



Government of **Western Australia**
Curriculum Council

YEAR 12 ENROLMENT PATTERN REVIEW 2009

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YEAR 12 ENROLMENT PATTERN REVIEW

1. Introduction

The Curriculum Council acknowledges that the introduction of new senior school courses, compulsory examinations and new Western Australian Certificate of Education arrangements have presented a significant challenge to schools. This task has been made more complex because the earlier approaches to course design and assessment were changed as the reform progressed. Some of the earlier understandings of the proposed system such as equivalence of difficulty of the same stage across different courses, the need to run units across stages, such as units 1B and 2A, and the need to repeat units in a different context have persisted, even though these aspects were removed from the reform three years ago.

Another factor contributing to the challenge schools have faced is the complexity of the WACE and university entrance requirements. The 2008 and 2009 transition arrangements have been difficult to manage. In addition, the WACE requirements for 2010 and beyond are quite complex and have also been subject to change. The breadth of study requirement was to be demonstrated through the coverage of the overarching learning outcomes but has changed to the more familiar list A and list B approach, and the compulsory requirement for community service was removed. Finally, the Tertiary Institutions Service Centre and the Curriculum Council developed a method to merge the distributions from both stages and add 15 marks to the scores of students who studied stage 3 units. This will provide an incentive for university-oriented students to study the higher stage 3 units and at the same time allow scores from stage 2 units to contribute towards university selection.

The result is that there has been a change from a familiar system that operated for more than two decades, and which schools understood well, to a more complex system with a high level of flexibility and choice. In wishing to do the right thing by their students, some schools have interpreted the new requirements differently from others. This has resulted in some apparent anomalies in course selection patterns.

This review examines some of these anomalies and explores possible reasons for them. The schools selected for visits by review panel members have enrolment patterns that appear to be anomalous in the following respects:

- schools which previously taught an E-code wholly school assessed course are now teaching units 1C and 1D instead of units 2A and 2B, for example Outdoor Education.
- schools which have a significant number of students repeating the same units studied the previous year
- schools offering units across stages, for example, units 1D and 2A of Media Production and Analysis.

The review panel considered the reasons given by these schools for counselling and timetable decisions. Most of the courses examined were those with additional stage 1 units, that is, units 1C and 1D, although enrolments in all English units and enrolments in other new courses were included in the review.

The visits were restricted to mid to large enrolment schools, primarily in the metropolitan and south west region. It is acknowledged that there are many schools in rural and remote communities and in the metropolitan area that have specialised enrolments.

The terms of reference for the review are in Appendix C.

2. Background

2.1 Course structure

The original curriculum design outlined in *Our Youth, Our Future*, (2002) proposed a 'course of study' structure where the complexity and demand of the content and context was to vary between each pair of units:

- Units at Stage 1 were to be the less demanding units, such as 1A and 1B and were to provide opportunities for access to content in flexible ways, possibly through a wider range of contexts using more practical learning experiences.
- Units at Stage 2 were designed to match the needs and abilities of the majority of students. For example, many students were expected to complete 2A and 2B in Year 11 and progress to 3A and 3B in Year 12. Others were considered likely to complete two Stage 1 units in Year 11 and progress to Stage 2 in Year 12. Therefore, completion of Stage 2 units is typically required for post-school destinations including TAFE colleges and other training providers, apprenticeships, traineeships, university and the workplace. It was always intended that the only students enrolled in Stage 1 units in Year 12 would be those not capable of completing Stage 2 units.
- Units at Stage 3 were to be the most demanding units, such as 3A and 3B, and were for students seeking university entrance.

Our Youth, Our Future also signalled the need for a range of units in selected courses for students with disabilities or learning difficulties, particularly those studying in an education support centre.

The key features of the original course design were as follows:

- pairs of units at three stages of increasing difficulty (units 1A and 1B, 2A and 2B, and units 3A and 3B)
- differentiation of courses based on stages, not years 11 and 12
- congruence in the level of difficulty within stages across courses
- open design of courses and units within them
- generic course examinations that spanned all three stages.

This 'course of study' and unit structure was to provide a high level of flexibility that would allow schools to offer course units with degrees of difficulty that allowed them to build on the prior achievement and interests of their students.

When the proposed 'courses of study' were developed and circulated for feedback, many teachers indicated that they would need more clarity about what they should teach and more information about the nature of assessment and the external examination.

In June 2006 the Curriculum Council made the decision to rewrite the courses so that they contained a clear specification of what should be taught. This occurred between June and November 2006. Despite this initiative, there was some continued disquiet from teachers about the level of difficulty of the new courses, particularly the Stage 3 (3A/3B) and Stage 2 (2A/2B) units. They were also concerned about the lack of detail in unit content because this would introduce too great a degree of uncertainty for teachers and students, particularly when there were to be external examinations in all courses.

At the time courses were being rewritten, the Council's Inclusivity Committee recommended the development of Preliminary Stage units for students with intellectual disabilities. This Committee also recommended the creation of additional Stage 1 units (1C and 1D) for students who are from the lowest quartile of the state-wide achievement spectrum, including students from refugee backgrounds. These students would struggle to achieve the required standard in units 1A and 1B in Year 11 and would need units of equivalent difficulty to allow

them to consolidate their learning from Year 11 and experience a sense of achievement in their Year 12 studies.

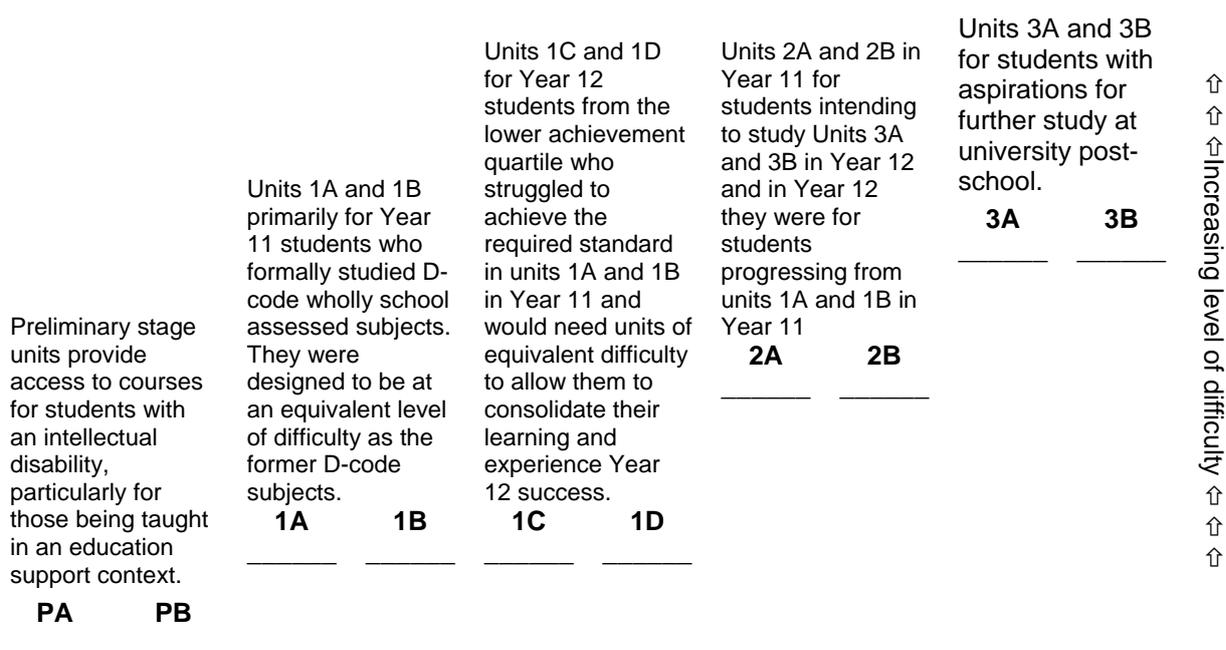
Teacher juries were convened for all courses to provide advice on the readiness of courses for implementation in 2008. Very practical advice was provided by the juries, particularly around the level of difficulty of Stage 2 and Stage 3 units and also about the level of detail needed in the courses to remove ambiguity and uncertainty and to clarify the assessment process.

Following advice from teacher juries, significant further revisions were made to the difficulty level of courses to remove the requirement for Stage 1, Stage 2 and Stage 3 units to be aligned across different courses and to ensure that the units were suited to the groups of students who would typically choose them.

Twenty-one of the new courses are being taught and examined in Year 12 in 2009. All remaining new courses have been implemented and will be examined in Year 12 in 2010.

The final structure and purpose of all units at different stages is summarised in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Structure and purpose of notional 55 hour units at different stages.



Although this structure provides a high level of flexibility, it is also more complex and more fragmented than having year-long, Year 11 and Year 12 courses. As a consequence, it presents timetabling and counselling challenges for schools, particularly those with low enrolments.

It also assumes that the units at Stage 1, 2 and 3 reflect the normal developmental learning pathway of students in a particular course. Students who are more developed in their learning typically take units 2A and 2B in Year 11 and Units 3A and 3B in Year 12 (the old 'TEE pathway') and others take units 1A and 1B in Year 11 and units 2A and 2B in Year 12 (the old 'non-TEE pathway'). There is an assumption that the latter group will develop sufficient understanding of the course by the end of Year 11 that they will be able to study units 2A and 2B in Year 12.

2.2 Current and future Year 12 cohorts

With the introduction of the raising of the school leaving age legislation in November 2005 effective from January 2006, it became even more important that the Curriculum Council's curriculum and certification arrangements accommodate all students.

The September 2009 school registration data indicates that there are approximately 30,500 students in the Year 12 age cohort. The size of the year cohort has increased steadily from slightly less than 30,000 four years ago. At the same time, the number of students completing Year 12 has also increased slightly from 19,951 (2006), 20,443 (2007), 20,412 (2008), and this year, current July enrolment is 21,953.

Between the end of 2008 and October 2009, 4,417 students who completed Year 11 have left school to undertake vocational education and training, employment or a mixture of both under the new raising the school leaving age initiative. Approximately 3,500 students either did not start Year 11, or left during Year 11.

Despite gradual improvement in school retention rates, the following retention pattern is typical of the last four years:

- Approximate number in July Year 10 cohort in 2007 30,000
- Number completing Year 11 and obtaining Year 11 results 26,500 [down 3,500]
- Number enrolled in Year 12 in June 2009 22,000 [down 4,500]
- Number completing Year 12 in 2009 (estimated) 21,500 [down 500]

The achievement levels of the 3,500 students who left prior to the end of Year 11 are not known. However, it could be conservatively estimated that approximately 2,000 of these students were from the lowest achievement quartile.

Table 1 provides the profile of 4,417 students who completed Year 11 and received Year 11 results and have subsequently left school. That is, they are no longer in the Year 12 population.

Table 1: Profile of the 4,417 students who completed Year 11 and received Year 11 results in 2008 and have subsequently left school.

School sector	AISWA	357	8.1%
	CEOWA	401	9.1%
	Government	3617	81.9%
	Other	42	1.0%
Gender	Male	2618	59.3%
	Female	1799	40.7%
Whether studying at least one VET unit of competence	VET	1854	42.0%
	Other	2563	58.0%

The Year 11 English units studied in 2008 and grades achieved by these 4,417 students are listed in Table 2. Figure 2 shows the total 2008 Year 11 English candidature, with the 4,417 exiting students (cross-hatched) and students continuing to Year 12 in 2009 (shaded).

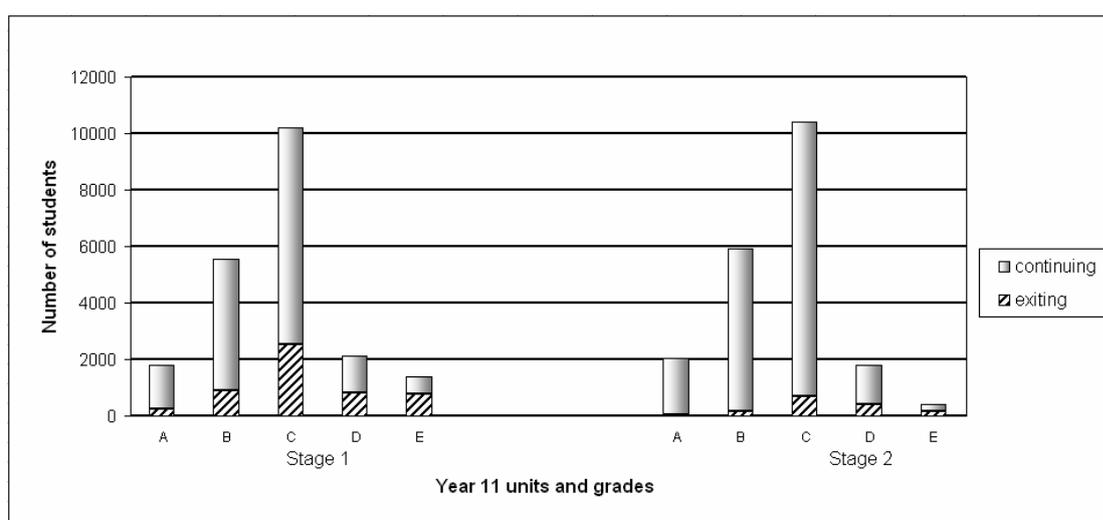
Approximately 810 of these students completed Stage 2 English units and 3,277 completed Stage 1 English units (each student normally studies two English units each year). A small number studied a mixture of Stage 1 and 2 units. Of the Stage 1 students, approximately 44% achieved a U (unfinished), E or D grades overall. This represents approximately 1,400 students. A further 39% achieved C grades overall. Assuming that about a third, or approximately 400 of these students may struggle to achieve in Stage 2 English. Therefore, overall approximately 1,800 students who finished Year 11 would most likely struggle to achieve in units 2A and 2B English and would have been more suited to units 1C and 1D if they had gone on to Year 12.

By the end of Year 12, 2009, it is estimated that 3,800 students from the lower achievement quartile of approximately 7,500 students will not have completed Year 12. As a result, only about half of the lower ability quartile remains at school to the end of Year 12.

Table 2: English units and grades of the 4,417 students who completed Year 11 and received Year 11 results in 2008 and have subsequently left school.

		Grades achieved and number of students						Total
		A	B	C	D	E	U	
		No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.
Year 11 English units completed in 2008	1A	64	257	734	248	220	387	1910
	1B	50	223	588	180	216	402	1659
	1C	62	222	674	225	154	213	1550
	1D	60	209	547	160	198	261	1435
	Total	236	911	2543	813	788	1263	6554
	2A	16	81	389	214	83	81	864
	2B	11	63	304	176	96	107	757
	Total	27	144	693	390	179	188	1621

Figure 2: 2008 Year 11 English candidature: students exiting and students continuing to Year 12 in 2009



2.3 Diminishing expectations

Recommendation 1 of the Government's Education and Health Standing Committee report on *Changes to the Post Compulsory Curriculum in Western Australia* (Report number 3, June 2006, Page 28) was that course and unit selections by students be monitored to ensure that perceived differences in difficulty did not result in enrolments falling in areas such as mathematics and the physical sciences.

Analysis of Year 11 enrolments in the first year of full implementation of the new courses indicates that the numbers in physics, chemistry and the higher-level mathematics units are approximately the same as for former Year 11 TEE subjects. Likewise, in Year 12, the introduction of the new courses did not appear to have adversely affected enrolments in TEE subjects in their final year before they were replaced by the new courses.

It seems that diminished expectations for the students from the middle two general ability quartiles, those students who are often considered as 'good, mid-range' students, was not considered by the Standing Committee.

2.4 New South Wales approach to course design

The blueprint for the revamp of the New South Wales Higher School Certificate in the late 1990s (*Securing their Future: the New South Wales Government's Reform of the Higher School Certificate*, 1997, Page 10) highlighted problems caused by excessive differentiation of courses within some Board of Studies subjects. In his analysis of NSW enrolment and achievement patterns, Professor Barry McGaw noted that this results in a lowering of students' expectations.

There is evidence that too many capable students are studying less demanding courses. For example, between 1991 and 1996 the candidature in the two most demanding English courses declined by nearly 50 percent and for the two most demanding Mathematics courses by over 30 percent.

It was noted that: Capable students in the School Certificate from south west Sydney, for example, have been significantly less likely to undertake the more demanding English courses than those from Northern Sydney.

Excessive differentiation has also led to doubts about the quality of courses at the lower end of a series of courses within a subject. The curriculum demands made on students in the lower courses often fail to challenge those students to reach their potential.

The blueprint for the new HSC courses outlined the need to address issues of low student expectations, the proliferation of courses, and the declining numbers of students taking up advanced level courses, as raised by Professor McGaw in his review, by:

- *raising curriculum standards*
- *allowing for greater depth of study in subjects where this is warranted*
- *providing more students with the opportunity of attempting higher levels of study, and*
- *raising teacher and student expectations about student achievement.*

The different approaches taken to senior school curriculum reform in New South Wales and Western Australia highlight the tension between providing a curriculum for all and ensuring that all students study the most challenging units suited to their background and capabilities, particularly when they are generally free to choose their course units.

2.5 Year 12 enrolment review 2009

The 2009 course enrolments in 21 new courses were finalised in July. The enrolment patterns were reported in the Curriculum Council document *Analysis of Year 12 enrolments in new courses* and considered by the Senior Secondary Advisory Committee on 22 July 2009. The Curriculum Council considered the Year 12 enrolment data on 5 August 2009.

It was noted that earlier concerns predicting that academically-oriented students would choose less difficult options, thus reducing enrolments in challenging courses such as high-level mathematics, physics, literature and the languages, had not eventuated. Furthermore, enrolments in the new courses with two units at each stage (i.e. 1A and 1B, 2A and 2B, and 3A and 3B) were generally as predicted.

However, despite total enrolments across stages 1, 2 and 3 in the new courses with additional Stage 1 units being as predicted, two enrolment trends in units within these courses were identified:

- there was a much larger than anticipated Year 12 enrolment in units 1C and 1D compared with units 2A and 2B
- a small but significant number of schools were offering units across Stage 1 and 2 (e.g. English 1D and 2A) in Year 12.

In addition, enrolment in units 2A and 2B in a number of courses was much smaller than expected: Aviation (1), Chinese: Second Language (3), Earth and Environmental Sciences (47), Italian (18), Philosophy and Ethics (23) and Psychology (114). This creates technical issues for standardisation, statistical moderation and scaling.

Finally, the number of students repeating units was relatively high and warranted careful monitoring.

The Curriculum Council asked that an immediate review of enrolment patterns be undertaken to determine why Year 12 enrolments in 1C and 1D units were higher than anticipated. The review panel was chaired by the industry representative on Council and comprised former educators and principals nominated by system/sectors. The report will be considered by Council after it is reviewed by the school system/sector representative on Council who will be invited to comment.

In addition, the Council agreed that:

- school systems should discuss the course unit offerings and enrolments with their schools
- the issues raised should be discussed by deputy principals and curriculum co-ordinators at meetings conducted by the Curriculum Council during terms three and four 2009 and
- the Curriculum Council would consider whether policy adjustments were required in relation to accepting repeated units.

Following the September Curriculum Council meeting, individual school course enrolment data was produced. The Chief Executive Officer and Director, Moderation and Standards from the Curriculum Council worked with an officer from the Catholic Education Office Western Australia, Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia and the Department of Education to identify schools from each system/sector where anomalies in enrolment patterns were evident.

Example of the types of anomalies included:

- schools that previously demonstrated relatively high student achievement in E-code wholly school assessed subjects had apparently replaced those subjects with 1C and 1D units in the new course
- significant variation in English enrolment patterns compared with previous years
- schools appeared to be segmenting their students into 'TEE' and 'non-TEE' streams
- students repeating units, despite many of these students being successful the previous year.

Thirty four schools were identified for inclusion in the list of schools to be involved in the review of enrolments in 11 courses.

Former principals and educational administrators were asked to serve as panel members (Appendix A). A meeting of panel members was held to discuss and confirm the visit procedures and data collection format. (Appendix C).

Principals of nominated schools were notified about the visits and informed about the process to be followed and courses to be discussed. (Appendix B).

Interviews were conducted during September and October 2009.

The records of interviews and detailed enrolment data were used to compile this report.

3. Enrolment analysis and comments from schools

The data in this report is arranged in tables showing enrolment trends since 2006.

English

Data related to enrolments in English are presented in Table 4 but is also presented in summary form in Table 3 and graphically in Figure 3 to highlight the enrolment changes between 2006, 2008 and 2009.

Enrolments in other subjects or courses

Tables 5 to 15 at the beginning of sections 4.2 to 4.11 show the Year 12 enrolments and the enrolment expressed as a percentage of the total Year 12 enrolment in the former E-code subject/s in 2006 and 2007, and the Year 12 enrolments in the various units 1A to 3B of the new courses. Note that preliminary-stage unit enrolments are not listed.

The annotated example below shows enrolments in the area of Applied Information Technology which is addressed at 4.2. Readers may wish to refer back to this figure as they read sections 4.2 to 4.11.

		2006		2007		2008		2009	
		19951		20443		20412		22075	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Business Info Tech	E231	1414		1248		275			
Industry Info Tech	E232	709		538		58			
Interactive Media	E237	1634		1789		310			
Computer Fund	E705	687		604		144			
Year 12s who studied one former E-code subject		4444	22.3%	4179	20.4%	787	3.8%		
Applied Information Technology AIT	1A					176		283	
	1B					153		289	
	1C					456		1032	
	1D					428		1048	
	2A					1158		1218	
	2B					1304		1141	
	3A					843		667	
	3B					615		661	
Year 12's who studied two units from the new course (estimated)						2566	12.6%	3170	14.4%

Former E-code subjects that were replaced by the new course identified in the lower section of the figure

Final Year 12 enrolments 2006, 2007 and 2008

Mid-year Year 12 enrolment 2009, final enrolment will be less than this.

In the transition years, some schools offered the new course and others offered the E-code subject

Following each table is a summary of the school interviews where this particular course was discussed. These are reported under the following key themes that emerged from the interview reports:

- needs of students
- variable nature and difficulty of courses and units
- pathways planned by students
- school capacity
- WACE requirements
- exam avoidance
- university entry requirements – TISC requirements, scaling
- community expectations.

4. Course specific discussion

4.1 English

English has a unique position in the curriculum for three key reasons:

- study of an English course (including English as an Additional Dialect/Language and English Literature) is compulsory throughout Year 11 and Year 12,
- English teachers normally have responsibility for monitoring whether students achieve the English language competence for the WACE requirements, as well as
- university requirements for competence in English, generally a scaled mark of 50 or more, though this varies from university to university.

These factors place an additional responsibility on English teachers and schools, particularly when there is a high level of public scrutiny of school graduation and university entrance results. This may play some part in influencing enrolment patterns.

Figure 3 shows the Year 12 enrolments for Vocational English, Senior English and TEE English in 2006, the final year of these subjects, and the 2008 and 2009 Year 12 enrolments in Stage 1, 2 and 3 units of the new English course. Table 4 contains the data used to produce the graph.

Figure 3: Year 12 enrolment in Stage 1, Stage 2, and Stage 3 units of the new English course

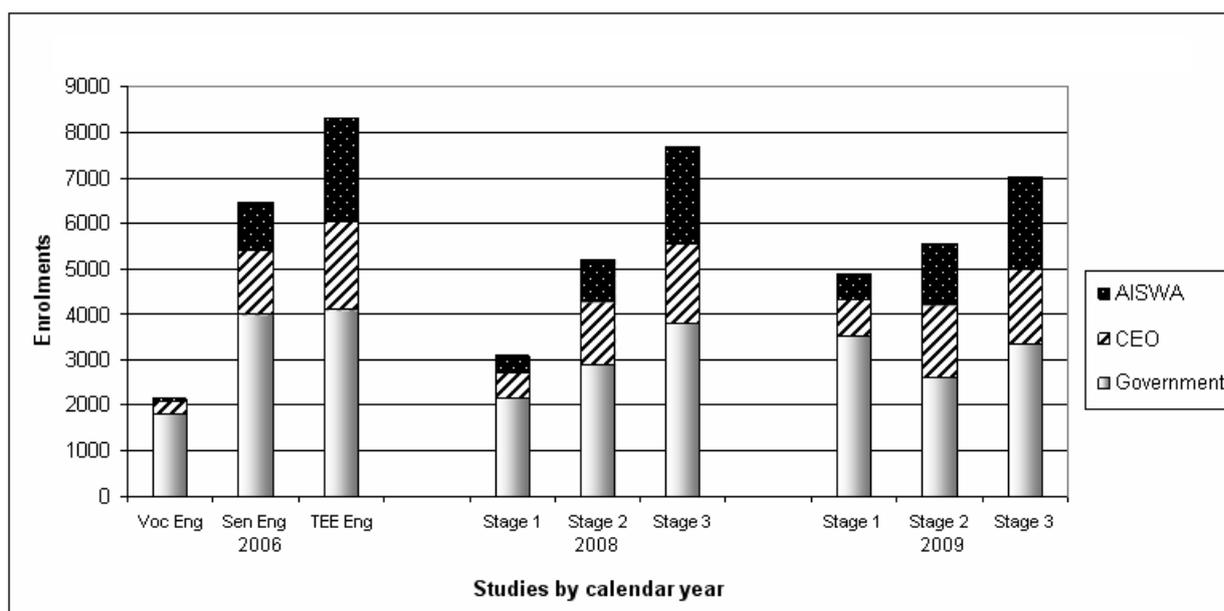


Table 3: Summary of changes in English enrolments between 2006 and 2009.

Former E-code English subject	2006 enrolment		English course	2009 enrolment	Approx difference
TEE English	8319	→	Stage 3	7002	1300 ↓
Senior English	6458	→	Stage 2	5557	900 ↓
Vocational English	2158	→	Stage 1	4892	2740 ↑

The number of students studying Stage 3 English units is significantly less than the 8,319 TEE English students in 2006, the last year of this subject. Between 2000 and 2006, the

Year 12 TEE English subject enrolments fluctuated between 8,200 and 8,500. Stage 3 enrolments in 2008 were approximately 7,680 and in 2009 are 7,000. Overall, approximately 1,300 fewer Year 12s are studying the highest level English course.

This decrease is somewhat surprising given that in 2007 the universities announced that an increment of 15 marks would be included in the score of students who had studied the higher Stage 3A/3B units in preference to the 2A/2B or 2C/2D units. The universities indicated that the higher-stage units generally provided a better background for further university study.

It appears that some schools considered that students may have a better chance of achieving a scaled score of 50 in English to meet the university requirement for competence in English if they restrict themselves to studying Stage 2 English units. In attempting to do the right thing by their students, it seems that some schools may have tried to predict the outcome of scaling this year.

Varying approaches to counselling students in different schools has introduced an inequity into the system. Students in some schools could be denied future opportunities because of differences in the advice offered. Evidence of the outcome of these different approaches is illustrated in Table 5 and the following descriptions:

- Shifting former TEE English students into Stage 2 English: Schools A, C, F and G appear to have counselled their 'lower end' TEE English into Stage 2 English to benefit from units more suited to their capability and to gain a boost to their scaled score:
 - School A: from 138 (51%) in TEE English to 55 (21%) in units 3A and 3B
 - School C from 93 (43%) in TEE English to 47 (23%) in units 3A and 3B
 - School F from 50 (40%) in TEE English to 14 (12%) in units 3A and 3B
 - School G from 127 (52) in TEE English to 78, (31%) in units 3A and 3B.
- Creating significant Stage 1 English enrolments, despite not having run Vocational English in 2006: Schools A, B and C did not run Vocational English:
 - School A now has 43 (17%) of their Year 12s in Stage 1 units
 - School B now has 102 (30%) of their Year 12s in Stage 1 units
 - School C now has 79 (38%) of their Year 12s in Stage 1 units.
- Maintaining TEE (exam) and non-TEE (non-exam) groups: Schools B, D and E each had significant enrolments in Year 12 Senior English in Year 12, 2006. These same schools are now not running Stage 2 English in 2009 for Year 12 students. Typically, their stage 3 enrolments have increased compared to their former TEE English enrolments, and the remainder of students study the non-examinable stage 1 units.

These examples were chosen because they clearly demonstrate these anomalies. However, there are other examples where similar patterns have emerged.

The number of students enrolled in lower-stage units (1A/1B and 1C/1D) has more than doubled from 2158 enrolled in Vocational English in 2006 to 4892 enrolled in Stage 1 units in 2009. Different views will be held about whether Stage 1 units were intended to replace Vocational English or not. Whether or not this is the case, such a large enrolment increase in the least demanding Stage 1 units in Year 12 is of concern.

Based on a full year cohort of around 30,000, if the 1C and 1D units were to cater for the lowest quartile of students, then the expected enrolment would be approximately 7,500. Given the discussion on page 8 and 9 where it is argued that it is estimated that 3,800 students from the lowest achievement quartile do not complete Year 12, state-wide enrolment in Stage 1 units in Year 12 was anticipated to be in the range of 3,500 to 3,800.

Table 4: Year 12 students studying an English course in 2006 (the last year of the English courses) and a pair of English course units in 2008 and 2009.

	Year 12 enrolments in English subjects ¹ in 2006, the last year of the English courses						Year 12 students studying a pair of English course ² units in 2008						Year 12 students studying a pair of English course ² units in 2009					
	Vocational English		Senior English		TEE English		Stage 1 units		Stage 2 units		Stage 3 units		Stage 1 units		Stage 2 units		Stage 3 units	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Government	1798	16	4004	36	4098	37	2161	19	2896	25	3780	33	3517	29	2622	22	3347	28
Catholic	296	7	1431	34	1960	47	558	13	1380	31	1769	40	826	18	1576	34	1642	36
AISWA	64	2	1023	25	2261	55	381	9	938	22	2130	50	549	12	1359	29	2013	43
Total	2158	11	6458	33	8319	43	3100	15	5214	26	7679	38	4892	23	5557	26	7002	33

Table 5: Year 12 English enrolment patterns course in selected schools in 2006, 2008 and 2009.

	Year 12 enrolments in English subjects ¹ in 2006, the last year of the English courses						Year 12 students studying a a pair of English course ² units in 2008						Year 12 students studying a pair of English course ² units in 2009					
	Vocational English		Senior English		TEE English		Stage 1 units		Stage 2 units		Stage 3 units		Stage 1 units		Stage 2 units		Stage 3 units	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
School A	0	0	70	26	138	51	28	13	55	25	68	31	43	17	99	39	55	21
School B	0	0	116	34	156	46	76	23	0	0	167	51	102	30	0	0	163	48
School C	0	0	120	56	93	43	28	18	57	37	59	39	79	38	33	16	47	23
School D	54	40	31	23	42	31	39	31	4	3	58	47	62	50	0	0	47	38
School E	42	31	40	29	43	31	14	9	45	29	69	45	68	42	0	0	67	41
School F	7	6	66	53	50	40	0	0	59	55	34	32	27	23	59	50	14	12
School G	15	6	77	32	127	52	24	10	58	24	35	14	31	12	101	40	78	31

1. Does not include students studying English Literature or English as a Second Language in Year 12 2006 and
2. Does not include students studying English Literature or English as an Additional Dialect/Language Year 12 2009.

In a similar way, as units 2A/2B and 2C/2D were designed for the middle two quartiles based on state wide achievement patterns, an enrolment in the order of 8,000 was anticipated, with this enrolment increasing to more than 10,000 as more students stay on to complete Year 12 in future years.

In light of this discussion, reasons given by the schools for including a larger than predicted Year 12 enrolment in 1A/1B and 1C/1D units included:

- Needs of students, twenty-three comments, for example:
 - *Students who have 'repeated' units: These are students at risk of failing and not graduating. Decisions based on advice of Department of Education's SAIS branch, HoLA English, parent written permission and individual counselling.*
 - *The Head of English reported that these students could not cope with exam pressure as the theory demands were too high and they were in the INSTEP non-university (exam free) pathway.*

- Variable nature and difficulty of courses and units, eleven comments, for example:
 - *Given the ability distribution of the cohort, the school finds that there is a mismatch between the new course and the former structure of English with its three subjects namely Vocational English, Senior English and English all available in D and E codes.*
 - *School staff commented that Stage 2 Year 12 English is completely different to past English courses at that level.*

- Pathways planned by students, twelve comments, for example:
 - *Students studying English at Stage 3 are passionate about the subject. These students are not necessarily university bound but have a passion for the subject. This compares with students studying Stage 2 English who are in the main desirous of getting a place at university.*
 - *The students identified have no aspirations to continue their education at university and any further education will be at the TAFE level. English 1C and 1D units are perceived to be in the best interest of the students.*

- WACE requirements, fourteen comments, for example:
 - *If the WACE permits something to happen then students choose to do this because they can.*
 - *The school does not believe that, for the students who would have studied Senior English, the progression from 1A/1B to 2A/2B is appropriate and offers 1A/1B to 1C/1D as a pathway that will support the achievement of a WACE.*
 - *The school also has a need to cater for those students who are achieving a C grade or above and in order to maximise their chances of gaining a WACE need to change their units of study. At this school this is usually achieved through mixed stage classes. For example there are 37 students enrolled in unit 2C and of these 14 are also studying unit 2D while 23 are working on unit 1D.*

- School capacity, twelve comments, for example:
 - *The school did not run 2C/2D (based on student demand). So the choice was either 3A/3B versus 1C/1D, the more able students chose to go up to 3A/3B and the less able/not-university oriented chose to go back to Stage 1C/1D*

- Exam avoidance, nine comments, for example:
 - *Not wanting to do an exam was a major incentive to get out of the Stage 2 or 3 units.*

- University entrance requirements, five comments, for example:
 - *Scaling: Stage 2 would mean consistently low marks, failure and no prospect for university entry anyway if they are 'C' grades. The school indicated that it would review its offerings after the external examinations this year when they will be able to make judgements about standards and scaling in Stage 2 English units.*
 - *Scaling: Potential stage 2 students enrolled in stage 3 units, in order to take advantage of the + 15 score increment. This was seen as a "strategic" decision.*
 - *Competence in English requirement: Stage 2 units: It was decided, based on Year 11 results, that Stage 3 English is considered too difficult for some students. It believes that if these students attempted Stage 3 English, achieving English Language Competency requirement for university entrance could be problematic and perhaps more easily achieved doing Stage 2.*
 - *+15 Marks: The view of the Head of English was that the change in the mechanism for the allocation of the 15 points bonus for 3A/3B in 2009 may result in schools counselling those students who might otherwise have enrolled on Stage 2 units into Stage 3 English in 2010.*

General comments

- The number of students studying Stage 3 English units is significantly less than the TEE English student numbers in 2006, the last year of this subject. This decrease requires careful monitoring of enrolment and achievement patterns, given that, in 2007, the universities announced an increment of 15 marks to be included in the scores of students studying the higher Stage 3A/3B units to the 2A/2B or 2C/2D units.
- The different approaches to counselling students in different schools require monitoring as these may be contributing to an inequity in the system. Students in some schools may be denied future opportunities because of counselling decisions made in these schools.
- The number of students enrolled in the lower stage units (1A/1B and 1C/1D) in 2009 has doubled from the number enrolled in Vocational English in 2006. This is a concern and requires careful monitoring.
- The variety of reasons given by schools for this increase in the larger than predicted number of enrolments in 1A/1B and 1C/1D include:
 - the variable nature and difficulty of the course and units
 - school capacity
 - exam avoidance
 - student needs and pathways.
- The complexity of WACE and university entrance requirements is a challenge for schools. State-wide English achievement and standards across years 11 and 12 needs careful monitoring with a particular focus on the number of students meeting WACE requirements and the number of students meeting university competence in literacy requirements.

4.2 Applied Information Technology

Applied Information Technology is a new course that replaced the former wholly school assessed subjects, Business Information Technology, Industry Information Technology, Interactive Media and Computer Fundamentals. Applied Information Technology was introduced in Year 12 in 2008.

Table 6: Applied Information Technology enrolment patterns

		2006		2007		2008		2009	
		19951		20443		20412		22075	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Business Info Tech	E231	1414		1248		275			
Industry Info Tech	E232	709		538		58			
Interactive Media	E237	1634		1789		310			
Computer Fund	E705	687		604		144			
Year 12s who studied one former E-code subject		4444	22.3%	4179	20.4%	787	3.8%		
Applied Information Technology AIT	1A					176		283	
	1B					153		289	
	1C					456		1032	
	1D					428		1048	
	2A					1158		1218	
	2B					1304		1141	
	3A					843		667	
	3B					615		661	
Year 12's who studied two units from the new course (estimated)						2566	12.6%	3170	14.4%

Twelve schools were asked about their enrolments in Applied Information Technology. Responses included the following:

- School capacity, six comments, for example:
 - *The school believes that it lacks the resources required to deliver the higher level courses in particular 3A/3B. Resources are defined as teachers with appropriate skills and experience and software/hardware requirement*
- Pathways planned by students, seven comments, for example:
 - *VET students make up a significant proportion of AIT Stage 1 courses and AIT is part of our VET pathway. AIT makes up either a 5th or 6th course for students on a Uni pathway. The Stage 1 pathways are offered for those students who have lower literacy, specifically reading and writing, as per school data.*
- Variable nature and difficulty of courses and units, five comments, for example:
 - *The College runs both AIT and Computing Science. More able students take Computing while the less able undertake the AIT course.*

General comments

- Overall, an increase in the number of students enrolled in Stage 3A/3B is a positive sign because this is first time students have been able to work at this high level.
- The new AIT course presents a major challenge to teachers in that the previous old four courses have been amalgamated into one single course. This amalgamation has lead some teachers to feel uncertain or not confident about teaching the new course and its required standards.
- It is hoped, as the standards in Stage 2 course in units 2A and 2B are clarified through the 2009 examination and the associated standards that will be made available to schools early in 2010, that teachers will become more confident to teach these units.

- Data from the interview indicates that students enrolled in this course tend to choose a TAFE pathway.

4.3 Career and Enterprise

The new course Career and Enterprise replaced the former Work Studies wholly school assessed subject.

Table 7: Career and Enterprise enrolment patterns

		2006		2007		2008		2009	
		19951		20443		20412		22075	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Work Studies	E686	2326	11.7%	2439	11.9%	1924	9.4%		
Career and Enterprise CAE	1A					104		602	
	1B					95		465	
	1C					340		734	
	1D					350		897	
	2A					96		1309	
	2B					81		1137	
	3A					-		107	
	3B					-		108	
Year 12's who studied two units from the new course (estimated)						533	2.6%	2680	12.1%

Thirteen schools were asked about their enrolments in Career and Enterprise. Responses included the following:

- Variable nature and difficulty of courses and units, five comments, for example:
 - *There are concerns that the 1A course is too easy for students and, as such, aspects of it are being incorporated in Year 10. The 2B course is too hard. At a school level, this course is being targeted at students who are interested in getting into the workplace – a significant number of these students are just not able to cope with the higher stage units. The crossover provides more of a challenge for these students than just level 1.*
- Needs of students, nine comments, for example:
 - *Have tried a Stage 2 course, but it was not successful. For these students Stage 2 is a 'leap too far'. That is, the switch from 'practical' to 'theory' is massive. Hence the students have repeated 1C and 1D – same courses but teacher has delivered in changed contexts.*
- WACE graduation requirements, three comments, for example:
 - *WACE graduation criteria permit minimum Stage 2 courses. A number of the students do Workplace Learning or INSTEP. The time these students are off campus means that the students would not meet the requirements for attendance. In addition their attendance pattern would be highly disruptive to the learning program of others in the course.*
- Community expectations, one comment:
 - *The parents have apathy towards education at this level, with many hoping for just a growth in maturity by having their children complete high school.*

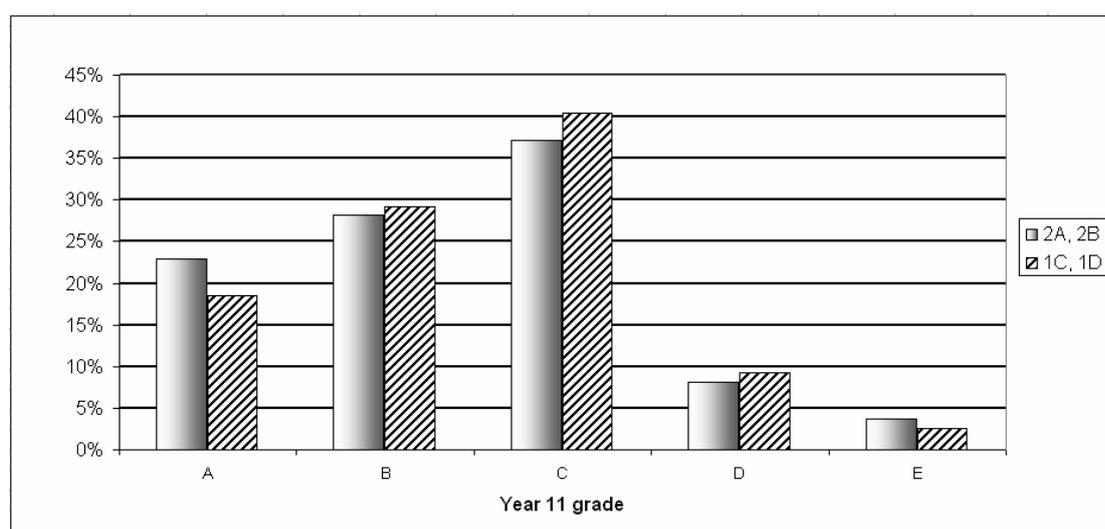
General comments

- The Course replaces the former Work Studies wholly school assessed subject and for the first time students have the opportunity to work at a Stage 3 level.
- The number of students enrolled in 2A/2B is a positive sign. However, it is one of the courses where students repeating units, supposedly in a different context, is a concern. This requires careful monitoring.

- Data from school interviews indicates that schools have taken the opportunity to link this course with Workplace Learning, INSTEP and Certificate IV qualifications.
- Data from the interviews indicate that students enrolled in this course tend to choose a TAFE pathway.

Approximately 565 students who completed Career and Enterprise units 1A and 1B or 1C and 1D in Year 11, 2008, are now enrolled in units 2A and 2B in Year 12 in schools that only offer these two units. Similarly, 312 students who were enrolled in units 1A and 1B or 1C and 1D in Year 11 are now enrolled in units 1C and 1D in Year 12 in schools that only teach these units in Year 12 (i.e. they do not run units 2A and 2B). Figure 4 shows the percentage of students who achieved Year 11 grades of A, B, C, D and E for each of these groups.

Figure 4: The percentage of students who achieved Year 11 grades of A, B, C, D and E in 2008 in Stage 1 Career and Enterprise units and are studying units 2A and 2B or 1C and 1D in Year 12, 2009.



These data show that the 2008 achievement patterns of the two groups are very similar.

It is noted that many students take up Career and Enterprise in Year 12 after not having studied it in Year 11 and this creates additional complexities for schools. However, it is hoped that schools who limit their offerings to units 1C and 1D consider offering the higher Stage 2A and 2B units in Year 12 in future years so they provide greater challenge and opportunity for their Year 12 students.

Every effort has been made to set the Stage 2 Career and Enterprise examination at a standard suited to the cohort of students enrolled in units 2A and 2B. Schools offering units 1C and 1D only are encouraged to carefully review the standards for units 2A and 2B when they are released early in 2010 and re-consider their Year 12, 2011 offerings.

4.4 Dance

The new Dance course replaced the former Ballet Studies and Dance Studies wholly school assessed subjects.

Table 8: Dance enrolment patterns

		2006		2007		2008		2009	
		19951		20443		20412		22075	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Ballet Studies	E635	17		12		21			
Dance Studies	E636	741		803		703			
Year 12s who studied one former E-code subject		758	3.8%	815	4.0%	724	3.5%		
Dance	1A					92	0.5%	320	1.4%
	1B					87	0.5%	320	1.4%
	2A					30	0.1%	404	1.8%
	2B					27	0.1%	399	1.8%
	3A					-	-	161	0.7%
	3B					-	-	161	0.7%
Year 12's who studied two units from the new course (estimated)						120	0.6%	881	4.0%

Five schools were asked about their enrolments in Dance. Responses included the following:

- School capacity, two comments, for example:
 - *The school is accommodating student requirements by offering Dance 1A/B & 2A/B. Due to the small numbers of students selecting the subject, the school is not able to run classes independent of each other.*
- Exam avoidance, one comment:
 - *Students do not choose Stage 2 units because of the theory involved and the need to sit an examination at the end of the course.*
- Variable nature and difficulty of courses and units, one comment:
 - *While the school believes that the progression from 2A/2B to 3A/3B is a natural one this is not the case for 1A/1B to 2A/2B given the significant difference in the assessment model.*

General comments

- Schools need clarification about what is meant by context (e.g. Dance genre); particularly for courses that have defined contexts that are coded separately and where the course content counts as a separate course for the purposes of determining a C grade average.
- Clarification also needs to be given to schools about repeating a subject or course unit.
- Data from schools interviewed identified that some of their students have a more practical, hands-on approach to learning in preference to theory-based learning. As a consequence, these schools expressed concerns about the gap in the level of difficulty between the Stage1 and Stage 2 units.

4.5 Drama

The new Drama course replaced the former TEE subject Drama Studies and wholly school assessed subject Drama.

Table 9: Drama enrolment patterns

		2006		2007		2008		2009	
		19951		20443		20412		22075	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Drama Studies	E647	976		936		909			
Drama	E634	843		847		533			
Year 12s who studied one former E-code subject		1819	9.1%	1783	8.7%	1442	7.1%		
Drama	1A					65		239	
	1B					63		240	
	2A					68		419	
	2B					66		422	
	3A					-		869	
	3B					-		867	
Year 12's who studied two units from the new course (estimated)						131	0.6%	1528	6.9%

Two schools were asked about their enrolments in Drama. Responses included the following:

- School capacity, four comments, for example:
 - *It is a problem to get sufficient staff with expertise for higher than Stage 1 units when wide course choice is provided to students. Teachers working outside their area of expertise or experience.*
- WACE Requirements, one comment:
 - *This enrolment pattern is directly related to staff resources and to the Curriculum Council policy of double WACE credits for similar repeats.*
- Needs of students, one comment:
 - *A number of students who are undertaking demanding TEE courses are also using Drama as a complementary course. Teachers design a program for the students who repeat a Stage 1 unit in a different context.*

General comments

- The number of students enrolled in Stage 3 units is pleasing. The number of students enrolling in Stage 2, however, will require careful monitoring.
- In the two schools interviewed, the pattern of repeating units to gain WACE credits can be identified. Clarification is required for repeating units in a different context.
- As teacher expertise develops in the new course at Stages 2 and 3 and standards are clarified through the 2009 examination data and made available to schools early in 2010, teachers may become more confident with the Stage 2 requirements, including the theory component.
- The external examination has theory and practical components, each worth 50%.

4.6 Marine and Maritime Technology

The new Marine and Maritime Technology course replaced the former Nautical Studies wholly school assessed subject.

Table 10: Marine and Maritime Technology enrolment patterns

		2006		2007		2008		2009	
		19951		20443		20412		22075	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Nautical Studies	E285	133	0.6%	60	0.3%	98	0.4%		
Marine and Maritime Technology MMT	1A					33		24	
	1B					33		24	
	1C					13		76	
	1D					13		94	
	2A							38	
	2B							20	
	3A							34	
	3B							34	
Year 12's who studied two units from the new course (estimated)						46	0.2%	172	0.8%

Three schools were asked about their enrolments in Marine and Maritime Technology. Their comments include the following:

- Needs of students, one comment:
 - *This course attracts students who in previous years would have enrolled in Senior Science. Traditionally Senior Science at the school had a strong marine component.*
- Pathways planned by students, three comments:
 - *Few if any of the students in the course have a tertiary focus and as in other courses it is the practical nature of the course that attracts them. The students taking MMT are essentially those who are taking MDT. They are not tertiary bound and are taking MMT as a practical subject.*

General comments

- The data from the three schools interviewed indicates that, for some students, this is their sixth course and, as such, often chosen for recreation or leisure. This reflects the perception, as a consequence, that the course should be studied at Stage 1.
- Schools' understanding and application of the Council's guidelines need to be monitored in relation to applying for exam exemptions for students studying six courses.
- Data from the interviews indicates that students enrolled in this course tend to choose a TAFE pathway.

4.7 Materials Design and Technology

Materials Design and Technology is a new course that replaced six former wholly school assessed subjects and it has three clearly defined contexts: textiles, metals and wood. Materials Design and Technology was introduced in Year 12 in 2008.

Table 11: Materials Design and Technology enrolment patterns

		2006		2007		2008		2009	
		19951		20443		20412		22075	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Fabrics Design and Technology	E290	202	1.0%	137	0.6%	144	0.7%		
Materials Design and Technology Textiles context MDTT	1A					13		32	
	1B					13		32	
	1C					19		119	
	1D					19		119	
	2A					-		145	
	2B					-		145	
	3A					-		7	
	3B					-		7	
Textiles sub-totals						32	0.2%	303	1.4%
Wood Fabrication	E720	296		240		188			
Furniture Design and Technology	E271	1115		1138		930			
		1411	7.0%	1378	6.7%	1118	5.5%		
Materials Design and Technology Wood context MDTW	1A					153		163	
	1B					126		136	
	1C					8		1050	
	1D					8		1059	
	2A					1		272	
	2B					1		266	
	3A					-		75	
	3B					-		75	
Wood sub-total						148	0.7%	1548	7.0%
General Workshop	E717	228		146		180			
Metal Machine and Fabric	E718	93		78		88			
Metals Technology		522		528		510			
		843	4.2%	752	3.7%	678	3.3%		
Materials Design and Technology Metals context MDTM	1A					68		88	
	1B					58		94	
	1C					11		576	
	1D					11		576	
	2A					6		107	
	2B					6		87	
	3A					-		9	
	3B					-		9	
Metals sub-total						80	0.4%	773	3.5%
Grand total		2456	12.3%	2267	11.1%	2200	10.8%	2624	11.9%

Twenty-six schools were asked about their enrolments in Materials Design and Technology. Responses consistently included the following:

- Pathways planned by students, thirteen comments, for example:
 - *Students enrolled in this course are those who attend TAFE for 1 or 2 days per week. These days are not the same for all students and hence progression from*

1A/1B to 2A/2B is not possible given the significant impact on performance of absence from the class on a regular basis throughout the year.

- School capacity, five comments, for example:
 - *In the school course selection grid for group 5 Year 11 and 12 MTD 1C/D competes with AIT Cert II and Modern History, Biology, Human Biology and Drama all at Stage 2 Year 11 and Stage 3 Year 12.*
 - *Teacher confidence in their competence to offer unit pairs at Stage 3 is limited.*
- Exam avoidance, four comments, for example:
 - *Students selecting these courses were not interested in doing a stage that involved examinations.*
- Variable nature and difficulty of courses and units, nine comments, for example:
 - *As in AIT the shift in weighting between the practical and theoretical from 1C/1D to 2A/2B is of significance given the student cohort.*
 - *The College runs Engineering Studies as well as MDT. Hence, the more able students take Engineering Studies to 3A/B whilst less able students take MDT.*
- Needs of students, fifteen comments, for example:
 - *Some units such as MDT are a useful 'psychological outlet' for some successful Stage 3 students due to the lack of external exams and stimulation of students' personal interests that they are already good at and that they engage in as a hobby and as a way of reducing stress.*
 - *The theory in the stage 2 units has too much depth and complexity compared with the traditional practical subjects, so students achieve the high level in the practical component but cannot cope (or are not interested) with the theory content.*
 - *The students are all marginal in their study habits and the school wants them to attend and remain at school for graduation purposes. Stage 2 units in courses with exams (involving significant theory and study skills) would/will drive them away from classes.*

General comments

- Concerns raised by schools in interviews indicated that this course requires careful monitoring of enrolment and achievement patterns. Most Year 12 students are enrolled in the Stage 1 course in 1C/D units.
- The amalgamation of the previous wholly school assessed courses has led some teachers to feel uncertain or not confident about teaching the new course and its required standards.
- An analysis of the data indicates that student grades are enhanced by a higher proportion of practical school-based assessments. There is a perception among school teachers and students that an external exam should be avoided. Further clarification is needed to promote the advantages of external assessments to strengthen and validate school-based assessments. This would open up opportunities for students who achieve good results at the end of Year 12 but who would not previously have considered university study.
- These students often attend TAFE for one to two days a week. This attendance at TAFE impacts on school timetabling decisions and school organisation. This may account for the large number of students in Stage 1 units.
- Standards will be clarified through the 2009 examinations. The associated standards will be made available to schools early in 2010.
- Differences in context are very clearly defined in MDT courses and repeating students do experience clear differences between units.

4.8 Media Production and Analysis

The new Media Production and Analysis course replaced the former Media Studies wholly school assessed subject.

Table 12: Media Production and Analysis enrolment patterns

		2006		2007		2008		2009	
		19951		20443		20412		22075	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Media Studies	E647	995	5.0%	936	4.6%	909	4.6%		
Media Production and Analysis MPA	1A			3		57		116	
	1B			5		47		163	
	1C							379	
	1D							357	
	2A			399		607		595	
	2B			578		716		524	
	3A			1084		1104		915	
	3B			854		928		913	
Year 12's who studied two units from the new course (estimated)				1458	7.1%	1677	8.2%	1981	9.0%

Seven schools were asked about their enrolments in Media Production and Analysis. Responses included the following:

- Needs of students, five comments, for example:
 - *1C/1D was offered for 14 Year 12 students with no prior MPA experience.*
 - *A further significant problem in this course is the low enrolment and a wide ability range.*
- Pathways planned by students, two comments, for example:
 - *Some tertiary bound students select Media as their sixth subject.*
- School capacity, 1 comment:
 - *When the school moves to a 5 line grid in 2010 MPA will be one of the subjects that will experience a decline in enrolment.*
- Exam avoidance, 1 comment:
 - *There is however, no doubt that the requirement to sit an examination in 2A/2B units deters students from selecting this unit pair if it were able to be offered.*

General comments

- The overall growth in this course is testament to the teachers and others who have been strong advocates for Media Studies becoming a tertiary entrance scoring subject. This is a popular course in terms of student enrolment and the high enrolment in Stage 3 is positive.
- There is a perception among school teachers and students that an external exam should be avoided e.g. schools are offering unit pairs such as 1D and 2A instead of 2A and 2B. Further clarification is needed to promote the advantages of external assessments that strengthen and validate school-based assessments.
- An analysis of the data indicates that student grades are enhanced by a high proportion of practical school-based assessments.
- A significant number of students are enrolled in Structured Workplace Learning or TAFE placements. Their attendance on the day designated for these programs can create problems of continuity of learning for their other subjects in some schools.

4.9 Outdoor Education

The new Outdoor Education course replaced the former Outdoor Education wholly school assessed subject.

Table 13: Outdoor Education enrolment patterns

		2006		2007		2008		2009	
		19951		20443		20412		22075	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Outdoor Education	E647	1318	6.6%	1490	7.3%	1399	6.8%		
Outdoor Education OED	1A					114		116	
	1B					101		163	
	1C					2		379	
	1D					3		357	
	2A					30		595	
	2B					30		524	
	3A							915	
	3B							913	
Year 12's who studied two units from the new course (estimated)						140	0.7%	1981	9.0%

Fourteen schools were asked about their enrolments in Outdoor Education. Responses included the following:

- School capacity (within Outdoor Education and across the school), twelve comments, for example:
 - *Logistical problems that would be encountered include the shift in the nature of the camps. In Stage 1 camps can be of a base camp structure while in Stages 2 and 3 they are expeditionary in nature which requires a far greater degree of supervision. This school does not have the staff to support the expeditionary style of camp.*
 - *This raises staffing issues both in terms of teacher competence, experience and qualifications and in more general aspects such as timetable disruption for both students and teachers.*
 - *The cost of relief staff in order to meet the requirements of this course is seen as an issue by the school.*
- Needs of students, six comments, for example:
 - *Results over many years show students struggle with the written component of the course at Stage 1 level. At present, work is being done to improve results. Stage 2 courses will be introduced in the next few years, depending upon staff commitment for course improvement.*
 - *However, in this course also student capabilities and interests have influenced the school to offer 1C/1D because of the greater practical component.*
 - *Students are offered 1A/1B in Year 11 and 1C/1D in Year 12. Students are interested in the subject at this level as it has a high practical component and no examinations. In fact the students often do course work off-site and can achieve certificates that are seen by them to be more important. As an example students can achieve their Recreational Skipper's Ticket in this course.*
- Variable nature and difficulty of courses and units, five comments, for example:
 - *The theory, in the Stage 2, units has too much depth and complexity compared with the traditional practical subjects, so students achieve the high level in the practical component but cannot cope (or are not interested) with the theory content.*
- Exam avoidance, three comments, for example:
 - *Student preference and the aversion to courses with examinations were all proffered as reasons for not offering Stage 2.*

General comments

- The overall number of students studying Outdoor Education in Year 12 has increased.
- An analysis of the data indicates that student grades are enhanced by a high proportion of practical school-based assessments e.g. achievement of a Recreational Skipper's Ticket.
- There is a perception among school teachers and students that an external exam should be avoided. Further clarification is needed to promote the advantages of external assessments that strengthen and validate school-based assessments e.g. schools are now offering units pairs such as 1 C/D instead of 2A/B.
- Feedback indicated that external school camps have a negative impact on daily school operation as well student achievement in other courses.
- Several comments were made concerning the perceived difficulty level of units 2A and 2B compared with the former E-code Outdoor Education wholly school assessed subject.
- The issue may be that students are expected to know what assessments are used to demonstrate the degree to which knowledge and skills are applied instead of understanding the theory and developing the skills covered by this course.
- It is hoped that as units 2A and 2B are implemented and teachers become more familiar and confident with the content and assessment requirements of the new course that they will be more inclined to offer units 2A and 2B in preference to 1C and 1D.

4.10 Physical Education Studies

The new Physical Education Studies course replaced the former Physical Education Studies wholly school assessed subject.

Table 14: Physical Education Studies enrolment patterns

		2006		2007		2008		2009	
		19951		20443		20412		22075	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Physical Education Studies	E600	3428	17.2%	2966	14.5%	409	2.0%		
Physical Education Studies PES	1A					276		303	
	1B					240		303	
	1C					951		2181	
	1D					861		2175	
	2A					1699		1267	
	2B					1822		1276	
	3A					1030		1202	
	3B					845		1186	
Year 12's who studied two units from the new course (estimated)						4066	19.9%	4946	22.4%

Sixteen schools were asked about their enrolments in Physical Education Studies. Responses included the following:

- School capacity, eight comments, for example:
 - *Resourcing is also an issue in Physical Education Studies albeit at a slightly lower level than for Outdoor Education as it does not include an excursion requirement.*
 - *Limited facilities at this stage (no gym). Also a female teacher is not available in 2010.*
- Variable nature and difficulty of course and units, one comment:
 - *Students do not see PES as part of a pathway to tertiary education and the assessment structure of 1C/1D provides opportunities for success that would not be available in 2A/2B at Year 12.*
- School community, two comments, for example:
 - *The catchment area is relatively young with the aspirations of parents for their children still maturing. Students select courses initially that are not well matched to their aspirations or ability. This often results in reverting to courses at a level appropriate to their future direction and more closely matching their ability/interest. On the other hand students often have parents who are earning significant incomes in 'fly-in, fly-out' occupations and they cannot see the worth in attempting higher stage units when they can achieve what their parents achieve without sitting examinations or being extended at school. These students prefer subjects with a large practical component and a minimal theory component.*
- Needs of students, seven comments, for example:
 - *Results in years 11 and 12 over many years indicate students are not of sufficient academic ability to cope at stage 2 or 3 level. Nature of the course at stage 2 or 3 becomes too theoretical and specific for school's clientele. The students are interested in the subject at this level as it has a high practical component and no examinations. In fact the students often do course work off-site and can achieve certificates that are seen by them to be more important.*
- Pathways planned by students, five comments, for example:

- *In Year 12, if changing uni pathway/intentions, they do stage 1 as Stage 1 in Year 11/12 has Cert. II in Sport incorporated. This TAFE qualification assists them in TAFE entry as significant numbers want to further their sport and career options via TAFE rather than University. Grades plus Cert II assists with competitive entry to TAFE.*
- *Many of the students are very high achievers in their chosen sport and have little time or interest in pursuing university entry. For students with goals set on a professional sport career the out of school sport experience awards a significant part of the requirements for WACE so in-school work in any related unit is not seen as so important.*
- WACE requirements, two comments, for example:
 - *Moving from 1A/1B in Year 11 to 2A/2B in Year 12 would present logistical problems as well as creating a shift in assessment which would result in students achieving lower grades than in Year 11 with the potential for this to impact on their ability to achieve a WACE.*
- Exam avoidance, three comments, for example:
 - *They appear to be averse to sitting examinations.*

General comments

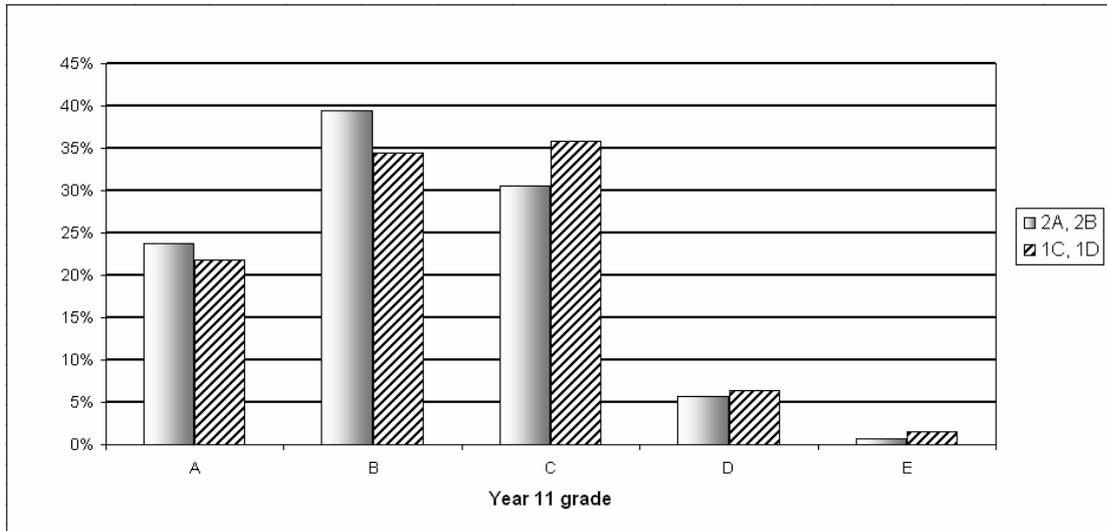
- Overall, this is a popular course in terms of student enrolment. The high enrolment in this course is testament to the teachers and others who have been strong advocates for Physical Education Studies becoming a tertiary-entrance scoring subject.
- There is a perception among school teachers and students that external examinations should be avoided. This may account for the high enrolment in Stage 1 units 1C and 1D. Further clarification is needed to promote the advantages of external assessments that strengthen and validate school-based assessments.
- An analysis of the data indicates that student grades are enhanced by a high proportion of practical school-based assessments.
- Stage 1 enables students to complete Certificate 2 in sport. This qualification assists them in TAFE entry as many students wish to further their career options in sport via TAFE rather than university.

Approximately 825 students who completed Physical Education Studies units 1A and 1B or 1C and 1D in Year 11, 2008, are now enrolled in units 2A and 2B in Year 12 in schools that only offer these two units. Similarly, 1335 students who were enrolled in units 1A and 1B or 1C and 1D in Year 11 are now enrolled in units 1C and 1D in Year 12 in schools that only teach these units in Year 12 (i.e. they do not run units 2A and 2B). Figure 5 shows the percentage of students who achieved Year 11 grades of A, B, C, D and E for each of these groups.

These data show that, apart from the 1C/1D group having a slightly lower proportion of A and B grades overall, and slightly more C grades, the 2008 achievement patterns of the two groups are very similar.

It is hoped that schools who limit their offerings to units 1C and 1D consider offering the higher Stage 2A and 2B units in Year 12 in future years so they provide greater challenge and opportunity for their Year 12 students.

Figure 5: The percentage of Physical Education Studies students who achieved Year 11 grades of A, B, C, D and E in Stage 1 units and then study units 2A and 2B or 1C or 1D in Year 12.



Those who argue that the academic demands of units 2A and 2B are too demanding are encouraged to go back to the E-code wholly school assessed subject and compare the requirements of this subject with units 2A and 2B. The theoretical requirements of both courses are very similar. Also, every effort has been made to set the Stage 2 examination at a standard suited to the cohort of students enrolled in these units. Schools offering units 1C and 1D only are encouraged to carefully review the standards for units 2A and 2B when they are released early in 2010 and re-consider their Year 12, 2011 offerings.

4.11 Psychology

The Psychology course is new to Western Australia and thus does not have a precursor subject.

Table 15: Psychology enrolment patterns

		2008		2009	
		20412		22075	
		No.	%	No.	%
Psychology PSY	1A	18		57	
	1B	16		57	
	2A	5		125	
	2B	5		123	
	3A	-		172	
	3B	-		172	
Year 12's who studied two units from the new course (estimated)		22	0.1%	353	1.6%

One school was asked about their enrolments in Psychology. Responses indicated the following:

- School capacity, one comment:
 - *The school originally 'stalled' in offering this course. However, there is a very enthusiastic teacher wanting to take the course. The teacher is not able to teach this subject at Stage 3 level. Numbers are dwindling – it may not survive.*
- Pathways planned by students, one comment:
 - *A small cohort takes the course. Essentially they are not the TEE students.*
- Needs of students, one comment:
 - *Students originally selected the subject thinking it would be more along the "counselling" line – it is not what they expected.*

General comments

- Only one school was interviewed and it is therefore difficult to make general comments in relation to this course. However, data indicates that there is a significant number of students enrolled in both Stage 2 and Stage 3 units given that this is the first full year of operation of the course.
- The nature and purpose of the course needs to be explicitly explained to students during the school counselling process.

5. Planned 2010 enrolments

The panel members asked schools about their estimated enrolments for 2010, with a particular focus on mathematics.

Mathematics

The Curriculum Council's analysis of Year 11 mid-year enrolments for mathematics indicate that the number of Year 11 students studying higher-level units of the new *Mathematics* and *Mathematics: Specialist* courses has decreased slightly when compared with enrolments in the former subjects *Introductory Calculus* and *Geometry and Trigonometry* in 2007 and 2008.

Table 16: Number and percentage of Year 11 students studying former mathematics subjects in 2007 and 2008, and the new courses in 2009.

	2007		2008		2009					
Total Year 11 population	25782		26639		28095					
	No.	%	No.	%	Unit	No.	%	Unit	No.	%
Geometry and Trigonometry	2245	9%	2225	8%	3AMAS¹	2202	8%	3BMAS¹	2106	8%
Introductory Calculus	5717	22%	5733	22%	3AMAT²	5405	19%	3BMAT²	5199	19%
Foundations of Mathematics	8198	32%	8306	31%	2CMAT²	3973	14%	2DMAT²	3967	14%
					2AMAT²	6959	25%	2BMAT²	6749	24%
Mathematics in Practice	5546	22%	6350	24%	1DMAT²	1601	6%	1EMAT²	1489	5%
					1BMAT²	9345	33%	1CMAT²	8133	29%
Vocational Mathematics	1725	7%	1554	6%						
					1AMAT²	1365			5%	

1. Specialist Mathematics course code: MAS 2. Mathematics course code: MAT

Overall, there is an increase in the number of students studying mid-level mathematics in Year 11. Enrolments in units 2C and 2D *Mathematics* include those students who, in previous years, studied *Introductory Calculus* in Year 11 but went on to complete the mid-level *Discrete Mathematics* in Year 12. The provision of extra Year 11 pathways has also meant that more students now have an opportunity to access university courses for which the further study of mathematics is likely to be needed. About 33 per cent of current Year 11 students are enrolled in 2D or 3B *Mathematics*. These students have the necessary background to study mathematics to a higher level than the *Discrete Mathematics* subject of the past. This compares with about 22 per cent of Year 11 students over the previous two years who had the background necessary to study at a higher level than *Discrete Mathematics*.

Student enrolments in the lower-level mathematics units have significantly increased, resulting in more students studying mathematics than in previous years.

Schools were asked to provide the current numbers enrolled in the various mathematics units in Year 11 and discuss their expected mathematics enrolments for Year 12 in 2010.

Responses indicate that:

- most schools reported that they expect their enrolments to be very similar to previous years for the top-end, double mathematics students.
- the 'middle range' of students enrolled in mathematics courses are being well catered for in terms of choices being offered - for the students that achieve good results at the end of Year 12, they will have more opportunities to continue their studies and gain university entry than they would have had in the past.
- one school highlighted the paradox associated with more choice – the school cannot offer the same range on the grid as timetabling constraints limit choice.
- some schools, especially those with a high VET enrolment, have indicated a focus on 1D/1E units which provide a sound background for many vocational education and training programs.
- several of the schools interviewed indicated that students would repeat some units.

The feedback relating to mathematics is positive, but highlights the need to carefully monitor enrolments in the range of units over the next three or four years.

Changing patterns in Year 12 enrolments in other courses

Enrolments in the physical science courses are reported to be stable or increasing. Several schools indicated increased enrolment in chemistry and physics because these courses are listed as prerequisites for some university courses. In addition, some students have selected science courses to enhance their opportunities for TAFE entrance.

The range of mathematics courses is reported to have impacted on the timetable in some schools as a wider choice in this area has limited the choices in other areas.

Several schools indicated that there was some decline in the numbers of students choosing to study humanities courses such as geography, economics and history. Reasons given for this were varied and included:

- students now have a wider selection of courses
- English is a compulsory list one subject and therefore students who are mathematics/science/technology-oriented do not need another list one subject
- some schools have mandated the Religion and Life course and students chose this as a second list one subject

As schools implement the new courses there is some change in selection patterns. This is to be expected.

6. Conclusion

The review panel members' reports identify common patterns in the enrolment and achievement data which form the focus of the conclusion. However, they also raise a number of concerns which need to be addressed in future years. These will require careful monitoring by the Curriculum Council, in collaboration with the Tertiary Institutions Service Centre, the school system/sector and schools. Processes that report the participation and achievement of students in Years 11 and 12 for all of the new courses will need to be developed.

Each report acknowledged the efforts made by the nominated schools to adapt their timetables and counselling procedures to meet the needs of students. This is particularly evident in courses offered to students who, in the past, studied wholly school assessed D-code subjects in Year 11 and then continued with wholly school assessed E-code subjects in Year 12.

One report highlighted, for example, the Curriculum Council's advice to schools in a counselling document *Delivery of Senior School Courses and Counselling* discussed at the deputies forums held towards the end of 2008 and placed on the Curriculum Council website.

Stage 1 units are suitable for students who achieve in the lower 30% of the year cohort. These students would be unlikely to complete Stage 2 units in Year 12.

Schools' feedback in the reports highlights this as one of the main reasons for the high number of Year 12 enrolments in 1C and 1D units. However, the reports are less clear in identifying why enrolments for the middle range students are higher in unit 1C and 1D than expected. This is an area where enrolment and achievement patterns in all new courses require further careful monitoring.

A related factor is that despite the courses being adjusted so that units 2A and 2B are of equivalent challenge to the former E-code wholly school assessed subject, for example Outdoor Education, several schools commented that they considered the demands of the 2A and 2B units still to be too high for their students. Community and school perceptions in this regard need further clarification by the Curriculum Council working together with the school system/sectors.

Several schools identified the impact of TAFE entry requirements. They made statements such as:

Study of the higher stage units are not rewarded in TAFE selection, higher grades are more important for TAFE entrance. Students will opt for lower level courses to maximise their grades and hence their entry chances.

Most reports outlined a number of reasons influencing a school's ability to effectively offer a given stage and/or unit pair. These include:

- lack of teacher experience, knowledge, skills and confidence to teach the new courses
- the size and nature of a school's student cohort
- timetable constraints
- the cost of specialist equipment and the constraints of a school's resources
- the availability of appropriate facilities within a school
- the impact of a course on other courses offered (for example the length and nature of external camps in Outdoor Education in Stages 1 and 2)
- lack of continuity of teaching staff in schools
- difficulty in managing conflicts between school and TAFE timetables
- access to the Schools of Isolated and Distance Education (SIDE) courses
- community expectations and other factors.

Several reports noted school requests for the Curriculum Council to provide explicit counselling guidelines - for example, a request for guidelines indicating how students meet both the WACE graduation literacy and the competence in English for university entrance requirements.

Additionally, they commented on the fact that schools do not want the Council to introduce any more changes to the WACE requirements before the current ones are “bedded down”. One powerful example referred to often is the English course where teachers have been frustrated by the number of changes to the course.

A common theme raised in many interviews is the compulsory nature of external examinations in Stage 2 courses. There is a perception among teachers and students that external examinations are appropriate only for students seeking university entrance, however, on the other hand some schools have introduced examinations for all students in lower school. This is an obvious area where the Curriculum Council, supported by school systems/sectors, needs to promote the advantages of external assessments that strengthen and validate school-based assessment and expand opportunities for students in general.

Each school was able to present sound, logical and practical explanations for their individual enrolment patterns, counselling processes and timetabling decisions. However, there was evidence of some schools appearing to accept that capable students may be best served by opting for less challenging units in which they can potentially achieve higher grades.

While opting for less challenging study options, in some cases, may have been driven by parent or student perceptions or possibly by an aversion to examinations, it is apparent that schools have responded by increasing provision of Stage 1 courses and accepting enrolment of students otherwise likely to succeed at Stage 2.

It will be very important for the longer-term standing of secondary schooling in Western Australia that all teachers, counsellors, school administration teams and their communities address the issues raised in this report in a very practical manner to ensure all students study units that will build on their prior learning and provide an appropriate challenge.

7. Recommendations

That the Curriculum Council:

1. Continue to carefully monitor enrolment and achievement patterns in all new courses and, in particular, monitor enrolment and achievement patterns for different subgroups, including male/female, Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal, school size, socio-economic and background in English.
2. Provide a detailed report for English teachers, in collaboration with the Tertiary Institutions Service Centre, on state wide English achievement and standards across Year 11 and Year 12, with a particular focus on the number of students meeting WACE requirements and the number meeting university competence in English.
3. Develop systems that report school and state wide achievement of students in both Year 11 and Year 12 within courses.
4. Develop systems that allow detailed reporting to schools and school systems regarding students staying on to the end of Year 12, students leaving throughout Year 12, the reported destination of students who leave and the prior achievements of students who leave.
5. Work with the school system/sectors and schools to provide more explicit counselling guidelines for entrance to university and further education.
6. Promote the advantages of broader-based external assessments that strengthen, support and validate school-based assessment and increase opportunities for young people.
7. Work with the school system/sectors to identify courses where a lack of teacher experience, knowledge, skills, confidence and resources is inhibiting those schools' course offerings.
8. Plan so that further changes to the WACE requirements are not introduced without proper notice (so it affects Year 12 for the next group of Year 10s to be counselled, e.g. 2012 WACE requirements for Year 10s being counselled in 2010).
9. Collaborate with school system/sectors, provide feedback to schools throughout 2010 on the new courses and 'standards packages' to address perceptions that for all but the most able students, the course content in 2A/2B is at too high a level for the group of students who traditionally studied wholly school assessed D-code subjects in Year 11 and then progressed to the wholly school assessed E-code subject in Year 12.
10. Clarify policies that impact on counselling and course and unit selection including:
 - contexts. Clarification of which courses have contexts.
 - repeating units.
 - exemption for students required to sit six or seven exams and for students studying significant vocational education and training.

Appendix A: Panel members

Mr Sean Wrigley (Chair)

Mr Ken Betjeman

Mr David Carvosso

Mr Tony Curtis

Mr John Feutrill

Mr Barry Harvie

Mrs Audrey Jackson

Ms Lee Moore

Mr Kevin Nener

Mr Vaughan Sadler

Mr Ross Sweeney

Appendix B: Letter sent to schools

<name>
«Position»
<address>

Dear <name>

In the analysis of 2009 enrolment data, a number of undesirable trends are evident in the enrolments in the 21 new courses being implemented in Year 12 this year. These trends include:

- a larger than anticipated enrolment in units 1C and 1D compared with units 2A and 2B
- a small but significant number of schools offering units across Stage 1 and 2 (for example English 1D and 2A)
- the number of students repeating units who successfully completed the same units last year is relatively high.

The Curriculum Council has requested an immediate review of enrolment patterns to determine why the above trends have emerged. The review panel, chaired by the industry representative on Council, Mr Sean Wrigley, will consist of former educators and principals nominated by system/sectors. It is planned that the panel's report will be viewed by system/sectors before it is considered by Council.

Two panel members will visit your school to discuss enrolment patterns in the following courses:

- «Courses»

The panel will also discuss the number of students who are repeating some units, particularly when many students were successful (obtained a C grade or better) in Year 11.

Finally, the panel will seek information about preliminary enrolment information and factors that are influencing timetabling decisions for 2010. Specifically, from planning to date:

- In which course (if any) are units 1C and 1D being planned in preference to units 2A and 2B?
- Are any cross-stage 1 and 2 units (e.g. units 1D and 2A) planned for Year 12 next year?
- Are the numbers expected to study units 3A and 3B in 'traditional' TEE subjects such as chemistry, economics, history, etc. about the same as studied the E-code subject in previous years?
- What are the numbers expected in the various pairs of mathematics units in Year 12?

Please find attached the following printouts:

- the 2009 Year 12 enrolments in course units for the school
- the 2008 Year 11 grade distribution of Year 12 students who are enrolled in units in the same course in 2009
- grade distributions for subjects for the previous three years.

Also included for background are two documents: *Analysis of Year 12 enrolments in new courses* and *Delivery of senior school courses and counselling* (distributed to schools mid-2008).

My executive assistant, Ms Cindy Chan will email you in the next few days with the names of the panel members who will visit your school. Following this, one of the panel members will contact you to arrange a time for the visit. I anticipate the visits will take approximately two hours.

You may wish to include others in the meetings such as the deputy principal in charge of timetabling, head of learning area and/or teachers of specific courses.

Please feel free to contact me on 9273 6373 if you have any questions concerning this review.

Yours sincerely

DAVID WOOD
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

<date>

Appendix C: Data collection proforma sent to schools before meetings

Data collection for enrolment review meetings

School: _____ Principal: _____

Panel members: _____

Part 1

Discussion of courses with anomalies in 2009 Year 12 enrolments

For each of the nominated courses, discuss and record reasons for:

- offering 1C/1D units in preference to 2A/2B units in Year 12
- offering units across stages (e.g. units 1D/2A in a particular course)
- having students repeat some units, particularly when many were successful (obtained a C grade or better) in Year 11

Nominated courses for discussion:

Course 1:

Discussion:

Course 2:

Discussion:

Course 3:

Discussion:

Course 4:

Discussion:

Part 2

Timetable planning for 2010

Seek information about preliminary enrolment information and factors that are influencing timetabling decisions for 2010. Specifically, from planning to date:

2.1 In which course (if any) are units 1C/1D being planned in preference to units 2A/2B?

Summarise reasons justifying running 1C/1D in preference to 2A/2B units:

1C/1D units running in Year 12 next year	Expected enrolment	Reasons for running 1C/1D units in preference to 2A/2B units in this course

2.2 In which (if any) courses are across Stage 1 and 2 unit combinations (e.g. units 1D and 2A) planned for Year 12 next year?

Course	Proposed unit combination	Reasons for offering unit combination across stages (e.g. units 1D/2A or 2B/3A in Year 12)

2.3 Are the numbers expected to study units 3A/3B in 'traditional' TEE subjects such as chemistry, economics, history, etc. about the same as the number who studied the equivalent E-code TEE subject in previous years?

2.3.1 Courses in which there is no significant change to current and previous enrolments:

2.3.2 Courses in which there will be significant enrolment decrease:

Course	Current and previous enrolment	Proposed enrolment	Reasons for decrease in enrolments

2.3.3 Courses in which there will be significant enrolment increase:

Course	Current and previous enrolment	Proposed enrolment	Reasons for increase in enrolments

Any general comments

2.4 What are the current numbers in the various pairs of mathematics units in Year 11 and what are the expected numbers in the various pairs of mathematics units in Year 12?

Mathematics

Current Year 11 enrolment		Proposed Year 12 enrolment 2010		Comments if any
Unit pair	enrolment	Unit pair	Enrolment	
1A		1B or 1B/1C		
1B/1C		1D/1E		
1D/1E		2A/2B		
2A/2B		2C/2D		
2C/2D		3A/3B		
3A/3B		3C/3D		
Other		Other		

Mathematics Specialist

Current Year 11 enrolment		Proposed Year 12 enrolment 2010		Comments if any
Unit pair	enrolment	Unit pair	Enrolment	
3A/3B		3C/3D		

Part 3

Any other notes or observations

For example what is your school actually doing (in terms of timetabling, student counselling, staff practice) to challenge students so that these anomalies are minimised.

Appendix D: Bibliography

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