



Pinjarra Senior High School

Assessment Policy for Senior School Courses

The whole school assessment policy and its individual course assessment policies and procedures must conform to Curriculum Council requirements for assessment and grading in Accredited Courses. The following guidelines have been developed so that students, parents and teachers are aware of their responsibilities in the assessment process.

1. Overview

Assessment assists teachers and schools in:

- ◆ monitoring the progress of students and diagnosing learning difficulties;
- ◆ providing feedback to students;
- ◆ adjusting programs to ensure all students have the opportunity to achieve the intended outcomes;
- ◆ developing subsequent learning programs;
- ◆ reporting student achievement to parents;
- ◆ whole-school and system planning, reporting and accountability procedures;

Assessment procedures must therefore be fair, valid and reliable.

2. Assessment Guidelines

Senior Schooling assessment has mandatory guidelines set by the Curriculum Council. Adherence to these guidelines is a Curriculum Council policy requirement.

A Course Outline (including task deadlines) and clear Assessment Guidelines must be provided to students at the start of the learning program.

3. Student Responsibilities

It is the Student responsibility to:

- ◆ Complete all Course requirements by the due date;
- ◆ When submitting an assignment, complete and sign the assignment receipt and retain it in a safe place.
- ◆ Maintain a folio of evidence for each Course studied and make it available when required.
- ◆ maintain a good record of attendance, conduct and progress. Students are expected to complete all work missed due to absence.
- ◆ initiate contact with teachers concerning absence from class, missed assessments, extension requests and other issues pertaining to assessment.

4. Staff Responsibilities

- ◆ develop a teaching/learning program that meets current Curriculum Council guidelines;
- ◆ provide students with a Course outline and assessment outline (i.e. what will be assessed and when it will be assessed) at the start of the Course.
- ◆ ensure that assessments are fair, valid and reliable;
- ◆ provide students with timely feedback and guidance
- ◆ maintain and make available accurate records of student achievement and assessment;
- ◆ meet school and external timeframes for assessment and reporting;
- ◆ inform students and parents of academic progress as appropriate.

5. Missed Assessment Work Due to Absence

a. General

If a student is absent from class, their ability to achieve to their potential is diminished. Extended absence frequently results in lower levels of achievement and may have serious WACE implications.

b. Scheduled assessment tasks

Absence from a scheduled assessment task (including tests and examinations) must be accompanied by an acceptable explanation.

Satisfactory explanation of the absence may enable the student to complete that assessment task, or a similar task, and gain credit.

Wherever possible, advance notification of absence is required. In cases where a student is unable to attend to complete a scheduled assessment task, and where appropriate supervision is guaranteed, permission may be negotiated to complete that task in an alternative venue. Where there is no satisfactory explanation of an absence from a scheduled assessment task, or alternative arrangements cannot be made, no marks will be recorded for that assessment.

c. Late Work

Work submitted after the due date may incur a penalty where a student through having extra time is deemed to have gained an advantage over other students.

When assessment deadlines are not met parents should be informed and students will be expected to complete the assessment during a lunchtime homework class. Continued or frequent lateness of assessment items may result in a loss of good standing.

1. Prolonged Absence

Where a student is unable to attend school for a lengthy period due to injury or illness, the school will endeavour to provide support to the student's learning program. A U grade indicating the Course is unfinished will be given in these circumstances when insufficient assessments and time have been completed.

2. Sickness and misadventure

Consideration may be given to candidates suffering from a temporary sickness or misadventure close to or during the examinations, if they believe it may have affected their performance in the examination. Students should not miss an examination session merely because they do not feel able to do their best. The sickness/misadventure provisions are designed to cover the case of a student who performs below expectations because of sickness or misadventure.

If a student does not attend an examination session and their sickness/misadventure application is unsuccessful, they will not receive a result for that exam. This could affect their achievement of a WACE and Australian Tertiary Admission Rank.

The school does not expect candidates to attend an examination session against specific medical advice.

If a student is not able to complete an examination session for health reasons, it is important that medical evidence be provided to verify the nature and severity of the illness/injury. In most cases, that will mean producing evidence from a medical professional who was consulted on the day of the examination or the day before.

If the application is approved, then the School will calculate an examination mark using the student's school assessment as a basis.

6. Changing Subjects

- (a) Generally, it is not possible to change after the first month, as to do so would place a student at risk of not completing the Course requirements. The school will only consider changes in exceptional circumstances. All changes must have parental approval and changes must be negotiated through the Deputy Principal or the Student Services Coordinator.
- (b) Where a student changes schools during a school year, credit for the completion of work in the same Course will be given when the student and/or previous school supplies appropriate evidence.

7. Extensions

Generally, it will not be possible for students to seek an extension of deadlines. In cases where work is not submitted on time, teachers will make their judgement on the evidence available by the deadline.

Extensions may be given at the discretion of Learning Area Manager in cases of illness or significant personal problems.

If a student does not apply for or receive an extension then the same consequences will apply as those that apply for missed work when there is no satisfactory explanation of an absence.

8. Non submission of evidence of achievement

General

A subject or course overview, including timelines for submission of assessment tasks, will be provided to each student at the start of the course. Due dates will be clearly outlined and implemented. Where adjustment to a deadline is necessary, it will be made in close consultation with students and publicised.

It is a teacher's responsibility to manage the assessment outline. It is a student's responsibility to provide evidence of achievement by the published timelines.

Parents/guardians will be notified in cases where concern for a student's progress emerges.

9. Cheating, Collusion and Plagiarism

Students shown to have cheated or been involved with collusion or plagiarism in assessed work or in examinations may have that work not accepted as valid evidence of their achievement.

Collusion is when a student submits work that is not their own, for assessment.

Plagiarism is when a student uses someone else's words or ideas without acknowledgement that they have done so. That is, work is essentially copied.

10. Independent Learning Assessment Tasks

School Practice

Teachers will use strategies to ensure that work submitted for assessment, which has been completed in an out-of-class situation, is the student's own work.

Learning Area Decisions

Strategies will be developed to validate that the student has completed the independent learning assessment task without unfair assistance.

Additional Notes

As a guide to developing departmental procedures on this issue, one or more of the following may be applied:

- ◆ Unseen assignment questions may be administered in class with open access to notes and reference materials.
- ◆ Assignment questions completed at home with the level of achievement measured by an in-class 'test' on key concepts covered in the assignment.
- ◆ Prepared assignment questions researched out-of-class but completed in class.
- ◆ Regular interaction between students and teachers on projects being completed over extended periods out-of-class.
- ◆ Assignments completed partially at home and partially at school - providing teachers with the opportunity to validate out-of-class work.
- ◆ Student progress with a longer-term assignment or project may be periodically monitored by the teacher.

11. Assessment of Students Working in Groups

School Practice

Assessment of student achievement demonstrated in a groupwork situation is acceptable and in many cases desirable. All students within a group must have the same opportunities to demonstrate achievement of outcomes.

Learning Area Decisions

- ◆ Whether the purpose of the assessment is to assess the student's capacity to work in a group or whether it is to assess other educational outcomes (knowledge or process) demonstrated whilst in the group situation.
- ◆ Procedures to ensure the assessment is fair, valid and reliable.
- ◆ Strategies to take account of different achievement of individuals within a group and to apportion results accordingly.

12. Examinations

(a) Regulations

When attending examinations, students must adhere to the regulations that pertain to that examination and the school's Examination Policy and Procedure.

Regulations will be issued with the examination timetable.

Infringement will result in an appropriate penalty.

(b) Attendance

Students should attend scheduled examinations. In exceptional circumstances, special alternative arrangements may be made through the Deputy Principal and or the Curriculum Council if the circumstances arise prior to the Curriculum Council Examinations. Application forms are available from the Deputy Principal.

Participating in family holidays will not be accepted as an exceptional circumstance.

(c) Security of Tests and Examinations

School Practice

Teachers use strategies such as alternative test forms to address problems that arise from the use of the same test by different classes at different times or from one year to the next.

Learning Area Decisions

- ◆ Strategies for addressing problems caused by using externally-set tests or exams which are likely to be used by a number of other schools.
- ◆ Strategies for addressing problems caused by students in different classes sitting for the same test at different times.
- ◆ Strategies for addressing problems caused by some students being disadvantaged by the use of the same test from one year to the next.

13. Students requiring special consideration

The school will ensure that students with special educational needs are catered for in an appropriate way and in accordance with Curriculum Council guidelines.

14. Reporting

Students will be kept informed of their progress throughout their enrolment in a subject.

Teachers will assess completed tasks, and relay assessment information to the student promptly.

Parents will be regularly informed about a student's progress.

Both students and parents/guardians will be informed when it is identified that there is a risk of:

- ◆ their not completing the course
- ◆ not achieving their potential and/or
- ◆ failure.

15. Frequency of Assessment

School Practice

Teachers should schedule sufficient assessment tasks to arrive at a valid and fair assessment, and they should avoid over-assessments at different times or from one year to the next.

Learning Area Decisions

- ◆ The most appropriate or required number of assessments in each course. Too many assessments interfere with the normal process of teaching (and learning) and create undue stress on both students and teachers.
- ◆ When to use other forms of assessment to measure the success or failure of a particular teaching/learning experience or assess the progress of students.
- ◆ When to schedule assessments that contribute to the final assessment.

Additional Notes

Teachers should differentiate between diagnostic (formative) assessment which may be ongoing and part of the teaching/learning program and grading (summative) assessment. Only the latter should contribute to the final result.

Generally, assessment is valid if it is measuring student achievement of course objectives or outcomes. Assessment will be considered fair if students have been provided with the learning conditions and information necessary to enable them to demonstrate achievement of course objectives sampled in the specific assessment instrument.

16. Students Unable to Complete Tasks Owing to Cultural Beliefs

School Practice

Students who are unable to complete tasks because of their cultural beliefs will be provided with alternative opportunities to demonstrate their achievement of course objectives. The school will develop strategies for counselling students so that they do not select courses, which contain content, or assessment elements which do not fit with their cultural beliefs.

Learning Area Decisions

- ◆ Selection of alternative assessment strategies, which conform to Curriculum Council policies and guidelines.

17. Reviewing marks and grades

If a student considers that there is an issue about the delivery of the course, the marking of an assessment task or the grade assigned for a unit (or pair of units) they should, in the first instance, discuss the issue with the teacher.

If an assessment issue cannot be resolved through discussion with the teacher then the student or parent/guardian should approach the head of learning area or teacher-in-charge of the course.

The student (or parent/guardian) can request, in writing, that the college conduct a formal assessment review, if they consider that the student has been disadvantaged by any of the following:

- the assessment outline for the unit (or pair of units) does not meet Curriculum Council requirements
- the assessment procedures used in the class do not conform with the college's assessment policy
- computational errors have occurred in the determination of the mark's and/or grade's.

The Principal, or a nominated representative, will conduct the review. The reviewer will meet with the student and the teacher independently and prepare a written report. This report will be provided to the student's parent/guardian.