

New Stage 6 Syllabus

**INVESTIGATING
SCIENCE**

The new Investigating Science syllabus has been developed using the established NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) syllabus development process. The syllabus includes Australian curriculum content and reflects the new directions of the *Stronger HSC Standards* reforms.

The *Stronger HSC Standards* reforms include:

- supporting the achievement of high minimum standards for all students
- ensuring the flexibility and versatility of the Higher School Certificate (HSC) to cater for the full range of students
- encouraging every student to achieve at their highest possible level
- a focus on the acquisition of deep knowledge, understanding and skills for students.

NSW Stage 6 syllabuses are inclusive of the learning needs of all students. The syllabuses accommodate teaching approaches that support student diversity, including students with special education needs, gifted and talented students and students learning English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D).

Many of the features of the current Stage 6 syllabuses have been retained, including:

- rationale
- aim
- objectives
- outcomes
- content for Year 11 and Year 12 courses.

New features of Stage 6 syllabuses include:

- Australian curriculum content identified by codes
- Learning across the curriculum content, including cross-curriculum priorities and general capabilities
- publication in an interactive online format
- an interactive glossary.

What is Investigating Science?

Investigating Science is a new course with a focus on the applications of science. The modules students will have opportunity to study include the methodology of science and the place of science in society.

Course modules:

- Observing
- Inferences and Generalisations
- Scientific Models
- Theories and Laws
- Scientific Investigations
- Technologies
- Fact or Fallacy
- Science and Society.

How is the course structured?

- Content is organised in modules.
- Inquiry questions provide a focus for teaching and learning.
- Depth studies in Year 11 and in Year 12 provide opportunities to investigate areas of interest in more depth.

What will students study?

Students will be provided with opportunities to:

- build on the knowledge, understanding and skills of Stage 5 Science
- apply Working Scientifically skills in an integrated way
- design and conduct practical investigations
- participate in fieldwork in Year 11 and Year 12
- learn about:
 - the observations of Archimedes, Alexander Fleming and Galileo
 - the practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in relation to their application of scientific principles
 - the use of models in science
 - the distinction between scientific theories and laws
 - using Science to test claims
 - how science affects the development of new technologies.

Why is assessment changing?

The *Stronger HSC Standards* reforms provide new directions for assessment practices in all Stage 6 courses to:

- rebalance the emphasis on assessment to allow more time for teaching and learning
- maintain rigorous standards
- provide opportunities to assess students' depth of knowledge and their conceptual, analytical and problem-solving skills.

NESA continues to promote a standards-referenced approach to assessing and reporting student achievement. The approaches of assessment for, assessment as and assessment of learning are important to guide future teaching and learning opportunities and to provide students with ongoing feedback.

Changes to school-based assessment requirements for each course include:

- mandated components and weightings for Year 11 and Year 12
- capping the number of school-based assessment tasks to three in Year 11 and four in Year 12
- specified minimum and maximum weightings for formal tasks
- a variety of tasks to assess student knowledge, understanding and skills.

School-based assessment requirements for Investigating Science reflect outcomes, course structure and content.

What is the plan for implementation?

2017	2018		2019
	Term 1	Term 4	
Familiarisation and planning	<p>Start teaching new Year 11 courses for English, Mathematics, Science and History</p> <p>Start implementing new Year 11 school-based assessment requirements for all Board Developed Courses (excluding VET, Life Skills and Content Endorsed Courses)</p>	<p>Start teaching new Year 12 courses for English, Mathematics, Science and History</p> <p>Start implementing new Year 12 school-based assessment requirements for all Board Developed Courses (excluding VET, Life Skills and Content Endorsed Courses)</p> <p>Start implementing new HSC examination specifications</p>	First HSC examinations for new English, Mathematics, Science and History courses

What materials will be provided to support implementation?

Many science resources will continue to be useful and relevant.

Support materials will assist teachers in familiarisation and planning for implementation of the syllabus and assessment requirements. Program Builder, an online programming tool, will be available for teachers in Term 1, 2017.

Initial materials released with the syllabus include:

- school-based assessment requirements
- assessment advice
- a parent guide to new syllabuses and assessment.

Additional materials to be released throughout 2017 include:

- sample scope and sequences
- sample teaching units
- sample assessment schedules
- sample assessment tasks
- advice on making adjustments for students with special education needs.

HSC Examination Specifications with sample materials will be released in Term 3, 2017.

The NSW Department of Education, the Catholic Education Commission NSW, the Association of Independent Schools of NSW and other school systems and professional teacher associations will continue to assist and support implementation of the syllabus.

How can I access the new Investigating Science syllabus?

The Investigating Science syllabus is available on the NESA website.

Features of Investigating Science content pages

