



SNOWY
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GRAMMAR
SCHOOL

CHALLENGE **BELONG** EXPLORE

Assessment Policy

Student



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This policy must be read in conjunction with the NESA ACE Manual. Regular revisions to this policy will be taken made from the ACE Manual.

Summary

The School's Assessment policies and procedures comply with the requirements documented in the *Assessment Certification and Examination (ACE) Manual* and the *NESA syllabus* for each course. These policies include statements of school procedures relating to the allocation of grades in each school course. Each course in the Secondary School has an Assessment Policy that outlines how teachers will determine the level of academic achievement of each student.

Summative Assessment is used by teachers to determine the level of achievement by students of the outcomes in each course. Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning activities undertaken by each class and teacher. Assessment is not seen as a separate activity but as a part of a learning continuum that includes:

- Learning
- Teaching
- Assessing
- Feedback

Where a syllabus prescribes assessment weightings and other requirements, the School's Assessment Policy in that course reflects those weightings and requirements. Otherwise, the assessment procedure reflects the course outcomes as set out in the syllabus, the work undertaken in class, the interests of the students and the ethos of the School. Students are given numerous opportunities and a variety of methods to demonstrate their level of achievement.

Types of assessment tasks include:

- Formal examinations
- Class tests
- Inquiry-based research assignments and projects
- Problem-solving and simulation activities

- Practical activities
- Fieldwork activities
- Presentations
- Peer assessment
- Self-assessment
- Formative assessment

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1 Types of Assessment

1.1 Assessment for Learning (Formative Assessment)

Assessment for learning occurs when teachers use inferences about student progress to inform their teaching. It is frequent, formal or informal (e.g. quality questioning, anecdotal notes, written comments), embedded in teaching and provides clear and timely feedback that helps students in their learning progression. It has a formative use providing evidence that informs, or shapes, short term planning for learning.

All assessment activities can be used to support learning, and to provide feedback to students, that enables them to actively monitor and evaluate their own learning. In summary, assessment for learning:

- Is an essential and integrated part of teaching and learning
- Reflects a belief that all students can improve
- Involves setting learning goals with students
- Helps students know and recognise the standards they are aiming for
- Involves students in self-assessment and peer assessment
- Provides feedback that helps students understand the next steps in learning and plan how to achieve them
- Involves teachers, students and parents in reflecting on assessment data

1.2 Assessment of Learning (Summative Assessment)

Assessment of learning occurs when teachers use evidence of student learning to make judgements on student achievement against goals and standards. It is usually formal, frequently occurring at the end of units of work where it sums up student achievement at a particular point in time. It is often organised around themes or major projects and judgements may be based on student performance on multi-domain assessment tasks. It has a summative use, showing how students are progressing against the Standards, and a formative use providing evidence to inform long term planning.

1.3 Assessment as Learning (Student Reflection and Metacognition)

Assessment as learning occurs when students reflect on and monitor their progress to inform their future learning goals. It is regularly occurring, formal or informal (e.g. peer feedback buddies, formal self-assessment) and helps students take responsibility for their own past and future learning. It builds metacognition as it involves students in understanding the standards expected of them, in setting and monitoring their own learning goals, and in developing strategies for working towards achieving them.

2 Assessment Design

Assessment tasks should consist of a variety of essays, tests, practical work, field work, oral presentations or similarly appropriate items designed to improve overall measurement of student performance and linked to syllabus outcomes in each course.

Details of assessment items planned for every semester in each subject for which the particular teacher is responsible, will be co-ordinated by the relevant Head of Faculty. The Schedule of Assessment Items is to be followed throughout the semester. Students should not have to do assessment items not on the schedule.

Changes to the schedule are possible, through application to the Director of Curriculum and Operations.

The information supplied by each subject teacher will be:

- Tests/Examinations - time, subject, topic (if possible)
- Assignments and Assessment Instruments - length, subject, topic, due date
- Other work - subject, topics, when due (or how often)

Students should use the Assessment Schedule as a basis for their work planning during each semester. The Schedule of Assessment Items will also be provided to parents and carers so that they know to expect busy school periods and can use the plan to assist their sons and daughters to plan and meet commitments.

Criteria being assessed are not common across all subjects. Class Teachers need to familiarise students with assessment criteria for each task and demonstrate the way in which global levels of achievement for each criterion will be calculated to represent an exit level of achievement at the end of the course. This information will also be available to parents/guardians both through handouts issued to students and through contact with Class Teachers, if required.

Teachers are responsible for arranging the setting of assessment instruments in each subject for which they are responsible. Teachers are to supply a copy of the assessment instrument to the relevant Head of Faculty for review and approval before it is copied and distributed to students in hard copy and on Canvas.

All assessment instruments must be submitted to the relevant Head of Faculty giving sufficient notice for them to review the task and for the Classroom Teacher to meet the minimum notice periods. This is to allow sufficient time for proofreading, corrections and photocopying. For Year 11 and 12, all assessment tasks are released a minimum 6 weeks prior to the compulsory final submission. The Assessment Schedule will be released at the start of each academic year.

Each assessment piece should reflect sufficient time for a student to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. Staff need to be aware of the different nature of assessment tasks and what would be considered an appropriate time frame for students and for the assessing process. Consideration should be given to the expected word length, difficulty or complexity, and/or the extent of subject materials to be covered in the assessment task.

A checklist to be used by the relevant Head of Faculty in reviewing assessment instruments will include:

- Name of School
- Subject name
- Year level
- Semester/Term
- Calendar Year
- Space for the Student's name
- Teacher(s) Names
- Assessment criteria
- Marking schemes
- Details of task
- Perusal and working time (if applicable)
- Length (if applicable)
- Equipment allowed (if applicable)
- Due date (if applicable)
- Weighting
- Reference List Requirements (if applicable)

The relevant Head of Faculty will be reviewing assessment instruments for clear linkages between course content outcomes, NESA requirements and the teaching program submitted by the teacher. In addition, the relevant Head of Faculty will assess the academic rigour and merit of the assessment piece. Assessments will not take into account a student's attitude or conduct.

Teachers can nominate assessment tasks as Assessment of Learning for Years 7-10 that meet course outcomes that are identified prior to the commencement of each semester. Teachers must ensure students are allocated sufficient time to demonstrate their understanding of course content. End of Semester Examinations are included for English, Mathematics, Science and History/Geography Years 7-10. For Years 11 and 12, teachers are expected to follow the NESA regulations for their subject.

3 Integrity of Assessment and Quality Assurance

Regardless of the nature of the assessment task, students need to be provided with guidelines that define the scope of responses to the task. These guidelines can be in the form of specific criteria to be addressed and/or standards to be achieved.

Moderation processes will be implemented to ensure that the integrity of criteria and/or standards developed by teachers will be preserved across different markers or with small cohort sizes. It is required where there is an element of subjectivity in the evaluation. It is not necessary for multiple choice assessment tasks or other tasks in which there is no interpretative response by the student.

For the purposes of moderation:

- Criteria are the elements by which the quality of student work is to be judged
- Standards describe the levels of achievement to be attained
- Moderation processes are those processes that ensure a student's work can be judged consistently regardless of who marks the task

The Director of Curriculum and Operations will oversee the moderation process. This may include having moderation samples sent/given to another teacher for evaluation. If an inconsistency is identified in the moderation process, the teacher is responsible for adjusting the marks.

4 Supplementary and Alternative Assessment

There may be special circumstances, outside the provisions of special consideration and deferred assessment, where arrangements must be made for assessment tasks for particular students.

Special individual arrangements may need to be made for additional assessment tasks to be set for students for whom the carrying out of a specific assessment task, as originally set out, is not possible (such as unanticipated resource access problems). These special arrangements must be directly negotiated between the teacher and the Director of Curriculum and Operations with due consideration given to issues of equity and assessment validity. The agreed arrangements must be clearly communicated to the student and their parents, with a copy lodged in the student's record. Supplementary and alternative assessment arrangements shall only be considered for students with genuine circumstances. Please refer to specific details in a later section.

Students are expected to be available throughout the published examination periods and be available for assessment dates specified in the assessment calendars.

Where, in exceptional circumstances beyond the student's control, a student is unable to sit an examination/task at the scheduled time, the student may be granted an alternate examination sitting. An alternate examination sitting may be scheduled during the normal examination period or may be scheduled as a deferred examination.

Alternate examination sittings will only be approved in the following circumstances:

- The student's individual timetable falls outside the timetabling guidelines
- Religious convictions
- Medical or compassionate grounds, such as confinement or surgery
- Sporting or cultural commitment at state, national or international level

An application for an alternate examination sitting must be in writing and be lodged to the Director of Curriculum and Operations within one week of the publication of the final examination timetable. The application must be accompanied by supporting documentary evidence.

Where a student undertakes an alternate sitting, the student is required to complete a Declaration to the effect that, in the situation of sitting prior to the normal scheduled examination time, they will not disclose the contents of the examination paper to any other students, and, in the situation of sitting after the normal scheduled time, they have not been given information about the contents of the examination paper by other students.

Students who cannot sit examinations because of illness, accident, disability, bereavement or other compassionate circumstances may apply for illness/misadventure and should not normally apply for an alternate sitting.

Applications for alternate examination sittings will not be approved for students unless they fall into one of the categories outlined above. For example, students who want to sit early so they can return home early will not be permitted to do so except on compassionate grounds when appropriate documentation is provided. All students are expected to be available for the full examination period. Booking a plane ticket prior to the end of the examination period is not considered an adequate reason for an alternate sitting.

In cases of approved supplementary or alternative assessment (including alternative examination locations), the student and their parents will be required to:

- Ensure the student has an internet compatible device capable of accessing Skype and/or Google hangouts
- Ensure the student has access to a centre/location/room that provides for an acceptable standard of supervision and is comparable to on-site conditions
- Ensure a suitability qualified and/or experienced supervisor, independent of the child's immediate family and associates is submitted and approved by the Director of Curriculum and Operations. In most cases, a qualified teacher and/or experienced tutor will be required.

If there is any cost associated with the administration, supervision or conduct of the examination or alternative assessment, this cost will be charged to the Student's School Account. These costs will be provided to the parents/students prior to the conduct of the examination/assessment. In the cases where there is a cost and the student has approval from the Principal to represent the school, the cost will be borne by the School.

5 Assessment Schedule and Notice to Students

The Director of Curriculum and Operations is responsible for publishing an Assessment Schedule at the start of each Semester for Years 7-10. The Director of Curriculum and Operations will produce a timetable of appropriate dates for teachers. Teachers are able to negotiate any changes required through their Head of Faculty.

For Years 11 and 12, all assessment dates will be contained in the Academic Handbook that is issued at the beginning of each academic year.

The Director of Curriculum and Operations will then publish an Assessment Schedule for these year groups from these documents.

Students in Year 11 and 12 will be given a hard copy of their Assessment Schedule within the first two weeks of school commencing each semester. An electronic copy will also be published on Canvas and the School website. Year 7-10 will receive their Assessment Schedule electronically.

The minimum notice periods are as follows:

- Years 7-10 2 weeks from a first submission of being due
- Years 11-12 5 weeks from a first submission being due

Where an assessment task is an in-class task, equivalent notice of the assessment along with any information for students must also conform to this requirement. The published Assessment Schedule informs students of the week of the task. It is the responsibility of the teacher to nominate the day of the week and the time that the in-class task will be delivered to students 5 weeks in advance.

6 Marking Requirements – Teacher Obligations

Teachers are required to ensure they adopt a fair and valid method for marking of assessment items.

It is a requirement that, prior to a task being given to students, the teacher must have developed an appropriate marking scheme. This is submitted to the relevant Head of Faculty, as part of approval process. For assessment items, such as examinations and tests, teachers should have completed the appropriate paper with worked solutions and/or model answers.

Summative assessment results are not to include bookwork, RELTs, behaviour, etc and must only include assessment tasks undertaken.

Teachers are to have student work marked within a reasonable time period. A reasonable time period is as follows:

- Years 7-10 – within 2 weeks
- Years 11-12 – within 3 weeks

If a teacher requires longer than this to mark student work, a note explaining this should be sent to students and their parents explaining why this needs to occur.

7 Assessment Feedback to Students

Staff are required and supported to provide quality academic feedback to students in both summative and formative ways. This provides the learning context to each subject and strengthens the learning relationship between the student and the teacher.

Feedback is any response made in relation to student's work such as an assessment task, a performance or product. Feedback is intended to inform students on the progress they have made towards achieving the learning outcomes of a subject. Feedback should be constructive, justify the mark and be related to the criteria. It should point students to ways in which they can improve their learning and achievement and allow them to monitor and evaluate their progress against the subject course learning outcomes. A teacher, an external assessor, or a student peer can provide this.

Feedback should be timely and developmental if the learner is to maximise their engagement with subject requirements. Such feedback can fall into two broad categories:

- Early in a unit, prior to any formal assessments, to ensure an awareness of subject requirements and expectations
- After each assigned assessment task, so that students have sufficient opportunity to use feedback for improving subsequent performance

8 Re-marking of Assessment Tasks/Appeal against Assessment Marks

Students may request that an assessment task be re-marked, in its original form, in circumstances where the student presents a case arguing that the original marking was unfair or inconsistent with marking guidelines. This request must be directly addressed to the Head of Faculty, with a copy to the Director of Curriculum and Operations, by the student within ten working days of receipt of the original marked assessment task.

It will be the Head of Faculty's responsibility to arrange for the re-marking to be done. Only a single re-mark will be permitted, and the result of the re-mark will be recorded as the final mark for that assessment task, irrespective of its position relative to the original mark. If the student remains dissatisfied with the outcome, then they have the right of appeal to the Director of Curriculum and Operations.

9 Assessment Extensions – Illness and Misadventure

It is recognised that unforeseeable events can disrupt RELTs time and in addition to formal extensions, some flexibility will be granted to accommodate these events. The teacher will notify the student when their result and/or rank for an approved variation to an assessment did not adversely impact their final result for the course.

Students must appreciate that the School also has a responsibility to provide swift and accurate feedback on assessments, and delayed submissions can adversely affect the larger student body that submitted on time. In some circumstances, granting extensions for assessment tasks may constitute an unfair advantage due to the student having additional time to complete the task.

Accordingly, the flexibility to accept late assessment tasks is often limited. Students must also understand that late submission may impact adversely on their ability to benefit from feedback given to other students.

Students can apply for an extension by completing the Assessment Variation Form ('Blue Form'), submitting it to the teacher and then taking the form to the relevant Head of Faculty. For Years 7-10, the Head of Faculty will make the decision on whether to approve the extension, and for Year 11-12, the Head of Faculty will forward the application to the Director of Curriculum and Operations for final approval.

The following circumstances are unacceptable grounds for extensions:

- Inability to have an assessment task word processed by the due date
- Other assessment tasks due on or about the due date
- Failure of technology, in whatever form that may take, unless publicly documented (ICT failure at the SMGS server is grounds)
- Foreseeable extra-curricular and/or work commitments.

All Assessment Variation Forms are submitted at the next Academic Committee Meeting to ensure consistency across the school and to monitor trends and patterns.

10 Assessment – Late Submissions and Penalties

All assessment items must include progressive monitoring and documentation of student work so that it may be used as a basis for making a judgment in the absence of a final product (Teachers setting assessment items must include first submission dates and/or 'milestone dates' for parts of the assessment item). If students are not meeting preliminary submission dates and/or 'milestone dates' for parts of the assessment item, the Teacher of the subject must contact the student's parents/guardians and notify them of the limited response received to date.

The Teacher of the subject should also notify the relevant Dean of Students and Head of Faculty of all actions taken regarding late assessment.

All assessment items are due on the date prescribed in the assessment schedule at 9:00 am unless otherwise specified. The three methods by which an assessment task may be submitted are:

- A physical copy in the Library Assignment Box
- Submission via Canvas in the relevant assignment section
- Submission via email. For this method, the student may or may not receive confirmation of the success of the email. If the teacher does not receive an email, the task is not considered submitted

Student responses received on the due date will be marked against the task's criteria and the results awarded will appear on the student's profile and academic report for the subject. All students will receive a zero for a task not submitted by the due date and time, unless the student applies for an extension and/or misadventure/illness.

If a student requires an extension of the due date or cancellation of penalty for missing an assessment item, they may apply using the Assessment Variation Form (Blue Form). This form requires students to attach either a medical certificate or other documentation to provide evidence to substantiate their reason for the application. All Year 11 and 12 student applications must be accompanied by documentation (i.e. Medical Certificate with details of the ailment and the impact it has had on the student in the completion of the task. A parent/relative of the student cannot issue the Medical Certificate).

Students have the option of applying for either:

- an extension to the due date for the assessment item
- cancellation of any penalty due to submitting/presenting an assessment item late, or
- cancellation of any penalty due to missing an exam/assessment item

If a student refuses to hand in an assessment task or has not applied for an extension, further sanctions may apply.

Students who fail to submit a piece of assessment, including examinations where there is no legitimate reason for the student's absence, will have results withheld from academic reports. This will be indicated as a blank result on the report. The reports will include the comment:

- <Name> has failed to submit all assessment required for this semester. Therefore, <his/her> result has been withheld. A Parent/Teacher interview is requested.

11 Calculation of Result for Illness/Misadventure Applications

There are occasions when a student has circumstances that make it necessary to give an estimated mark. Students can make an application through the Assessment Variation Form (Blue Form).

An illness or misadventure must not:

- Disadvantage the student making the application
- Advantage the student making the application
- Secure a rank for any one student

Therefore, an estimated mark must take into consideration:

- The variation of student performance in assessment
- The variation of cohort performance in assessment
- Student growth/decline over the duration of a pattern of study
- Difference in style of assessment instruments

The School uses a statistical method of calculating the result for a student who is absent from an assessment task and/or does not submit an assessment task AND has a successful application for illness or misadventure. The following process is completed:

- Once the application is approved, the Director of Curriculum and Operations advises the student that their result for this task will be a calculated result
- The subject teacher provides a copy of their markbook for all students and for all tasks complete to that point
- The Director of Curriculum and Operations then follows this process:
 - removes all weightings for tasks to create an equal field between tasks
 - calculates the average for each student on all tasks and the average of each task across all students
 - calculates the Standard Deviation (distributions) for each task
 - calculates a Z-score for the student in each of the tasks (relative position to the mean)
 - finds the average Z-Score for the student across all their assessment tasks in that subject (student growth)
 - multiplies the student's average Z-Score with the Standard Deviation for the task the application was approved. This calculates the student's relative position and growth to the cohort on that task
 - adds this student based Standard Deviation with the cohort average on that task. This results in the student's final mark
 - writes to the student and subject teacher to formally release the result to the student

12 Examination Lengths

The school mandates the required examination length for all Years 7-12 examinations as detailed below.

| Year Group | Subject | Examination Length (hours) |
|------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Stage 4 | English | 1 |
| | Mathematics | 1 |
| | Science | 1 |
| | History/Geography | 1 |
| Stage 5 | English | 2 |
| | Mathematics | 2 |
| | Science | 2 |
| | History/Geography | 2 |

| Year Group | Examination Length (hours) |
|------------|--|
| Year 11 | <i>Yearly Examination</i> 1.5 - 2 hours per 2-unit course |
| Year 12 | <i>Trial Higher School Certificate Examination</i> Same length as the subject's HSC Examination |

13 Assessment Task Weightings

Assessment weighting means the emphasis placed on each assessment task, in percentage terms, combined to form the aggregate mark for a student. For example, a subject may specify differential assessment weights such that an individual essay assignment will be worth 30%, a group-based project worth 30% and a final examination worth 40%. Alternatively, a unit may specify equal assessment weights such that two individual essay assignments will each be worth 25%, a group-based project worth 20% and a final examination worth 30%. Weighting should reflect relative demands on the student.

In weighting assessment tasks, consideration must be given to the appropriate weighting to be given to each assessment task. In many cases, a simple average may be used which means that each task carries equal weight. Alternatively, assessment tasks may be weighted in terms of their relative importance, expected word length, difficulty or complexity, or the extent of subject material expected to be covered. In these cases, the weighting system must be clearly explained in assessment documentation provided to students. Teachers must ensure they also follow the expectations of the NESA syllabus for the course in which they are teaching.

A single End of Semester Examination must be weighted at least 30% and no more than 40% in the aggregate mark for any student in Years 7-10. This information must be provided to all students in the course within seven days of the course commencing.