



**Physics**  
**Stage 6**

**Draft Syllabus**

**Consultation Report**  
**February 2017**

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# 1 Background information

The NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) replaced the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW (BOSTES) on 1 January 2017.

The preparation of the *Physics Stage 6 Draft Syllabus* took into account the broad directions for the learning area, which were developed following public consultation and endorsed by the NESA in December 2014. In 2015 NESA conducted consultation on the draft writing briefs. The draft writing briefs were endorsed by the Board in February 2016.

NESA conducted consultation on the draft syllabus in Term 3, 2016.

The consultation program from 20 July 2016 to 31 August 2016 included:

- a meeting of the Years 11–12 Science Board Curriculum Committee on 24 August 2016
- face-to-face consultation meetings
- targeted consultation meetings for:
  - Aboriginal education
  - Special education
  - Industry.
- student voice meetings
- an online survey on the NESA website
- written submissions.

Professional associations and schooling sectors conducted a range of activities during the consultation period to inform feedback to NESA.

Feedback from consultation was analysed and informed revisions to the draft syllabus. The final syllabus is available in an online interactive format on the NESA website.

## 2 Executive summary

The *Physics Stage 6 Draft Syllabus Consultation Report* provides a description of the consultation process and a summary and analysis of feedback received. It details data and findings gathered from a meeting of the Years 11–12 Science Board Curriculum Committee, 4 metropolitan and 3 regional face-to-face consultation meetings, 6 targeted consultation meetings, 2 student voice meetings, 157 responses to an online survey and 24 written submissions.

The Physics draft syllabus has been generally well received and the scope of the course supported. Some respondents raised matters about the continuum of learning and the mathematical demands of the course. However, these matters were not supported by the majority of respondents.

Some responses indicated that the depth of learning required by the content was unclear.

A small number of respondents indicated that the skills of Working Scientifically did not show a continuum of learning from Stage 5 and that there was a lack of integration of Science as a Human Endeavour (SHE). These issues were not identified by the majority of respondents.

Responses also indicated support for the provision of depth studies. Further clarification about their assessment and structure was required.

Responses indicated that further guidelines were required for assessment structures and the HSC examination specifications, and that support materials to assist implementation are needed to illustrate a range of approaches to the courses and the implementation of the depth studies.

### 3 Key matters

| <b>Key matters</b>   | <b>Actions</b>  |
|--|---|
| There is too much content in the course, especially in Year 11.  | Content has been reviewed and 'Simple Harmonic Motion' has been removed from Module 2 in Year 11.   |
| Clarification is needed about the depth study and how it is to be implemented, monitored and assessed. | Support materials will be developed to support a range of approaches to implementation of the depth study.  |
| The need for further information on assessment and examination requirements is needed.                 | Assessment requirements have been reviewed and adjusted, and support materials will include assessment advice to support syllabus implementation. |

## 4 Analysis

### 4.1 Rationale

#### Summary

The majority of survey respondents supported the proposed rationale.

#### Feedback affirming the rationale

| Feedback   | Sources                                   |
|--|---|
| The rationale is clear and concise and is supported. | CSOArm<br>CSOLism<br>SCS<br>Survey (x121) |

#### Key matters and actions

| Key matters  | Sources       | Actions   |
|--|---------------|---|
| The rationale should be amended to include STEM opportunities. | DoE<br>STANSW | The rationale has been reviewed to include reference to STEM. |

## 4.2 Aim

### Summary

The majority of respondents supported the proposed aim.

### Feedback affirming the aim

| Feedback   | Sources                     |
|--|-----------------------------|
| The proposed aim provides an appropriate statement of the overall purpose of the syllabus. | DoE<br>SCS<br>Survey (x122) |

### Key matters and actions

No key matters were raised in relation to the aim.



## 4.3 Objectives

### Summary

The majority of respondents supported the proposed objectives.

### Feedback affirming the objectives

| Feedback                  | Sources                            |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| The objectives are clear. | CSOArm<br>CSOLism<br>Survey (x110) |

### Key matters and actions

No key matters were raised in relation to the objectives.

## 4.4 Outcomes

### Summary

The majority of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the outcomes are appropriate for the Physics course.

### Feedback affirming the outcomes

| Feedback                                   | Sources                          |
|--|----------------------------------|
| The outcomes are relevant and appropriate. | Canterbury (CM)<br>Survey (x102) |

### Key matters and actions

| Key matters   | Sources   | Actions  |
|---|---|--|
| Further guidance is required to indicate depth of knowledge for some of the outcomes. | AIS<br>Armidale (CM)<br>Canterbury (CM)<br>Epping (CM)<br>Submissions 5, 7<br>Survey (x3) | The outcomes have been reviewed to ensure clarity. |

## 4.5 Course structure and requirements

### Summary

A large number of respondents found the structure clear and logical. The relevance of the Inquiry Questions was raised.

The inclusion of depth studies was supported by the majority of respondents; however, further detail about the implementation and assessment of the depth studies is required.

### Feedback affirming the course structure and requirements

| Feedback                                      | Sources  |
|---|--|
| The inclusion of a depth study was supported. | AHISA<br>DoE<br>Epping (CM)<br>STANSW<br>Submissions 4, 5,<br>9,10,11,12<br>Survey (x88) |
| The course structure is clear and logical.    | Survey (x88)   |

### Key matters and actions

| Key matters  | Sources   | Actions   |
|--|---|---|
| Further detail relating to depth studies, their implementation, monitoring and assessment is needed. | AIS<br>CCSOBB<br>Epping (CM)<br>SCS<br>STANSW<br>Submissions 3,13<br>Survey (x11) | The support materials to be released in 2017 will provide further clarification about the implementation and assessment of the depth studies. |
| The place of Inquiry Questions is not clear.   | AIS<br>CCSOBB<br>SCS<br>STANSW<br>Submissions 1–2                                 | A statement relating to the nature and purpose of the Inquiry Questions has been included in the syllabus.                                    |

## 4.6 Assessment

### Summary

A significant number of respondents supported the structure of the school-based assessment.

Respondents raised the need for further advice about how the depth studies are to be assessed, and the HSC examination specifications.

### Feedback affirming the information on assessment

| Feedback  | Sources                       |
|---|-------------------------------|
| The information about school-based assessment looks fair and appropriate. | Submission 10<br>Survey (x91) |

### Key matters and actions

| Key matters   | Sources  | Actions  |
|---|--|--|
| The assessment of depth studies is unclear.               | AIS<br>Canterbury (CM)<br>CCSOBB<br>CSOArm<br>CSOLism<br>SCS<br>STANSW<br>Submissions 9,10<br>Survey (x19) | Support materials will be developed to support implementation and assessment of depth studies. |
| There needs to be clearer HSC examination specifications. | AIS<br>CCSOBB<br>DoE<br>Epping (CM)<br>SCS<br>STANSW<br>Submissions 4, 3,<br>8<br>Survey (x20)             | Assessment and reporting requirements will be released in 2017.                                |

## 4.7 Content

### Summary

The majority of respondents agreed that the scope of content is clear but the depth is not.

The amount of content, especially in Year 11 was raised by respondents. A high number of respondents indicated that there was too much coursework for the time allocated.

### Feedback affirming content

| Feedback  | Sources                                      |
|---|--|
| The mathematical content makes the course more rigorous and is a good preparation for university courses. | AHISA<br>AIS<br>Submission 13<br>Survey (x3) |
| The emphasis on problem-solving is positive.  | Submission 8                                 |

### Key matters and actions

| Key matters   | Sources  | Actions  |
|---|--|--|
| The skills content needs to be more specific.   | AIS<br>DoE<br>CCSOBB<br>SCS<br>STANSW<br>Submission 1<br>Survey (x3) | The Working Scientifically skills have been revised for specificity.                     |
| The depth of learning is not clear.   | AIS<br>SCS<br>STANSW<br>Submissions 2, 4, 5<br>Survey (x10)          | The wording of content has been revised in each module to provide clarity about depth.   |
| The increased mathematics requirements could have the effect of smaller candidature and classes not being run in small schools. | AIS<br>Campbelltown (CM) DoE<br>SCS<br>STANSW<br>Submissions 3,14    | The mathematical requirements have been reviewed to cater for the diversity of learners. |

| Key matters   | Sources   | Actions   |
|---|---|---|
| There is too much content for the allocated time.   | AIS<br>Armidale (CM)<br>CCSOBB<br>DoE<br>Epping (CM)<br>SCS<br>STANSW<br>Submissions<br>2,3,8,14<br>Wagga Wagga<br>(CM) | The content in Year 11 has been reduced in Module 2.  |
| Greater specificity is required, including the use of verbs, to assist in the interpretation, scope and the depth of content. | AIS<br>Campbelltown<br>(CM)<br>DoE<br>Epping (CM)<br>Gosford (CM)<br>Manly (CM)<br>SCS<br>STANSW<br>Submission 6        | The content has been revised to include verbs where appropriate to clarify the scope and depth of learning. |
| Opportunities for practical experiences should be clearly identified.   | AIS<br>STANSW   | Opportunities for practical experiences have been defined and clarified throughout the syllabus.            |

## 4.8 Learning across the curriculum

### Summary

Respondents indicated that Learning across the curriculum content was an important inclusion in the syllabus. Many respondents noted that the content had been included appropriately, but some indicated that not all inclusions were relevant and appropriate and other opportunities could be identified.

### Feedback affirming Learning across the curriculum

No specific feedback was provided.

### Key matters and actions

| Key matters  | Sources   | Actions   |
|--|---|---|
| Opportunities for learning across the curriculum have not been embedded clearly within the course. | Aboriginal Ed<br>AIS<br>DoE<br>Submission 7<br>Survey (x11) | Additional icons have been included throughout the syllabus indicating opportunities for addressing learning across the curriculum content. |

## 4.9 Diversity of learners, including Life Skills

### Summary

Respondents agreed that the course provides for the diversity of learners. However, some indicated that students who did not have a strong mathematical ability would not have an opportunity to successfully complete the course.

### Feedback about the diversity of learners, including Life Skills

| Feedback   | Sources       |
|--|---------------|
| The syllabus meets the needs of the diversity of learners. | Survey (x72)  |
| The level of mathematics included is a positive change.    | Survey (x110) |

### Key matters and actions

| Key matters  | Sources                                       | Actions   |
|--|---|---|
| There is a strong emphasis on mathematics in this course which may affect the diversity of learners. | AIS<br>CCSOBB<br>SCS<br>STANSW<br>Survey (x3) | The mathematical content has been reviewed for and revised for appropriateness to engage the diversity of learners. |



## 4.10 Other comments

### Summary

The majority of respondents welcomed the quantitative analytical rigour as a foundation for students who are preparing for tertiary studies or other STEM-related disciplines and endeavours.

Several respondents have raised matters about the time allocated to complete the depth study.

### Feedback affirming the draft syllabus

| Feedback  | Sources             |
|---|---------------------|
| This syllabus provides for flexible delivery and teacher and student engagement.  | AIS<br>Survey (x10) |
| The course provides for a sound preparation for students progressing to tertiary studies and other STEM-related fields. | AIS<br>Survey (x5)  |

### Key matters raised and actions

| Key matters raised   | Sources   | Actions   |
|--|---|---|
| The removal of the current syllabus contexts is not supported. | AIS<br>Armidale (CM)<br>CCSOBB<br>SCS<br>Submissions 3, 7–8 | The inclusion of contexts is a school-based matter. |

## 4.11 Student voice

Targeted consultation meetings with students were held to gather feedback about the Science syllabuses. These meetings focused on discussion of courses within the Year 11 and Year 12 Science learning area, including: aspects of Science most and least liked; how the course could be improved; and the value and interest in a Science Extension course.

### Summary

Student comments focused on the study of Stage 5 and Stage 6 Science. The majority of students supported a more flexible approach to the study of science, including opportunities to research and a move away from learning a large amount of prescribed content.

### Feedback from student voice on Science

| Feedback   | Sources                           |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Students enjoy the open-ended nature of tasks.   | Armidale (SV)<br>Wagga Wagga (SV) |
| Students dislike learning extensive content for an examination and preferred the application of knowledge.                 | Armidale (SV)<br>Wagga Wagga (SV) |
| Students indicate that there was much more content in the Stage 6 course compared to Stage 5.                              | Armidale (SV)<br>Wagga Wagga (SV) |
| Students support the inclusion of more independent research tasks and having time dedicated to exploring Science in depth. | Armidale (SV)<br>Wagga Wagga (SV) |
| Students strongly endorsed the development of a Science Extension course.  | Armidale (SV)<br>Wagga Wagga (SV) |

## 5 Quantitative analysis of survey responses

Note: Due to rounding, some percentages may not total 100%.

| Survey item  | Number of responses | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|--|---------------------|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| <b>Rationale</b>   |                     |                |       |          |                   |
| 1. The rationale describes the nature and purpose of the course in the curriculum.   | 131                 | 26%            | 66%   | 7%       | 1%                |
| <b>Aim</b>   |                     |                |       |          |                   |
| 2. The aim provides a succinct statement of the overall purpose of the course.   | 130                 | 27%            | 66%   | 5%       | 2%                |
| <b>Objectives</b>  |                     |                |       |          |                   |
| 3. The objectives define the intended learning and the knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes to be developed through study of the course. | 128                 | 27%            | 58%   | 13%      | 2%                |
| <b>Outcomes</b>  |                     |                |       |          |                   |
| 4. The outcomes and content describe what students are expected to achieve in relation to what they know, understand and can do from studying the course.  | 120                 | 28%            | 57%   | 15%      | 0%                |
| 5. The outcomes provide an appropriate continuum of learning from Stage 5 to Stage 6.  | 122                 | 27%            | 55%   | 16%      | 2%                |
| <b>Course structure</b>  |                     |                |       |          |                   |
| 6. The course structure and requirements are clear, manageable and appropriate.  | 122                 | 21%            | 51%   | 18%      | 10%               |
| 7. The requirements for programming a depth study are clear.   | 121                 | 15%            | 44%   | 29%      | 12%               |

| Survey item   | Number of responses | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---------------------|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| <b>School-based assessment</b>  |                     |                |       |          |                   |
| 8. The school-based assessment requirements are manageable.   | 123                 | 15%            | 59%   | 19%      | 7%                |
| 9. The school-based assessment requirements provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate their learning.   | 121                 | 23%            | 56%   | 17%      | 4%                |
| 10. The requirements for the assessment of a depth study are clear.   | 121                 | 12%            | 38%   | 33%      | 17%               |
| <b>HSC assessment</b>   |                     |                |       |          |                   |
| 11. Please comment on the HSC examination specifications.   | 93                  | 12%            | 49%   | 29%      | 10%               |
| <b>Content</b>  |                     |                |       |          |                   |
| 12. The content describes the scope and depth of learning.  | 120                 | 25%            | 48%   | 22%      | 5%                |
| 13. The course content is appropriate.  | 120                 | 29%            | 45%   | 19%      | 7%                |
| <b>Learning across the curriculum</b>   |                     |                |       |          |                   |
| 14. The Learning across the curriculum content, including opportunities for students to develop their understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, is authentic and appropriate. | 110                 | 14%            | 45%   | 29%      | 12%               |
| <b>Modules</b>  |                     |                |       |          |                   |
| 15. The modules provide a clear progression and development of concepts.  | 117                 | 21%            | 62%   | 14%      | 3%                |
| 16. Sufficient time has been allocated to cover the course outcomes and content for each module.  | 115                 | 11%            | 48%   | 24%      | 17%               |

| Survey item   | Number of responses | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---------------------|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| 17. Working Scientifically is appropriately incorporated in the content.                          | 117                 | 23%            | 66%   | 9%       | 2%                |
| 18. There is sufficient scope for a variety of practical experiences.                             | 116                 | 30%            | 61%   | 7%       | 2%                |
| 19. There are sufficient opportunities to apply quantitative and analytical skills in the course. | 116                 | 41%            | 54%   | 3%       | 2%                |
| <b>Diversity of learners</b><br>20. The syllabus meets the needs of the diversity of learners.    | 115                 | 18%            | 44%   | 28%      | 10%               |

## 6 Respondents

### 6.1 Consultation meetings

#### Board Curriculum Committee consultation meeting at NESAs on 24 August 2016 (code: BCC)

16 members

| Name                       | Organisation   |
|----------------------------|--|
| Dr Timothy Wright          | Chair  |
| Mr Vatche Ansourian        | NSW Department of Education  |
| Dr Alison Beavis           | NSW/Territories Committee of Chairs of Academic Boards/Senates     |
| Ms Olivia Belshaw          | Professional Teachers' Council NSW                                 |
| Mr John Cairns             | Australian Association of Special Education NSW Chapter            |
| Ms Karen Daffy             | NSW Teachers Federation  |
| Ms Fiona Davies            | NSW Parents' Council   |
| Mr Robert Farr             | Association of Independent Schools of NSW                          |
| Ms Catherine Garrett-Jones | Council of Catholic School Parents NSW                             |
| Mr Peter Harold            | Independent Education Union NSW/ACT                                |
| Ms Alice Leung             | NSW Department of Education  |
| Mr Mike Morgan             | NSW Teachers Federation  |
| Mr Paul Reilly             | TAFE NSW   |
| Mr Timothy Spencer         | Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of NSW             |
| Mr Paul Stenning           | Catholic Education Commission NSW                                  |
| Dr Louise Sutherland       | NSW/Territories Committee of Chairs of Academic Boards and Senates |

**Face-to-face consultation meetings (code: CM)**

480 attendees

| <b>Location</b> | <b>Date (2016)</b> | <b>Number of attendees</b> |
|-----------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Campbelltown    | 28 July            | 65                         |
| Canterbury      | 2 August           | 82                         |
| Gosford         | 4 August           | 44                         |
| Manly           | 9 August           | 59                         |
| Epping          | 11 August          | 174                        |
| Armidale        | 18 August          | 35                         |
| Wagga Wagga     | 23 August          | 21                         |

## Targeted consultation meetings

### **Aboriginal education** (code: Aboriginal Ed)

15 attendees

| Location    | Date (2016) | Number of attendees |
|-------------|-------------|---------------------|
| Sydney (am) | 28 July     | 7                   |
| Sydney (pm) | 28 July     | 8                   |

### **Special education** (code: Special Ed)

57 attendees

| Location  | Date (2016) | Number of attendees |
|-----------|-------------|---------------------|
| Sydney    | 11 August   | 19                  |
| Sydney    | 16 August   | 21                  |
| Newcastle | 22 August   | 17                  |

### **Industry** (code: Industry)

28 attendees

| Location | Date (2016) | Number of attendees |
|----------|-------------|---------------------|
| Sydney   | 11 August   | 28                  |

### **Student voice meetings** (code: SV)

30 attendees

| Location    | Date (2016) | Number of attendees |
|-------------|-------------|---------------------|
| Armidale    | 18 August   | 19                  |
| Wagga Wagga | 23 August   | 11                  |



## Consultation meeting attendees

| Attendees           | Number of attendees |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Academic            | 11                  |
| Parent              | 0                   |
| Pre-service teacher | 5                   |
| School executive    | 62                  |
| Teacher             | 326                 |
| Student             | 1                   |
| Other               | 14                  |

| Attendees identified as                                | Number of attendees |
|--|---------------------|
| An Aboriginal person                                   | 2                   |
| A Torres Strait Islander person                        | 0                   |
| An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person        | 0                   |
| Not an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person | 417                 |

| Sector           | Number of attendees |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Government       | 218                 |
| Catholic         | 62                  |
| Independent      | 173                 |
| Non-school based | 27                  |

| Area of NSW  | Number of attendees |
|--------------|---------------------|
| Metropolitan | 380                 |
| Regional     | 100                 |

*Note: The data listed above was gathered from meeting attendance registrations. It may not include all data for those who attended without first registering. Some data may not reflect the total number of attendees.*

## 6.2 Online survey respondents

157 responses

| <b>Respondents</b>        | <b>Number of respondents</b> |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Academic                  | 8                            |
| Parent                    | 2                            |
| Pre-service teacher       | 3                            |
| Principal                 | 1                            |
| School executive          | 18                           |
| School faculty/department | 8                            |
| Teacher                   | 96                           |
| Student                   | 28                           |
| Other                     | 14                           |

| <b>Respondents identified as</b>                       | <b>Number of respondents</b> |
|--|------------------------------|
| An Aboriginal person                                   | 2                            |
| A Torres Strait Islander person                        | 1                            |
| An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person        | 0                            |
| Not an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person | 154                          |

| <b>Sector</b>    | <b>Number of respondents</b> |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| Government       | 72                           |
| Catholic         | 20                           |
| Independent      | 45                           |
| Non-school based | 20                           |

| <b>Area of NSW</b> | <b>Number of respondents</b> |
|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Metropolitan       | 114                          |
| Regional           | 43                           |

| <b>Number of people contributing to the survey</b> | <b>Number of respondents</b> |
|--|------------------------------|
| 1  | 135                          |
| 2–5  | 19                           |
| 6 or more  | 3                            |

### 6.3 Written submissions

| <b>Organisations, groups and individuals</b>             | <b>Code</b>   |
|--|---------------|
| Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia | AHISA         |
| Association of Independent Schools of NSW                | AIS           |
| Sydney Catholic Schools, Archdiocese of Sydney           | SCS           |
| Community of Catholic Schools– Diocese of Broken Bay     | CCSOBB        |
| Catholic Education Office – Armidale                     | CSOArm        |
| Catholic Education Office – Lismore                      | CSOLism       |
| NSW Department of Education                              | DoE           |
| NSW Teachers Federation                                  | NSWTF         |
| Science Teachers’ Association of NSW                     | STANSW        |
| Individual respondent                                    | Submission 1  |
| Individual respondent                                    | Submission 2  |
| Individual respondent                                    | Submission 3  |
| Individual respondent                                    | Submission 4  |
| Individual respondent                                    | Submission 5  |
| Individual respondent                                    | Submission 6  |
| Individual respondent                                    | Submission 7  |
| Individual respondent                                    | Submission 8  |
| Individual respondent                                    | Submission 9  |
| Sydney Grammar School                                    | Submission 10 |
| The Kings School   | Submission 11 |
| Sarah Redfern HS   | Submission 12 |
| Individual respondent                                    | Submission 13 |
| Individual respondent                                    | Submission 14 |
| Individual respondent                                    | Submission 15 |