HSC ASSESSMENTS
2014

Revised September 2013

Guidelines for students in Year 12 and their parents.

Details of components, weightings and tasks of each HSC course.

Principal
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I am sure you will find the senior years to be both a challenging and exciting time in your schooling. You will have the opportunity to build upon the skills you developed in Year 11, as well as striving to realise your potential over the two years of intense academic study. It is expected that you will further develop your organisational and leadership skills as you engage in a range of sporting, cultural and other school experiences.

Before you begin your HSC study, it is important to realise that there will be greater expectations on you than in Years 7 – 11. Not only will you be expected to be an excellent role model for other students by being a good school citizen, but there will be a range of other school requirements that we will expect you to meet. Naturally, all teachers will have the basic expectation that you will try as hard as you can in class at all times and complete all homework. The NSW Office of the Board of Studies, as the body that controls your HSC studies, will expect you to abide by all of its policies and procedures.

One of the most important areas requiring your full attention is the completion of assessment tasks in each of your courses. Whilst the assessment tasks are compulsory and will require a great deal of effort on your part, they are also a valuable means by which you will obtain feedback on your performance as you work towards the HSC examinations. You should remember that in the HSC course, the assessment tasks (including Half Yearly and Yearly Examinations) provide you with the opportunity to gain marks by working consistently.

The following pages in this book give details about the specific assessment requirements in each HSC course. You will need to study these carefully so that you will meet the requirements of the school and the NSW Office of the Board of Studies.

We look forward to working with you as you progress toward the Higher School Certificate.

G R Wing
Principal
Assessment Policy – HSC Course

These notes have been prepared to assist you in understanding the procedures used in arriving at assessment marks for HSC courses. You must also read the booklet entitled Rules and Procedures for 2014 Higher School Certificate Candidates which has been issued to you. It is also available online at:


What Is Assessment?

- Assessment is a process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about student learning.

- Assessment is designed to provide information on student achievement and progress in each course in relation to syllabus standards, and to report on the standard of performance attained at the end of the course.

- The HSC requires a standards-referenced approach to assessment and reporting. A standards-referenced approach means that the achievements of students are assessed and reported against specified standards that are established for each course. Students are no longer assessed by comparing their achievements with other students, but against the standards that are specified in each syllabus.

These standards are established in the HSC through:

- Knowledge, skills and understandings expected to be learnt by students as a result of studying the course;
- The standard set out in the syllabus; and
- The levels of achievement reached by the students against the 6 performance bands of the syllabus.

Together, these things specify what is to be learnt and how well it is achieved.

- Assessment measures performance through the whole course. Every course outcome will be measured at least once.

- Students must satisfy the assessment requirements for the Preliminary Course before commencing the HSC course. Assessment for the HSC course must not commence until the completion of the Preliminary course.

How Will Assessment Be Undertaken?

- The Board of Studies has provided a range of documents for each Board course. These documents include a syllabus, assessment and reporting supplement, sample assessment tasks and sample examination papers. The assessment program for each subject is devised using these documents. The documents are available on the Board of Studies website, and should be consulted by students. Address: http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/

- The syllabus contains a statement of outcomes for each course. At some point during the assessment program, every one of the outcomes must be assessed.

- Each syllabus lists components that must be followed by all schools, although schools will differ in how they assess the components.

- Each course will require a different number of assessment tasks to adequately assess the course. The Board of Studies encourages teachers to assess student progress and achievement so that students will not be completely overwhelmed by assessment tasks. This will usually mean that students will undertake 3-5 tasks for each subject during the HSC course.
The Higher School Certificate

Results of HSC courses satisfactorily completed appear on the Higher School Certificate Record of Achievement and on a separate Course Report. Results of Board Developed Courses are recorded under the following headings on the Record of Achievement:

- An assessment mark: the total of your assessment task marks achieved at school.
- An examination mark: the mark awarded for the external examination.
- The HSC mark: the combined assessment and examination mark, out of 100. School based assessment comprises 50% of the overall mark in each course; the external examination comprises 50% of the overall mark in each course.
- A performance band: your level of achievement in that course as measured against the published course standards.

Allocation of Marks

Your HSC mark for 2 unit courses will be reported on a scale of 0 to 100. A mark of 50 will represent the minimum standard expected. If you achieve the minimum standard expected in a course you will receive a mark of 50. There will be five performance bands above 50 that correspond to different levels of achievement. Marks are based on the standard of achievement reached.

Your HSC mark for 1 unit courses (including Extension courses) will be reported on a scale of 0 to 50.

Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)

The Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) is a number between 0 and 99.95 with increments of 0.05. It provides a measure of your overall academic achievement in the NSW HSC in relation to that of other students, and it helps universities rank applicants for selection. It is calculated on behalf of the universities and released by the Universities Admissions Centre (UAC). It is important to note that the ATAR is a rank, not a mark, and it is designed only to be used for university course entry.

Eligibility

To be eligible for an ATAR in 2014 you must satisfactorily complete at least 10 units of ATAR courses. These ATAR courses must include at least:

- eight units from Category A courses;
- two units of English;
- three Board Developed courses of two units;
- four subjects.

Calculation of the ATAR

Your ATAR is based on an aggregate of scaled marks in 10 units of ATAR courses comprising:

- your best two units of English; and
- your best eight units from the remaining units, with the provision that no more than two units of Category B courses be included.

The ATAR is optional. You can request that an ATAR not be calculated as a result of your HSC. For further information about the ATAR, see: http://www.uac.edu.au/undergraduate/atar/
Review of Final Assessment Marks

Following submission of assessment marks from the school in each HSC course, the Board of Studies will provide information for students on their relative positions in each course.

If the position assigned by the school differs significantly from what was expected by a student, based on the information provided during the course, the student may seek a review in that course. Procedures for this review are available from the Year 12 Deputy Principal for 2014, Mrs Dennett.

The teacher’s professional judgement of the achievement level in individual assessments as reflected in the marks or grades awarded will not be any part of these reviews.

Information to Be Provided to Students

Each school has the responsibility to tell students the following information:

- what aspects of the course will be assessed; including the relevant syllabus outcomes;
- how they will be assessed, eg. what essays, test, practicals will be used;
- the relative value of the tasks; and
- when they are going to be assessed.

This information will be provided in writing. Your class teacher will provide details of each assessment task at least two weeks before the date that the task is due.

During the HSC course you will be provided with information about your rank in specific tasks. However, your final rank will not be provided until you complete your final HSC examination.

Your Rights and Responsibilities in HSC Assessment

You have the right to:

- be informed of the assessment policies of your school and the Board of Studies.
- receive clear guidelines relating to the requirements of each assessment task. This will be issued to you in hard copy. The template of the Pennant Hills High School Assessment Task Notification Sheet is provided as an Appendix on page 8.
- be told in advance of the due date for each assessment task.
- query the mark for an individual task at the time it is returned to you.

You have the responsibility to:

- become familiar with and follow the assessment requirements set by your school.
- monitor upcoming tasks by reference to this booklet, and the Term Assessment Planners, issued at the beginning of each term.
- complete all set tasks on time, or talk to your teacher about what is required if you can't meet a deadline.
- avoid behaviour which could be considered cheating, including plagiarism, and ensure that all assessment work is your own or acknowledges the contribution of others (more detail to follow).
- follow up any concerns you have with tasks at the time they are returned to you.
Absence from an Assessment Task / Examination

- If a student is unable to complete a task because of illness, a **medical certificate must be supplied** supporting the illness. This certificate is required **immediately on the first day that the student returns to school and is to be given to the Head Teacher of that subject**. A note from a parent/caregiver is **NOT** sufficient documentary evidence. Also note that students must return to school the day after the medical certificate expires.

- **Submitted Tasks:** you must submit the task, with your medical certificate, on the first day of your return to school.

- **Examinations/Orals/Practicals and Other Similar Tasks:** you must be prepared to complete the task on your first day of return to school. **Students are advised that no adjustment of assessment marks is possible.** The BOS mandates that actual performance, not potential performance is to be assessed. **If you are sick and have a medical certificate covering the period of the task, you are advised to stay at home and attempt the task upon your return to school.**

- If a student is to be absent from an assessment task for any reason, he/she must inform the class teacher prior to this absence e.g. if the student is to represent the school in a sporting fixture on that day.

- The Head Teacher of the subject concerned will:
  - allow the student to undertake the same task; or
  - allow the student to undertake a suitable replacement task; or
  - give an estimate for that task only, based on the quality of the student’s work in the components being assessed, if the Principal permits.

- **Failure to provide documentary evidence (i.e. a medical certificate) will result in a zero mark for that task.**

- When a task is missed, because a student is required by the school or some other organisation to attend some important function, the date of which cannot be altered, the alternatives listed above for a task missed through illness will apply. An example might be a Zone or Regional final in sport, the date of which cannot be predicted, which may clash with the advertised dates for an assessment task. This rule does not apply to such private arrangements made by parents as holidays in school time and the like.

- **Students absent when a task is handed out CANNOT request or be granted an extension on the basis of that absence.** Note that this includes absence due to TAFE commitments, sporting events or any other school-endorsed activity. It is your responsibility to request any task notification sheets from your teacher upon your return.

Attendance Before a Task Is Due

Where an assessment task is to be held in class, or submitted on a due date, students must attend **ALL lessons on that day** to be eligible to sit for, or submit the task. Failure to observe this rule can result in zero marks being awarded for the task.

Completion of Assessment Tasks

Students **must complete all assessment tasks.** This applies even to assessment tasks where the student knows they will be scored zero due to lateness, as failure to complete/submit tasks carries additional consequences. Where a student has been given zero marks **because of failure to complete assessment tasks** totalling more than 50% of the final course assessment mark, the Principal must certify that the course has **not been studied satisfactorily** and neither the exam mark nor the assessment mark will be recorded on the HSC. This could also mean that a student becomes **ineligible** for the award of a Higher School Certificate as he/she has achieved less than 10 units.
Tasks Submitted Late (e.g. Essays, Assignments)

Tasks submitted late without approved extension of time from the relevant Head Teacher will incur a 25% penalty on the first day late, 50% penalty on the second day late, 75% penalty on the third day late and zero awarded on the fourth day late and afterwards. Tasks which incur a late penalty will be marked out of the full mark value, and then the relevant late penalty will be applied. Even though late tasks may not be awarded marks, tasks must still be completed and submitted in order to meet course outcomes.

NOTE: For tasks that have not been given approval for extension over a weekend or holiday period, non-school days DO accumulate towards percentage penalties imposed, e.g. lateness after a weekend will accumulate a 3 day penalty (75%).

Head Teachers may accept tasks submitted late as long as the student requests consideration in writing BEFORE the date that the task is due. This also includes circumstances that occur on the evening prior to the submission date where prior written application cannot be made. Any extension time will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Failure of computer equipment is NOT an acceptable excuse. Students should develop a pattern of regularly backing up work on a transportable storage device which can be brought to school in the event of any computer failure, e.g. printer out of ink.

If lateness is due to sickness, a medical certificate will be required. Lateness beyond the approved number of days as specified on the medical certificate, or lateness for which a student does not seek approval before the due date, will lead to a zero result for the task.

HSC: All My Own Work Program

This program is designed to help HSC students follow the principles and practices of good and ethical scholarship as set out by the NSW Board of Studies on its HSC: All My Own Work website at http://amow.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/

All students entered for one or more HSC courses with an external examination are required to have satisfactorily completed HSC: All My Own Work or its equivalent. This requirement excludes students who are entered for Life Skills courses or Board Endorsed courses although the program would still be available as an option for these students if this was seen as appropriate by the school.

What is Malpractice in HSC Assessment?

Cheating, or malpractice, is dishonest behaviour by a student that gives them an unfair advantage over others. Most students understand what cheating in an examination means, but there are other types of behaviour that are also considered cheating.

Here are some examples of behaviour considered to be cheating:

- copying, buying, stealing or borrowing someone else’s work in part or in whole, and presenting it as your own.
- using material directly from books, journals, CDs or the internet without acknowledging the source.
- submitting work that contains a large contribution from another person, such as a parent, tutor, coach or subject expert, that is not acknowledged.
- paying someone to write or prepare material that is associated with a task, such as process diaries, logs and journals.

The examples above are generally referred to as plagiarism.

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is when you pretend that you have written or created a piece of work that someone else originated. It is cheating, dishonest, and could jeopardise your HSC results.
How to avoid plagiarism

Students should refer to the school’s Ethical Scholarship Policy contained in the booklet, *Researching at PHHS*, which is distributed through the library. These booklets were issued to students in February 2013 at the commencement of the Preliminary Course. See the librarian if you need another copy.

Further information can be obtained online in the leaflet, *HSC Assessments and Submitted Works – Advice to Students*, found at: www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/manuals/advice_students.html OR refer to the *All My Own Work* booklet.

Consequences of Malpractice

All assessment tasks done at school or at home must be the student’s own work. If any malpractice is proven, the task concerned scores zero and the student jeopardises his/her eligibility for the award of the HSC.

If an assessment task for a subject is scheduled for different periods of the same day, students are not to disclose details of the task to the cohort undertaking the task at a later time. If this occurs, this will be considered to be malpractice and a zero mark will be awarded to all students who have disclosed or received the information.

Allegations of malpractice will initially be investigated by the Head Teacher of the faculty concerned, before being referred to the appropriate Deputy Principal, who will convene an Assessment Review Panel to examine the case.

The Board of Studies treats cheating in written tasks, examinations and practical work very seriously and takes measures to deal with students who are caught. Depending on the circumstances of the case, one or more of the following may apply:

- Zero marks may be awarded for part or all of the examination.
- You may be required to have an interview with a ‘malpractice’ panel at the Board of Studies.
- You may lose the award of the HSC in one or more courses.
- You may damage your ability to apply for entry to TAFE or university courses or scholarships.

Mobile Phones and Electronic Equipment

Mobile phones must be switched off and placed face down on the examination desk at the start of an examination. Failure to do so will make your performance in that examination null and void. Mobile phones must be turned off and remain in bags or be collected before a class assessment task commences.

Other than Board approved calculators (when required), no other electronic equipment or instruments (e.g. MP3 players, portable video players) will be permitted in examinations, or during in-class assessment tasks. Essential medical appliances need prior approval before the examination/assessment.

Disputing an Assessment Mark

If you are concerned about a mark, you must discuss this with your teacher when the work is returned. If you are still not satisfied, you should pursue the matter with the relevant Head Teacher within FIVE school days of the return of the task. Appeals must be received by the Head Teacher within FIVE school days of the return of the task.

Record of Marks

Each faculty keeps a register of all marks awarded for tasks. The school will NOT provide an actual assessment mark to students or parents, as the final mark must remain confidential. However, each half year report will show the student’s current ranking in the assessments in each subject.
Steps to Manage Your Assessment Tasks

- Be aware of due dates. Keep an up-to-date diary of all assessment activities and other commitments. Highlight dates on the planner issued at school.
- Use a wall calendar or small whiteboard in a public space like your kitchen to note due dates if you want others in your household to help you remember deadlines.
- Start tasks early so that you can ask for help if you need it.
- Break tasks into a series of smaller steps and set deadlines for completing each step.
- Record the sources of information you use as you find them so that acknowledgements do not become a major task at the end.
- Frequently save, back up and print any work completed on a computer. The failure of technology is not an acceptable excuse for the late submission of work.
- Keep all your earlier drafts and copies of your resources.
- Keep a copy of any work you submit for marking.

General Comments on Assessment

1. Each subject provides information in this booklet about the types of tasks which will be set. Remember, the components of the course to be assessed and the percentage weightings given to each component are determined by the Board. The school decides the tasks.

2. There may be variation in the number of tasks set or in the description of the task, but students will always be given notice of any change, in advance, in writing.

3. Two weeks WRITTEN notice will be given of the date for a set task. Read carefully the information on LATE tasks and MISSED tasks.

4. If a student is suspended when an assessment task is due/taking place the student must not attend school for the duration of the suspension. Assessment tasks are to be submitted on time by either mail or by delivery to the Administrative Office or to the respective faculty Head Teacher.

5. The school will endeavour to monitor the dates set for tasks by having teachers of all subjects inform Mrs Dennett of planned dates. If too many tasks appear to be set over too short a time (eg. two on the one day), the Deputy Principal will seek a variation of dates from Head Teachers. Any problems should be referred to Mrs Dennett.

6. Remember, work done in assignments, etc, must be the student’s efforts. It easily becomes apparent to teachers if this is not so. If work is proven to be other than the student’s efforts, a zero mark will be awarded. Ignorance of the rules regarding plagiarism is not a defence: it is the student’s responsibility to read ALL information provided.

7. While assessment tasks are obviously important, no one should lose sight of the fact that the HSC examination still remains more important, as candidates’ results in the final examinations will influence the final scaled assessment mark.

8. Please note that not all tasks are weighted equally and a poor level of achievement in a major task can have significant consequences. At the same time, it should be recognised that significant variation in a student’s rank may occur during the HSC year as a consequence of relatively small mark differences.

9. Finally, learn to organise your time and efforts, so that deadlines and other aspects of the assessment scheme do not cause unnecessary stress. If problems seem insurmountable, there are personnel in the school who will be available to provide advice and guidance. Don’t stew - ask for help!
Task type:

(E.g.: oral presentation, formal examination, research report, research essay, examination essay, practical performance, etc.)

Task description:

(Any information that helps students understand what is expected of them; would include length, break down of components, etc.

E.g.: A formal examination of 80 minutes duration, made up of multiple choice questions, short answer questions, source based questions and an extended essay-style response)

Outcomes being assessed by this task:

E.g. H1.1, H1.2

Criteria for assessment:

This will outline the criteria upon which your work will be marked (as appropriate)

Additional information:

- Student BOS ID numbers are to be used.
- Upon submission of this task you will be required to certify that your work complies with the Board of Studies All My Own Work rules (this to be included in all Stage 6 non-examination tasks).
- This is a formal assessment item. Absence due to illness must be supported by a medical certificate, presented to the Head Teacher on the first day of your return to school, irrespective of your timetable for this subject. You must be prepared to attempt/submit the task on the first day of your return to school – i.e. when your medical certificate expires. (this is to be included in all Stage 6 tasks.)

Additional information may include: submission details, equipment needed, how the order will be determined for orals/practicals, etc.