provide the opportunity for students to demonstrate their achievement of outcomes in a variety of types of task
 - consider the type of assessment task being used, ensuring that it is appropriate to the outcomes being assessed
 - inform the students of the assessment criteria on which the assessment task is to be judged, before the task is undertaken



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- design for each task marking schemes which are aligned to the syllabus standards
- provide students with meaningful feedback about what they are able to do and what is needed to improve performance
- determine rankings and relative difference between students by level of achievement of the standards.

Q. Will the new HSC examination be different from the current examination?

- A.** HSC examination questions will be developed from the examination specifications. Teachers will need to check the examination specifications for each course they teach. Most courses have had changes made to their exam specifications as a result of the review process.

HSC examinations will now assess against standards. They will do this by using a variety of question types to enable students to demonstrate their level of achievement of course outcomes. Questions will be clearly worded and structured to indicate to students what is expected and will reflect a range and balance of course content and outcomes. Marking guidelines will be developed which will align with the performance standards. Examinations will be marked using teachers' professional judgement to determine the standard of students' performance, and the marks awarded will reflect the standard.

Q. What are non-examination type tasks?

- A.** Some examples of non-examination type tasks include:
- computer simulations, multimedia presentations
 - interviews, surveys, seminars
 - debates, hypotheticals
 - case study reports
 - oral presentations
 - research reports
 - dramatic presentations

- interpretation of scenarios, statistics
- co-operative learning tasks
- investigation and analysis tasks
- audio-visual presentation or analysis.

Q. What are performance scales and performance bands?

- A.** Students who successfully complete the HSC Course will have their performance reported against performance bands on a course report.

The course report includes a performance scale which describes five levels (bands) of achievement above a minimum standard expected. Each band on the performance scale (except band 1) includes descriptions that summarise the attainments typically demonstrated on that band.

Students who meet or exceed the minimum standard receive a mark of 50 or more. The mark awarded to a student will reflect the standard achieved in the course.

Performance scales can assist in internal assessment programs as they can be used to determine the wording of marking schemes and feedback to students.

Q. What do I need to understand about performance bands?

- A.** Teachers need to understand that the performance bands are used only to report students' achievement at the end of the course. They provide a summative description of a student's overall performance in a subject, based on internal assessment and the external examination.

Teachers need to recognise that the development of performance bands is an evolving process, in which the bands will continue to be refined to include information from performance in the new HSC courses and the outcomes assessed internally.

Support for teachers in developing an understanding of performance bands will include:

- State-wide workshops (LIG events) in November, which will specifically focus on assessment in the new HSC.

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- New HSC Bulletins. Four HSC Bulletins are being developed to address issues concerning assessment and reporting in the HSC. The first bulletin is on *Assessment—A Standards-Referenced Approach*. Other issues that will be addressed include: the role of internal assessment; developing assessment tasks; reporting student achievement.
- Board of Studies support documents, including the *Examination, Assessment and Reporting Supplement* for each course.

Q. At the end of the HSC, what will I need to submit to the Board of Studies?

- A. As in previous years, schools will provide the Board with a mark only. These marks are the product of the internal assessment program and should indicate the rank order of the students and the relative differences between the students.

This mark will provide a summation of each student's achievement, measured at points throughout the course.

Teachers will make informed judgements about the relative difference between students, based on their differing achievement of standards.

Q. What will happen to the internal assessment mark which I submit to the Board?

- A. For each school course group, the school assessment marks submitted to the Board of Studies will be moderated on the basis of the group's performance in the HSC examination. The approach to be used will be the same as at present, except that the raw examination marks will be used in the moderation process.

For each course, the moderated assessment and the examination mark will be averaged to provide a composite mark.

Experienced markers will follow a structured procedure, employing their professional judgement to determine what composite marks will correspond to the borderline between each performance band. This step provides a set of

“mapping points” that enable students' marks to be aligned with the performance scale.

For each student in a course, the moderated assessment mark and the examination mark are separately aligned with the performance scale.

The average of a student's assessment mark and the examination mark, after alignment to the performance scale, is then reported as the student's HSC mark.

Q. What will students receive in terms of an HSC?

A. Students will receive:

- The HSC testamur (if all requirements are met).
- A Record of Achievement which summarises results awarded in each course.
- A course report for each board-developed course. This will show the moderated internal assessment mark, the external examination mark and the averaged HSC mark on a performance scale. This report also includes statements of a typical performance which a student would demonstrate in each band.
- VET credentials.