

Science



CS HSC support strategy

Overview

The establishment, training and resourcing of school-based professional learning teams (PLTs) is central to the Department's HSC support strategy. PLTs will plan, implement and monitor their schools' projects to meet the learning needs of both staff and students.

Each school has received a grant to assist two or more team members to attend the district training day and school representatives to attend Local Interest Group events.

Local Interest Group (LIG) events scheduled for 1999 are as follows:

Local interest group events	Who will go	When
<p><i>LIG event 1: School structures and organisation</i> This one-day event provides a Board of Studies/VET update as well as solutions to whole-school implementation, including flexible structures, local solutions, and model timetables.</p>	Executive teachers with responsibilities in curriculum planning	Term 2 2-25 June
<p><i>LIG event 2: Syllabus implementation</i> These one-day events will identify syllabus implementation as well as learning and teaching issues in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • mathematics • sciences • biology. 	Head teachers in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • mathematics • sciences. 	Term 3 16 August - 2 September
<p><i>LIG event 3: Assessment</i> A one-day event to provide a Board of Studies update on school assessment for the new HSC.</p>	Senior executive and head teachers	Term 4 2-26 November

The exact dates of these local group events will be advertised in newsletters, on the web site and via invitations to schools.

Further information about LIG events is available from Frances Plummer, telephone (02) 9886 7189.

Curriculum support

Curriculum support is provided through the new HSC professional development web site, as well as through newsletters, workshops in a range of subjects and State conferences. **CURRICULUM SUPPORT** will include an HSC supplement offering advice on programming, teaching and assessing.

Contact officer:
Janet Davy
Telephone: (02) 9561 8312

Assessment and reporting

Assessment and reporting issues for the new HSC will be the focus of a series of bulletins.

Contact officer:
Peter Lorking
Telephone: (02) 9886 7683

Vocational education

Vocational education conferences for teachers of curriculum industry frameworks will be held in each of the 34 districts with a VET-In-Schools Committee. District-based events for industry-specific teachers are also planned.

Contact officer:
Cathy Gerloff
Telephone: (02) 9607 1326



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Support for implementing new Stage 6 science syllabuses

Science has been included in the LIG event 2 program because the system recognises that science teachers will have to deal with five new syllabuses, very different from the syllabuses they replace.

The LIG event 2 program targets science head teachers and biology teachers who will be teaching the new biology syllabus in 2000. The head teacher and biology teacher will each work through a daylong program.

The head teacher program will focus on the learning and resource demands of each of the new Stage 6 science syllabuses. Some strategies for helping science teachers to implement the new Stage 6 syllabuses will also be provided. The biology teachers will focus on a model for developing new biology units of work that will capture the new demands of the Stage 6 Biology Syllabus.

Later in Term 2 and early in Term 3, teachers wanting support to program and teach the new syllabuses in chemistry, physics and science will be able to choose from a series of one-day workshops, to be provided on the dates and at places listed below. You should put these dates, the subject workshop and the location closest to you in your diary.

Dates and venues may change as the pattern of demand becomes clear.

Relief to attend the LIG event and other one-day workshops may be met from the grant made earlier in the year to support the implementation of the initiatives associated with *Securing their future*.

For teachers wanting support to implement the new Earth and Environmental Science course, there will be a two-day conference in Sydney, at a venue to be announced, on Thursday and Friday, 21-22 October.

Location	Chemistry	Physics	Science
Ballina		22 Sept	13 Oct
Batemans Bay	9 Sept	10 Sept	8 Sept
Bathurst			15 Sept
Cowra		15 Sept	13 Sept
Dubbo	21 Sept	17 Sept	
Epping	19 Oct	15 Oct	18 Oct
Gilgandra			17 Sept
Grafton	12 Oct		
Gunnedah		20 Sept	22 Sept
Maitland		13 Oct	
Narrabri			20 Sept
Narrandera	14 Sept		
Newcastle	15 Oct		
Penrith	21 Oct	18 Oct	
St Marys			20 Oct
Sutherland	7 Sept	8 Sept	6 Sept
Tamworth	23 Sept		
Taree	14 Oct		15 Oct
Wagga Wagga	16 Sept	13 Sept	10 Sept

For further advice about the workshops, call Jim Scott or Gerry McCloughan (see contact details listed on p. 8).

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Feedback on the draft Stage 6 science syllabuses

In the two weeks prior to Easter, you would have received the draft Stage 6 syllabuses and surveys for biology, chemistry, earth and environmental science (replacing geology), physics and science. Comments on these syllabuses should have reached the Board of Studies on or before 30 April.

The Department was also invited to provide feedback, so a number of teachers across the state (from country and city schools, a field study centre, distance

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education contexts and TAFE) were invited by the Science Unit to participate in a teleconference. Teachers who had responded to the call for expressions of interest in the last two editions of this publication were especially invited to participate.

Three teleconferences (biology, physics and chemistry) were held in the last week of Term 1 and two more were held in the first week of Term 2 (science and earth and environmental science). Some 60 teachers, in five groups ranging from ten to fifteen in number, participated and contributed patiently in the teleconference for up to two hours. Another forty sets of comments from teachers have been received and added to the collection, which has been used to shape the Department's response to the drafts.

I would like to express my thanks to all those of you who participated in the teleconferences for the frankness of your comments.

The following general comments about the draft Stage 6 science syllabuses emerged.

There was general support for the contexts chosen in the modules for all subjects, and the prescribed focus areas were easy to identify. A number of you felt that some contexts and prescribed focus areas forced a narrowing of content and that they were, in some cases, too contrived. For many, the distinction between context and prescribed focus area is confused.

Most agreed that the preliminary courses underpinned the HSC courses. The module structure was supported and there was general agreement that four modules were appropriate for each course. While most agreed that options were a good idea and generally supported those listed, there was a wide variation on how many options there should be, and many suggestions were made for deletions and additions.

There was very strong agreement about there being far too much content in the modules for them to be taught in the available time and that the new courses were set at too high a standard for a significant proportion of students (this was particularly so for the new science syllabus).

While there was general support for the list of assumed knowledge underpinning the preliminary courses, most teachers felt that it would be impossible to ensure that their students in Year 10 this year would have achieved it all by the end of the year in time to start any new preliminary course next year.

The student research project attracted a lot of comment and was given in-principle support. However, teachers were sceptical about how to manage it so that the work they marked was that of the student and not a copy. Against this was a consistent view from teachers in schools where across-the-year projects are currently given, that projects can be managed appropriately and equitably and assessed fairly, especially when students keep a process diary of their work.

The above comments have been passed on to the Board in focus group meetings, along with the comments from your colleagues from the Association of Independent Schools and the Catholic Education Commission. Both groups reported similar reactions to yours.

The Department has also made a formal written submission to the Board about each of the five new draft syllabuses. In that response, the following issues have been raised:

- Coherence within and consistency between modules are lacking.
- The generic outcomes do not always relate to the other content in the module.
- The wording in the big ideas, the "learn about" and "learn to" columns does not adequately capture the acceptable scope and depth for the module.

The comments on each draft subject syllabus will be collated by five separate evaluation teams and a report written on each one to highlight the agreed changes. These changes will be made by writing teams under the direction of the relevant Board Inspector (in this case, Rosemary Hafner) and presented to the Board Curriculum Committee (BCC) for endorsement on 20-21 May this year. The BCC's recommendation will be conveyed to the Board. Once the Board recommends acceptance of the syllabus and the Minister agrees, the new syllabuses will be in schools in July for implementation in 2000.

The new syllabuses will be used as a basis for LIG events 2 and 3 and the workshops around the State listed in the table on p. 10.

Jim Scott
CEO, Science



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The new HSC web site

<http://www.newhsc.edu.au>

Helpful hint for PLTs ...

Bookmark this address: Why not build in regular access to this site so your team can keep abreast of the latest information? Maybe your school librarian or Internet contact person can assist.

The new HSC web site supports secondary teachers across NSW in their professional development. It is a "one-stop shop" for the latest information about initiatives, activities and resources for the new HSC. You can also share your issues, questions and ideas on-line with others in the learning community.

Check out the calendar of events

... to look at the timing of the year's major initiatives.

Locate those events which meet your needs and interests. The calendar allows you to pinpoint events and dates quickly.

Register for discussion

... to join in a real on-line community, or just visit the site and observe discussions between teachers.

Express your opinions, converse with others, ask questions.

Visit the newsroom

... to find out the latest on professional development...

Keep up-to-date with the latest news about the new HSC and find out what's happening in schools.

Access hot links to other sites

... to the Board of Studies, the Department of Education and Training, the Catholic Education Commission, the Association of Independent Schools, NSW HSC On-line, and more.

Stay connected with the big picture in secondary education.

Find out about resources

... to help you and your school to implement the new HSC.

Find out about valuable contact people who can help you.

Participate in professional development initiatives

... to support you and your school with specific elements of implementing the new HSC.

Develop your understanding of PLTs and other aspects of the HSC support strategy.

Read Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

... or ask a question of your own.

Discover relevant details about issues great and small.

Provide your feedback

... on the site and related professional issues, using the form provided.

The site is designed for you, so have your say!

