

## **HSC Performances and Submitted Works Advice to Schools Regarding Content**

The Board of Studies provides for performance examinations or submitted works in the following courses for the Higher School Certificate:

Agriculture	Drama	Society and Culture
Dance	English Extension 2	Textiles and Design
Design and Technology	Industrial Technology	Visual Arts
	Music	

These performances and works are developed over an extended period of time under the supervision of the school. From time to time, questions arise as to the content in some of these works. These questions vary depending on whether the work is only for HSC submission, for display or performance within the school or in the public domain such as On Stage or the published works in Extension 2 English.

This document provides guidance to schools to assist in ensuring that teachers and students give considered thought to the content of works submitted to a public examination that is expected to take into account broad community standards.

Other HSC courses provide for mandatory assessment tasks in the form of research projects. The advice in this document may be applied to such projects as well as performances and works submitted for the HSC examinations.

### **The context for submitted works**

The Higher School Certificate curriculum provides broad access to the creative arts and technologies allowing students, teachers and schools flexibility in addressing social issues and exploring a range of traditions and styles. For many students their performance and works present a significant opportunity to explore an issue of personal interest and to express ideas and opinions.

As with any work, the student and school need to be cognisant of their audience and purpose in the creation and exhibition of their work.

There is a wide range of alternatives to investigate and explore, and schools are expected to guide students in understanding the different audiences for their works and meeting contemporary community standards and requirements without undue restraint on the student's creative interpretation.

### **A framework**

#### **School and Community Values**

The NSW approach to values in education recognises that common community values are taught in all classrooms. This approach to values should inform individual and group decision-making in the school community.

While it is understood that the nature of some performances and submitted works challenges established views, principals should ensure that work submitted for the examination does not cause offence. Teachers have a vital role in ensuring that the principal is advised of the nature and content of HSC works from an early stage. In this way the student's work may develop in a manner which takes into account the values and standards of the general community.

### **Legislative requirements**

Principals and teachers need to be cognisant of their role and responsibilities evolving from their unique relationship with students. Teachers monitor and assess the development of performances and projects, certify that this material represents the student's own work and ensure that child protection requirements are met through the consideration of material that may be inappropriate for a school-based activity. Principals and teachers should be mindful of government regulations concerning the prohibition of weapons in schools.

### **Audiences for submitted works**

When developing performances and projects, students should be conscious of the various audiences for their work. Although a project or work may be developed with a particular audience in mind, there are other audiences who need to be considered.

A principal audience for any HSC work is the marking team who, as experienced teachers, have been exposed to a wide range of styles and expressions in their discipline, and understand the nature of the subject and the medium. It is not expected, however, that markers should be confronted by works and performances that the general adult community would find offensive. Supervisors of Marking bring to the Board's attention any examination responses that contain frivolous or gratuitously objectionable material. Candidates are required to address the published marking guidelines and ensure that the chosen form and medium are appropriate to the nature of the work.

Schools may decide that works developed for the HSC will be presented for public performance or display. Principals must be assured that the works presented are appropriate to the understanding and expectations of the audience and their cultural sensitivity. Consideration could be given to modifying or withholding certain works from general public performance or display.

### **Selecting works for HSC showcase events**

In its showcase programs, the Board of Studies includes HSC works that reflect a range of topics, styles and forms. These works often include material and styles that are innovative, risk-taking and original in approach. However, care must be taken to ensure that the content and presentation of the work is appropriate for a general audience that may include a wide range of community members including younger students. Some works may be deemed unsuitable in their original form for showcase programs, irrespective of the marks they have received.

At all stages of the selection process the Board of Studies places particular emphasis on the general nature of the audience for showcase events.

In selecting works, the Board of Studies is mindful of certain principles that underpin the national classification code for film and literature:

- minors should be protected from material likely to harm or disturb them
- everyone should be protected from exposure to unsolicited material that they find offensive
- it is necessary to take account of community concerns about depictions that condone or incite violence, and any portrayal of a person in a demeaning manner.

Works may not be considered suitable for showcase events if they contain the following elements:

- offensive language, that is, language likely to cause outrage or disgust;
- violence, either real or perceived;
- references to the use of illegal drugs;
- sexual references or nudity;
- themes considered inappropriate for a general audience.