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Assessment for the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate

POLICY

Macarthur Anglican School will ensure that it complies with the Board of Studies’ rules concerning assessment as outlined in the Assessment Certification and Examination Manual (Sydney 2001) and any subsequent revisions of this document, and, where the Board allows, develop transparent and equitable school based assessment procedures consistent with the rules outlined in the aforesaid manual.

RATIONALE

Assessment plays a very important role in facilitating student learning and measuring student achievement. It is both formative and summative in that it develops student understanding as well as measures student achievement of outcomes. Assessment should take place over time and develop or measure a whole variety of learning outcomes. Sound assessment programmes, therefore, will contain differing tasks and assess a variety of competencies. Assessment should take place both formally, within set tasks and examinations, as well as informally through teacher observation and the like. As assessment plays a vital role in the attainment of the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate, it is important that Macarthur Anglican School complies with the Board of Studies’ rules concerning assessment and, where the Board allows, develop transparent and equitable school based assessment procedures. To that end Macarthur Anglican School has developed a Manual on Student Assessment: Years 10-12.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Manual on Student Assessment Years 10-12 (see below).

PROCEDURE

The Manual on Student Assessment: Years 10-12 outlines how the Board of Studies rules and School procedures will apply in the context of Years 10-12 at Macarthur Anglican School. At the beginning of each academic year every student and teacher of Years 10-12 will be given his or her own bound copy of the manual. An electronic version of the manual will also be placed on the School’s Intranet site for ready access by teachers, students and parents.
Manual on Student Assessment Years 10-12

COURSE COMPLETION CRITERIA AND ASSESSMENT

A student in Years 10, 11 and 12 will be considered to have satisfactorily completed a course if, in the Headmaster’s view, there is sufficient evidence that the student has:

a) followed the course developed and endorsed by the Board of Studies; and

b) applied themselves with diligence and sustained effort to the set tasks and experiences provided in the course by the school; and

c) achieved some or all of the course outcomes.

Assessment provides important evidence in determining whether or not a student has satisfactorily completed a course.

NON-SATISFACTORY COMPLETION OF A SCHOOL CERTIFICATE, PRELIMINARY OR HSC COURSE

Failure to satisfy assessment rules may well result in non-satisfactory completion of a School Certificate, Preliminary or HSC Course. This will result in the Headmaster notifying the Board of Studies that an ‘N’ determination be made for that course. A student who is given an ‘N’ determination in Year 10 in a mandatory course (ie not an elective course) will not be eligible for a School Certificate in that year. For Year 11 and 12 students presenting for the HSC, satisfactory completion of at least 12 units of Preliminary courses and at least 10 units of HSC courses are required to satisfy the Board’s pattern of study requirements to be eligible to receive the award of a Higher School Certificate.

PURPOSES OF ASSESSMENT

Assessment is both formative and summative. That is, it is helpful to a student’s learning process as well as an accurate measure of their achievement. In Years 10, 11 and 12, a special Assessment Programme is followed in each subject. The Assessment Programme comprises a number of specifically designated Assessment Tasks, which might be assignments, class tests, examinations, projects, talks or other pieces of work required of students.

The Assessment Programme measures students’ achievement for the particular purpose of reporting to the NSW Board of Studies, which uses the School’s Assessment results to assist in the determination of the results reported on the School Certificate, the Higher School Certificate and the Preliminary Course Record of Achievement.

How is Assessment Used?

THE SCHOOL CERTIFICATE

For each subject presented for the School Certificate, the School conducts an Assessment Programme over the four terms of Year 10. The Assessment Tasks are designed to assess student’s achievement against a set of defined outcomes and to produce a profile of each student’s learning and ability in the particular subject. The Board of Studies has published a set of profile Course Performance Descriptors for each subject, which are then used by the School to determine the appropriate Grade to award to each student. There is no pre-determine pattern of Grades.

In English Literacy, Mathematics, Science, Computing Skills and Australian History, Geography and Civics and Citizenship, the Board of Studies also conducts examinations (typically in November). Students’ results in these examinations have no bearing on the School determined Grades and vice versa. The results of the Board’s examinations and School Grades are reported to each student in December each year.
PRELIMINARY COURSES FOR THE HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE

The Board of Studies requires that, before students can progress to a Higher School Certificate course, they must satisfactorily complete the requirements of the relevant Preliminary course. A minimum of 12 units of study is required to complete the Preliminary Course.

During Year 11, over three terms, the School conducts an Assessment Programme in each subject. The purpose of the Assessment Programme is to enable the School to determine whether or not each student has satisfactorily achieved the outcomes of the Preliminary course. This determination, but not the actual mark, is reported to the Board of Studies and is reported on a Preliminary Course Record of Achievement issued by the Board.

It should be noted that this Record of Achievement is not made available to students until they have completed Year 12, unless they should leave School before that time.

THE HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE

Commencing in Spring Term and concluding at the time of the Trial HSC in Winter Term of Year 12, the School conducts an Assessment Programme in each subject.

The Board of Studies requires that the School rank students by reporting a mark for each student in each subject which they are presenting for the Higher School Certificate. This mark is determined by the ability of each student to meet the outcomes for a course and their achievement of skills and understanding in relation to Performance Bands for that course. The purpose of the Assessment Programme is to determine this mark through the administration of a variety of Assessment Tasks.

The marks which are submitted to the Board of Studies are moderated, based on the examination results achieved by the School's candidates in each subject. However the moderated Assessment mark then comprises fifty percent (50%) of the student's final HSC mark for each subject. A student's examination mark and moderated assessment mark are supplied to the University Admission Centre to determine their University Admission Index. Should the student suffer some misadventure at the time of the HSC Examination, the moderated Assessment mark can become the basis upon which the Board provides an HSC result. Thus, in every Assessment Task, students are working directly towards their HSC results.

School Reporting of Assessment Marks

Once an Assessment Task has been marked, it will be returned to the student. Students will be provided with a marking guide for each assessment task. This may be provided prior to or at completion of the task. Marks awarded for any Task are always available to the student concerned.

Marks will not be published or publicly read and all marks will remain confidential to the staff and the individual student.

The School has developed policies for the reporting of students’ cumulative achievement in the Assessment Programmes. Naturally, these policies incorporate certain guidelines determined by the Board of Studies.

Students have a right to know their cumulative Assessment Rank at any time. This information may be obtained from Faculty Heads with proper notice.

THE SCHOOL CERTIFICATE

In Year 10, on both the Semester 1 and Semester 2 reports, Course Mark and Course Rank will be reported. These will be based on the marks gained by the student in the Assessment Tasks and may include some practical work.

Even after the School has made its Grading recommendations to the Board of Studies and has received confirmation of their acceptance, actual Grades may not be reported until the day upon which the Board allows Schools to issue School Certificates. This confidentiality may not be breached even in the most exceptional circumstances.
PRELIMINARY COURSES FOR THE HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE

On the School's Preliminary Course report, a Course Rank will be reported. These ranks will be determined in accordance to the marking guide for each of the subjects completed. Ranks will be based on the marks gained by the student in the Assessment Tasks. The cumulative assessment mark on which this rank is based will not appear on reports.

THE HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE

On both the Half-Yearly and the Final Year 12 reports, a Course Rank will be reported. This will be based on the marks gained by the student in the Assessment Tasks. The cumulative assessment mark on which this rank is based will not appear on reports. These marks are confidential to the School and the Board of Studies.

Rules and Procedures Regarding Assessment

ASSESSMENT CALENDARS AND PROGRAMMES

Each year, students will be provided with:

• An Assessment Calendar for their particular Year group. This will be published by the Director of Studies in consultation with the Faculty Heads.

• An Assessment Programme for each subject studied, clearly showing the Tasks to be undertaken, the components which each will assess and the weighting of each in the overall Assessment Programme. This will be published by each respective Faculty Head.

• Each subject will have no more than five tasks per year.

OMISSION OF TASKS FROM THE CALENDAR

It may not always be possible for all Assessment Tasks to be placed on the Assessment Calendar by the time of its publication. Students can be required to undertake other Assessment Tasks in accordance with the published Assessment Programme. However, in such cases:

• two weeks’ clear notice of the date of the Task must be given;

• the date must be determined in consultation with the Director of Studies, the Faculty Head and the students, having regard both to Tasks already scheduled and to events affecting the School Calendar; and

• it is understood that Assessment Tasks printed on the Assessment Calendar have priority.

Nevertheless it should be noted that, while it may not be ideal, there is no firm rule against students having more than one Assessment Task in a day. However, individual students who believe that they are overburdened with assessment tasks within an unreasonable timeframe should make this known to the Director of Studies or Head of School. If this is found to be the case the Director of Studies will negotiate a fairer spread of tasks on the student’s behalf.

VARIATIONS FROM THE PUBLISHED ASSESSMENT CALENDAR

While every attempt will be made to ensure that the details published in the Assessment Calendar are strictly adhered to, unforeseeable events (such as staff illnesses or the impingement of events outside the control of the School) may cause changes to occur.

In such cases the new date must be determined in consultation with the Director of Studies, the Faculty Head and the students, having regard both to Tasks already scheduled and to events affecting the School Calendar.
VARIATIONS FROM THE PUBLISHED ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME

In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to alter an Assessment Programme. Any such alteration must be approved by the Director of Studies before it is announced to students. A variation will only be approved provided:

- the relative value of the Tasks is maintained;
- the component weightings and other Board requirements are maintained; and
- the students are informed in writing of the details of the changes made.

**Student Attendance and Absence**

**GENERAL ATTENDANCE**

Should students be unable to attend school for more than a few days for any reason, parents should seek the written consent of the Headmaster in relation to this absence.

Students must ensure that their attendance is adequate to allow them to achieve the outcomes set down for each course they study. Should a student’s attendance fall below 85% of the school’s programmed lesson time for a course, the Headmaster may determine that, as a result of absence, the course completion criteria has not been met. Should students demonstrate a pattern of regular non-attendance they are disadvantaging themselves by being unable to complete course requirements. Failure to complete course requirements may result in an ‘N’ determination being made in the courses where the student has failed to satisfy course requirements. In serious cases students may be asked to justify their continued enrolment in the school.

**ABSENCE WHEN AN ASSESSMENT TASK IS DUE**

Students should regard attendance at all in-school Assessment Tasks (e.g. tests) as mandatory. However, in the case of illness or unforeseen and pressing personal difficulty, the following procedures should be followed:

- Wherever possible, a parent should telephone the Director of Studies, Head of School or the respective Faculty Head on (or before) the day of the Task to alert them to the student’s absence.
- Upon his/her return to School, the student must present the Faculty Head, Head of School or the Director of Studies with documentary evidence justifying the absence. In the case of illness, a Doctor’s Certificate is mandatory for Year 12 students and highly desirable for Year 10 and 11 students.
- The Faculty Head will determine whether an estimate or the same or a substitute Task is more appropriate for the student to complete. In the case of the same or a substitute task being chosen, the Faculty Head will decide on an appropriate date for the Task to be undertaken; it may be expected in some circumstances that the Task be undertaken on the day of the student’s return.
- Where a substitute task cannot be equitably and expediently administered (the majority of cases), or a student’s absence has been of a long duration, or in other exceptional circumstances, the Faculty Head may advise and the Director of Studies may authorise the use of an estimate based on appropriate evidence. Appropriate evidence could include ranking such a student based on a ‘like’ task or maintaining a student’s general rank to date – whichever of the two is deemed more appropriate by the Faculty Head.

In the case of “hand-in” Assessment Tasks, a student who is unavoidably absent due to illness or unforeseen and pressing personal difficulty must, upon their return to School the following day, submit the Assessment Task to the Faculty Head, along with documentary evidence justifying the absence. In the case of illness, a Doctor’s Certificate is mandatory for Year 12 students and highly desirable for Year 10 and 11 students.
Failure to submit or undertake an Assessment Task

When a student fails to undertake or to hand in an Assessment Task, the Faculty Head will advise the Director of Studies to write to the student’s parents advising them of the fact and detailing the penalty applied. Parents will be asked to acknowledge receipt of the letter.

The penalty in such cases is the award of 0 marks for the Task.

Students in Years 10, 11 and 12 are warned that failure to submit Assessment Tasks worth in excess of fifty percent (50%) of the Assessment marks will result in the Headmaster advising the Board of Studies of their unsatisfactory completion of the respective course and recommendation of an ‘N’ Determination. In the case of Year 12 this is a requirement of the Board in which the Headmaster has no discretion.

Notification of ‘N’ Determinations

Students in danger of receiving an ‘N’ determination will be warned via a letter to their parents or guardian in time for the problem to be corrected. They will be alerted to the possible consequences of an ‘N’ determination. At least one follow-up warning letter will be written. Failure to heed such warning letters will result in the Headmaster notifying the Board of Studies recommending an ‘N’ determination for the course.

Penalty for Late Submission of an Assessment Task

Assessment Tasks submitted late (and without the proper explanations outlined above) will attract the following penalties:

1 day late - thirty percent (30%) of the marks awarded
2 days late - sixty percent (60%) of the marks awarded
3 or more days late - one hundred percent (100%) of the marks awarded, i.e. the award of zero (0) marks

For this purpose, Saturdays, Sundays, public holidays and similar will each count as one day.

An assessment will be deemed late if it is not submitted in class on the date that it is due. If no class for that subject is held on the submission date, the assessment will be deemed late if not submitted to the classroom teacher or Faculty Head by the end of recess time on the due date. The application of a one hundred percent penalty does not obviate the student’s obligation to submit the Task, which will still be marked and commented upon.

EXTENSION OF TIME

Any application for an extension of time for an Assessment Task must be made to the Faculty Head, in writing and as far in advance as possible. Full details of the reason that an extension is sought should be included and the application should be counter-signed by the student’s parent.

Extensions will only be granted by the Faculty Head where it is clear that the student has been affected by circumstances beyond their control and where the granting of an extension will not disadvantage other students.

Extensions of time will usually apply to “hand-in” Assessment Tasks. However, where a student feels that their preparation has been adversely and significantly affected by circumstances beyond their control for an ‘in-class’ task they should apply in writing for a misadventure appeal to the Faculty Head. If upheld the Faculty Head may advise and the Director of Studies may authorise the use of an estimate based on appropriate evidence. Appropriate evidence could include ranking such a student based on an example a ‘like’ task or maintaining a student’s general rank to date – whichever of the two is deemed more appropriate by the Faculty Head.

Submission Requirements

Assessment Tasks must be submitted directly to the student’s teacher in circumstances conducive to their safe receipt. In the event of the teacher being unavailable, Assessment Tasks
may be submitted to the relevant Faculty Head or, failing that, to the Director of Studies. Ensuring the Assessment Task reaches the teacher is the responsibility of the student.

The teacher to whom the submission is made will, on request from the student, provide a receipt for the Assessment Task. The receipt will include the name of the student, the date, the subject/course, the title of the Assessment Task and the teacher's signature.

**In the case of all “hand-in” Assessment Tasks, students are required to keep a good copy of the submitted Task.** A back-up copy on computer disk or a photocopy is acceptable. The copy must be produced on request and provides the student with security against any loss or damage to the submitted copy.

**Malpractice regarding Assessment Tasks**

- Where there is clear evidence of cheating, including serious plagiarism, in any Assessment Task, a mark of zero (0) will be awarded for that Task.

- Behaviour which disturbs the work of others during an Assessment Task will result in removal of the student from the room to another supervised area. His/her Assessment Task will be collected and will only be marked to that point.

- The non-serious attempt of an Assessment Task, including frivolous or objectionable material, will result in the award of zero (0) marks.

Malpractice is a serious issue, the consequences of which may result in a student failing to meet the course completion requirements and being awarded an ‘N’ determination in that course. Malpractice or a non-serious attempt in Board of Studies examinations might result in the Board of Studies withholding the School Certificate or Higher School Certificate from the offending student. For more information concerning malpractice in Board examinations students are advised to consult the Board of Studies directly.

**Keeping of Assessment Marks**

Each Faculty Head will ensure the proper keeping of all Assessment marks, including back-up copies, to safeguard against the possibility of fire, theft or vandalism destroying originals.

**Appeals and Grievances**

**GRIEVANCES ABOUT ASSESSMENT TASKS**

All enquiries or grievances regarding Assessment matters should be directed to the relevant Teacher and Faculty Head in the first instance and to the Director of Studies should the Faculty Head not resolve the matter to the satisfaction of all. Any grievance regarding an assessment task must be raised by the student within 14 days after the task is returned.

**STUDENT APPEALS AGAINST ‘N’ DETERMINATIONS**

Students may appeal the decisions of a school regarding ‘N’ determinations by applying to the Headmaster for a review. If a student is unsatisfied with the Headmaster’s decision he/she may appeal directly to the Board of Studies. A summary of the review process is best outlined in the diagram below:

**HSC APPEALS AGAINST ORDER OF MERIT RANKINGS**

Once students have received their Order of Merit reports from the Board of Studies, they may appeal against them to the Director of Studies. There are, however, only three grounds for appeal:

- the particular subject’s Assessment Programme did not conform to the requirements of the Board with respect to the weighting of individual components;
- the final Assessment rank does not appear to be consistent with the results obtained by the School’s published Assessment Programme; or
- there appear to have been computational or clerical errors made in the determination of the Assessment mark.
Should a student launch an appeal, the Director of Studies will, without delay, convene a Review Panel, which shall consist of the Headmaster (or Deputy Headmaster), the Director of Studies, the respective Faculty Head and the teacher directly involved in the administration of the Assessment Programme.

The Review Panel will investigate the appeal examining all necessary documentation and report its determination to the student. Only if the student believes that the Review did not conform to the Board of Studies’ requirements may (s)he make a further appeal to the Board itself.
Procedures for Appeals against 'N' Determinations

- Principal WARNS student in writing in time for problem to be corrected
- Principal issues at least one follow-up warning letter
- Principal makes 'N' determination
- Principal notifies student
- Principal notifies board
- Student makes no appeal
- Student appeals
- Principal reviews determination
- Principal confirms determination and makes comments on appeal
- Principal notifies student
- Principal revises determination
- Principal notifies student
- Principal notifies Board to remove 'N' determination
- Student makes no further appeal
- Student seeks Board review of principal's determination
- School notifies board
- Board considers determination and submission
- Board decides
- Board notifies student
- Board notifies principal