

ASSESSMENT POLICY, PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES

Teachers at Bowral High, as part of a curriculum based on an outcomes-approach to teaching and learning, have embraced a wide range of assessment and reporting practices. Our successful implementation of an outcomes-approach has been informed by appropriate assessment and reporting practices being embedded in the teaching and learning process underpinned by the backward design methods. We are committed to providing an appropriate and relevant curriculum, with quality teaching and learning informed by good practice in assessment and reporting.

Students at Bowral High are provided with continual support as they strive to reach their highest possible standards of achievement.

AIMS

- To report student achievement using descriptions of performance which relate to clearly defined standards.
- To ensure consistency in the information issued to students in years 7 – 12 describing assessment tasks
- To ensure assessment tasks and feedback are expressed in terms of achievement in relation to the BOS common grade scale using a known standards referenced framework
- To support consistency among teachers in the recognition of student achievement
- To support the learning process through the assessment of student achievement of outcomes
- To inform students and parents / care providers about why, when and how students are assessed and what students need to do to improve
- To evaluate and modify teaching / learning programs as a result of the assessment process
- To report student achievement clearly, using 'plain language' to the school community

OBJECTIVES

- Assessment will be integral to the teaching and learning process
- Teachers will understand that the main purpose of assessment is to find out what students know and can do
- Teachers will discuss and, if appropriate, negotiate learning outcomes with students at the beginning of each unit, program or course of work
- The assessment criteria used will relate to unit outcomes and clearly indicate student level of achievement
- Teachers will ensure that what is assessed is achievable by students, mindful of level of ability
- Teachers will use a variety of assessment strategies: formative as well as summative
- Teachers will ensure that they have a clear understanding of the performance descriptors and apply them consistently
- Teachers will ensure that desired outcomes (or criteria) for assessment tasks are expressed clearly, in plain language

IMPLEMENTATION

General

- Faculties are required to have written practices and procedures that reflect this school policy and relevant BOS and DET policies and documents
- Head Teachers are responsible for the supervision of the administration of school and faculty assessment requirements
- Classroom teachers are responsible for implementing assessment procedures as per school and faculty policies
- Any assessment regime has to cope with students with learning support needs and those with IEPs (independent educational plans) including those working below and beyond the stage.

Stage 4 (Years 7 – 8)

- Faculties will develop performance descriptors for individual courses for year 7 and year 8 following the format of the common grade scale using the descriptors outstanding, high, sound, basic and limited.
- All students will receive:
 - a copy of the faculty developed course performance description at the beginning of the course
 - a module / unit outline at the commencement of the module or unit. These will be used to ensure consistency amongst teachers in the recognition of levels of achievement in each course.
 - an outline of assessment procedures for each course of study in each reporting period which will:
 - ❖ Articulate levels of achievement for each course (unless the faculty statement specifies that this will be provided with each task)
 - ❖ Provide an overview of the types of tasks which will be used for assessment – both formal and informal
 - ❖ Identify and inform students at the beginning of each semester of the outcomes or areas of study as they will appear on semester 1 and semester 2 reports

Stages 5 and 6 (Years 9 – 12)

- All students must be provided with a course overview which indicates formal assessment tasks, when they will occur and what their weightings (if applied) will be
- All students in year 9 will receive a copy of the performance descriptors which will be used to assess their performance with a course / unit outline at the commencement of a course or unit. These will be used to ensure consistency amongst teachers in the recognition of levels of achievement in each course
- All students in a course will be provided with written notification of assessment tasks at least 2 weeks prior to the due date. This includes tests.
- This notification will include the assessment task number in the course; the type of task; the weighting, due date, task description, criteria for assessment; marking guidelines, performance descriptors (if appropriate) and the outcomes being assessed.
- Specific performance descriptors are not required to be issued in advance of science practical tasks, tests across all faculties, and PD/H/PE practical tasks. However, students should be given notification where performance in these tasks will be part of formal assessment.
- For formal assessment tasks of those listed above notification will be provided at least 2 weeks prior to the task, including the weighting, course component or topic.
- The school requires student reports to be prepared by all teachers twice a year for all students.
- Formal examinations are conducted as required for years 10 – 12
- Other examinations may be conducted by variation of routine or in class time.

Reporting

- The school requires student reports to be prepared by all teachers twice a year for all students
- Teachers will report on student performance in relation to progress against performance descriptions using the common grade scale (stage 4) or the BOS course performance descriptors (stage 5) or syllabus outcomes (stage 6) at both semester 1 and 2.

Documentation

- The school is to retain copies of student reports as per student record requirements
- Faculties are to maintain a central record of student achievement for years 10 – 12. Individual teachers are to maintain records for years 7 – 9 unless otherwise required by head teacher.
- Copies of Higher School Certificate assessment marks are to be kept on file by head teachers and archived as per DET policy.
- Classroom teachers are to maintain accurate records of student assessment.
- Each faculty will provide assessment information to students in years 7 – 12. The documentation for year 7 – 10 will contain copies of performance descriptors which will be used to make judgements about student achievement. All faculty assessment procedures will

provide overviews of the types of tasks which will be used for assessment – both formal and informal and the assessment practices implemented.

- The school will provide assessment policy and information for all students in years 9 – 12. Students will sign to acknowledge receipt of the policy. The policy will be available to all students on the website.
- Faculties and / or subjects will publish course outlines and assessment schedules.
- Each faculty / subject will publish the criteria and marking guidelines for all formal assessment tasks.
- Each faculty should follow school procedures for notifying parents / care providers through the appropriate use of FACULTY CONCERN LETTERS and OFFICIAL WARNING LETTERS for years 7 – 12.
- Faculties will develop systems to ensure a record is kept of receipt of HSC assessment tasks and subsequent letters sent home when tasks are not received using the OFFICIAL WARNING LETTER proforma provided.

Evaluation

- Evaluation should take place within faculties and at school level as required but at least every three years
- The implementation of school / BOS / DET policies will be reviewed by the principal as part of the annual TARS process.

COMMON GRADE SCALE YEARS 7 – 10

1. Student achievement will be described in each course or area of study using a common language as proposed below.
2. These descriptors will be related to clearly defined standards.
3. These descriptors are to be known to students and parents.
4. Appropriate allocation of the descriptors relies on teacher professional judgements that are informed by the grade descriptions, work samples and conversations with colleagues.
5. Teacher professional judgements are based on a wide variety of strategies not just assessment tasks but also observations, ongoing anecdotal records and other contextual information known by the teacher.
6. Teachers must engage in professional dialogue with colleagues across the year / stage levels, within KLA groups and whole school staff meetings and in the wider community through to state-wide networks to enhance the level of consistency in the judgements which are formed.
7. Use of 'plain language' needs to be consistently used as we discuss, determine and report on the descriptor judgements.

Descriptor	Description	Practice
Outstanding	The student has an extensive knowledge and understanding of the content and can readily apply this knowledge. In addition the student has achieved a very high level of competence in the processes and skills and can apply these skills in new situations.	Outstanding would be awarded if the student is performing extremely well and is regularly applying these skills, extensive knowledge and deep understanding to new situations. The student is demonstrating outstanding achievement.
High	The student has a thorough knowledge and understanding of the content and a high level of competence in the processes and skills. In addition, the student is able to apply this knowledge and these skills in most situations.	High would be awarded if the student is performing very well with the work presented and has consistently met the outcomes at a high level for the reporting period. This has been evident across assessments.
Sound	The student has a sound knowledge and understanding of the main areas of content and has achieved an adequate level of competence in the processes and skills.	Sound would be awarded if the student is performing reasonably well with the work that has been taught based on the syllabus expectations. Some of the work may have needed some extra revision but the student has understood the main concepts and has demonstrated a sound level of competence in the desired skills.
Basic	The student has a basic knowledge and understanding of the content and has achieved a limited level of competence in the processes and skills.	Basic would be awarded if the student's performance is inconsistent or if there are some gaps or lack of depth in his or her understanding of the work that has been taught and there is evidence that this has been occurring across a range of assessments
Limited	The student has an elementary knowledge and understanding in a few areas of the content and has achieved very limited competence in some of the processes and skills.	Limited would be awarded if there is a high level of concern about the student's performance or if he or she has experienced difficulty in most of the assessment tasks. It is likely that the student will only have an elementary knowledge in a few areas of what was taught.

DET GUIDELINES WHICH UNDERPIN THIS POLICY

What is assessment?

Assessment is the process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about students' learning. The central purpose of assessment is to provide information on student achievement and progress and set the direction for ongoing teaching and learning.

(Principles for Assessment and Reporting in NSW Government Schools, page 1)

Why assess student achievement?

The key reasons we assess student achievement are to:

- *Support student learning*
- *Monitor student learning*
- *Diagnose student needs*
- *Evaluate the effectiveness of teaching / learning programs*
- *Inform student reporting processes*
- *Assist accountability*

What is effective assessment practice?

- *It has clear, direct links with outcomes*
- *It is integral to teaching and learning*
- *It is balanced, comprehensive and varied*
- *It is valid*
- *It is reliable*
- *It engages the learning*
- *It values teacher judgement*
- *It is time efficient and manageable*
- *It recognizes individual achievement and progress*
- *It involves a whole school approach*
- *It actively involves parents*
- *Assessment is integral to teaching and learning not in addition*

(Principles for Assessment and Reporting in NSW Government Schools page 2)

STANDARDS – REFERENCED ASSESSMENT

What is a standards framework?

A standards framework is defined as syllabus outcomes in stages against which student achievement and progress can be compared.

(Principles for Assessment and Reporting in NSW Government Schools page 3)

Standards Stages 4 and 5 (Years 7 – 10)

From time to time teachers will make a judgement on the basis of assessment evidence about student achievement of syllabus outcomes and place them at the appropriate stage in the standards framework.

The standards framework also acts as a reference point for monitoring learning over time and reporting student achievement and progress to parents.

Performance descriptor statements will be developed for each of the years 7 and 8 (stage 4) and used to ensure consistency among teachers in the recognition of levels of student achievement in each course. The common grade scale will be used to ensure consistency among teachers in recognition of levels of student achievement in each course.

Standards Stage 6 (Years 11 – 12)

Students, parents, potential employers and further education and training providers are entitled to clear reporting on the standards of learning achieved. Students should understand the standards expected of them when they finish their Higher School Certificate studies. Teachers should know explicitly what is expected of their students

(Securing Their Future page 4)

Assessment for the Higher School Certificate will be essentially concerned with teachers making judgements about the extent to which students have achieved curriculum outcomes. The judgements will be informed through 2 elements, an external examination and school – based assessments.

YEAR 12 ASSESSMENT POLICY AND GUIDELINES

Year 12 2007 / 2008 Higher School Certificate 2008

What is assessment?

1. Assessment consists of a series of tasks which measure a student's achievement in a particular course.
2. The purpose of HSC assessment is to compare the achievement of all students within a course and rank them accordingly.
3. Assessment may include practical and performance work; field work; research; assignments and essays; formal exams and in class tests; oral presentations; seminars etc
4. Each student's final assessment total and ranking will be sent to the Board of Studies (BOS) in term 3 2008. The BOS will moderate this school mark using the HSC exam marks obtained by all students in each course at Bowral High School. The rank order within each course for the assessment will not change, but the mark given by the school will be altered by this process. This moderated assessment mark will appear on the HSC along with the student's HSC examination mark for each course. The HSC exam results of each group in the school are used to moderate the assessments sent in by the school. ***This is why it is vital that all students in each course do their best and maintain a high standard.*** These marks will be allocated within one of 6 performance bands with band 6 being the highest (Eg. 91% – 100%)
5. The University Admissions Index (UAI) calculated by the universities is based on the raw exam mark and the moderated assessment mark where the student has selected a combination of courses which will give a UAI (some combination of courses will not generate a UAI). Some subjects will have 100 as the top mark for UAI calculations, some will not. This will be determined by the quality of the candidature within each course.

Rules you must know

1. At the commencement of the course each faculty is required to provide students with an assessment schedule of all the assessment tasks to be completed throughout the course and the value (weighting) of each task. ***The first assessment item for every subject will be held in week 9 term 4 2007.*** This means all students must do all set homework, class work and coursework in weeks 1 – 8 of term 4.
2. Students will be notified of the specific date and time of each assessment task ***at least 10 school days prior*** to the date the task will take place or is due to be handed in.
3. Students who are absent on the day the class is notified of an assessment task are responsible for obtaining details from their teacher immediately on their return to school. They will be expected to complete the assessment task by the set time.
4. The same or equivalent tasks will be undertaken by all students in a course, regardless of which class they are in. Marking procedures will include consultation between teachers and double marking where appropriate to ensure consistency.
5. A student's interest, attitude or conduct are not considered when marking each assessment task. Obviously, however, effort, interest and attitude may affect the student's ability to achieve and may also affect the achievement of other students.
6. In 2008, when we return to assessment tasks scheduled throughout terms 1, 2, or 3 (instead of concentrated in one assessment week (as per term 4 week 9) then, you must attend all timetabled lessons on the day an assessment task is due to be handed in or on the day / time an assessment task takes place. ***If you are absent from any timetabled lesson***

(regardless of which subject) on the date of an assessment task you must provide a medical certificate to cover your absence.

Student Responsibilities

1. You are expected to complete ALL assessment tasks by the due dates and times specified. In term 4 2007 all tasks will be scheduled in week 9 and there will be no timetabled lessons in week 9. The assessment schedule will be issued mid term 4.
2. Some assessment tasks will involve attendance at excursions, field studies etc. Attendance is compulsory.
3. All work submitted for assessment must be your own work. Students are required to comply with the school plagiarism policy.
4. It is your responsibility to be aware of assessment task dates for all your courses and to organise your schedule accordingly.
5. Computer malfunction is not an acceptable excuse for non-submission of a task. If this occurs you are to submit your 'draft' (labelled as such) of the task to your teacher on the due date.

What do you do if you miss an assessment task?

1. If you fail to hand in an assessment task on or by the due date you will receive a mark of **zero**.
2. Where you feel there is a valid reason, such as **serious** illness, for missing the task or being unable to hand it in on the due date and time, you **MUST**:
 - a. inform the school on the day of the task – phone, fax or email the school and leave a message for your teacher and / or the head teacher of the relevant faculty
 - b. report to the relevant teacher or head teacher **immediately** upon your return to school, with supporting documentation, such as a medical certificate, to discuss your case. NB: documentation submitted at a later date will NOT be accepted
 - c. be prepared to complete the assessment task or an alternative task at the earliest time available **or**
 - d. if the task is a take-home task in 2008 you must hand it in with your documentation **immediately** upon your return to school

If you do NOT follow the above procedure you will be awarded **zero** for the task.

If you DO follow the above procedure and the reason for your absence is accepted, the choice of completing the original task, completing the alternative task or receiving an estimate for the task rests with the head teacher of the relevant faculty.

What do you do if you know in advance that you are going to miss an assessment task?

Either hand in the assessment task before the absence OR negotiate alternative arrangements with the head teacher of the faculty. Documentation explaining the absence (as outlined above) will be required.

Note the following statement from the Board of Studies:

"Where a candidate has been given a zero mark because of failure to complete assessment tasks which total 50% or more of the final assessment mark, the principal must certify that the course has not been studied satisfactorily and apply the 'N' determination indicating 'non completion of the course'".

NOTE:

1. Minor illness or illness that would not physically prevent you from completing the task will NOT be considered a valid reason for missing a task even if there is a medical certificate.
2. Medical certificates MUST state that you are 'unable to complete the specific HSC assessment tasks/s'. It is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to bring this to the attention of your medical practitioner.

3. Overseas trips, extended holidays, non-urgent dental appointments, meeting relatives etc are NOT valid reasons for missing assessment tasks.
4. A proven case of cheating will result in a zero mark.
5. Inappropriate behaviour during an assessment task (including examinations) will result in a ZERO mark.
6. If, for family reasons or severe illness you will be absent from school for extended periods you must request leave from the principal in advance. If leave is granted you will need to negotiate assessment task completion dates with each head teacher responsible for each course you are studying.

What do you do if you are unhappy with your mark?

1. See your classroom teacher within 2 school days of receiving your mark and explain the reason for your unhappiness. Attempt to negotiate a solution.
2. If you are still unhappy after the interview, see the head teacher of the faculty immediately. If necessary the head teacher will refer the problem to the SCHOOL ASSESSMENT REVIEW PANEL. This panel consists of a Deputy Principal, the Head Teacher of the subject involved and one of the student advisors.

Grounds for Appeal

Students may appeal, within the school, against a specific mark according to the conditions above (What do you do if you are unhappy with your mark?)

The Board of Studies has three grounds for appeal against the final assessment rank order of students in a course. They are:

1. the weightings in the school's assessment for the course do not correspond with those required by the Board of Studies
2. the procedures used by the teacher or faculty are not consistent with the school's stated policy
3. there is a computational or clerical error in determining or recording a mark

If you wish to appeal against the assessment rank order to the Board of Studies:

1. ***Final ranks in each course will be issued towards the end of term 3.*** If you wish to appeal against your final rank you should do so as soon as you receive the notice. Report your concerns to the Principal who will then follow up your concerns.
2. Obtain the information issued by the Board of Studies detailing your position within the school group for each course studied. This is available from the front office towards the end of the HSC examination period.
3. Present your case in writing to the principal immediately. Make sure that your case refers to one or more of the three grounds for appeal as outlined above.

Essential Organisation

1. Be positive and optimistic
2. Take responsibility for managing your assessment schedule and meeting deadlines
3. Ensure you are familiar with all relevant sections of this assessment booklet
4. Keep a record of tasks completed for each subject so, at any given time, you know exactly what proportion of your course assessment has been completed and how much remains.
5. Seek feedback from teachers about what you need to do to improve and make further progress.

POLICY FOR SATISFACTORY COMPLETION OF HSC COURSES IN 2008

Students are reminded that in order to complete their Higher School Certificate satisfactorily, they must achieve course outcomes in at least 10 units of study in year 12.

A student will receive an 'N' determination (i.e. 'non completion') in a course if he or she has failed to apply due diligence and sustained effort to the set tasks and experiences required by the school to achieve some or all of the course outcomes.

Indicators of possible failure to apply satisfactory 'diligence and sustained effort' or possible failure to fulfil course requirements to the school's satisfaction include:

- An excessive number of absences or lateness to school, particularly if these are unexplained
- An excessive rate of absences from or lateness to classes in one or more courses, particularly if these are unexplained
- A recurring pattern of lateness or absences
- Poor achievement in class tests, assignments etc caused by lack of application
- Poor classroom behaviour (this inhibits your own, and others' learning)
- Failure to submit assessment items
- Failure to complete class work and homework
- Proven case of copying, plagiarism or cheating

If at any stage during the course it appears that a student will not achieve a sufficient number of course outcomes, a warning letter will be sent. The purpose of these letters is:

- i. To give students a warning in time for them to correct the problem, and / or
- ii. To clarify their current status regarding an unsatisfactory designation

The principal is obliged to issue an 'N' determination (i.e. 'non completion' of a course) to any student who has not fulfilled course requirements. The student is entitled to appeal to the Board of Studies about the 'N' award. If the 'N' award issued by the school is upheld by the Board of Studies, the student will not be given HSC accreditation in that particular course. This would necessitate studying these units again the following year to ensure the correct total of HSC units had been completed. The HSC would then be awarded the following year.

Assessment Tasks in 2008

- The assessment schedule for 2008 terms 1, 2 and 3 will be distributed after consultation with year 12. This will take place at the end of term 4 2007 and the beginning of term 1 2008 when students and teachers will be given the opportunity to provide feedback regarding the effectiveness of 'assessment week' at the end of term 4 2007.
- The Trial HSC 2008 will be held in weeks 9 and 10 of term 2 2008
- There are some 1 unit course that year 12 pick up in term 1 2008. It is up to the individual student to discuss with teachers suitable times for running the assessment tasks for these courses. Remember, that there will need to be some flexibility in weighing up the difference of an in school task as opposed to a take home task in these discussions.

PLAGIARISM POLICY YEARS 7 - 12

What is plagiarism?

Many people think of plagiarism as copying another's work, or borrowing someone else's original ideas. But terms like 'copying' or 'borrowing' can disguise the seriousness of the offense.

According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, to 'plagiarise' means

- To steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own
- Use (another's production) without crediting the source
- To commit literary theft
- Present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source.

In other words, plagiarism is an act of fraud. It involves both stealing someone else's work and lying about it afterward.

All of the following activities are unacceptable:

- Copying 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 reference to the source
- Building on the ideas of another person without reference to the source
- Buying, stealing or borrowing another person's work and presenting it as your own
- Submitting work to which another person such as a parent, sibling, tutor or subject expert has substantially contributed
- Using words, ideas, designs or the workmanship of others in practical and performance tasks without appropriate acknowledgement
- Paying someone to write or prepare material

Please note:

Most cases of plagiarism can be avoided by citing sources. Simply acknowledging that certain material has been borrowed, and providing your audience with the information necessary to find the source, is usually enough to prevent plagiarism.

A copy of the Plagiarism Policy and Guidelines for Students is available:

- In the school diary
- On the school website
- In assessment booklets containing policies and procedures issued to all students

Consequences

- In cases of proven plagiarism in class work, the student will be given the opportunity to resubmit the work in order to satisfy the outcomes being assessed. The mark awarded will be zero.
- In cases of plagiarism in formal assessment tasks, all plagiarised material will be ignored in determining the final mark. That is, if the entire task is plagiarised the mark awarded will be zero.
- Parents will be informed that the student has submitted plagiarised work.

Guidelines for Students

"Avoiding plagiarism starts during the research process with keeping accurate records of information and ideas gleaned from sources. Any time that a researcher copies another's wording verbatim even if only a phrase, the researcher should place quotation marks around that wording in his or her notes, so that the quoted material is clearly distinguishable from the researcher's wording. It is important to keep a complete record of bibliographical information while doing research, so that one is able to complete in-text citations, notes and bibliography as he or she drafts the paper."

<http://www.bridgewater.edu/WritingCenter/plagiarism.def.htm>

What this means is:

When you decide that you want to make some notes from a source, the first thing you do is to write down the detail of the source.

An example of how to record this information is shown below:

Books	Author's last name, Author's First initial, Publication date, <u>Title of Book</u> , Publisher, location. Example: Starr, R, 1988, <u>Beetles in the Woods</u> , Bantam Books, London
Articles	Author's last name, Author's first initial, Publication date, "Title of Article", <u>Name of Periodical</u> , volume, number, pages used Example: Watson, P, 1988 "Making Ugly Dolls", <u>Mad Magazine</u> Vol. 16, No. 7, pp2-5
Web Pages	Author / Organisation, Web Address, Date accessed Example: Australian Academy of Science www.science.org.au/nova/072/072key.htm (accessed June 2002)

It is also a good idea to list those people who helped you in any way.

For example: "I was helped in my research by Joe Montana, Craig Luckenbach, Albert Einstein, and by Pat Lewis who helped me build my display."

Once you have accurately written the details of your source, take notes underneath.

- Put ideas into your own words using regular vocabulary
- If you are copying 'word for word' place quotation marks around your notes. (Check with your teacher if footnotes are required – they are expected in years 11 and 12)
- You must organise all your references into a bibliography. A general guideline has been shown above, but you should check with class teachers for any specific requirements.

[This Plagiarism Policy was reproduced in its entirety from Riverside Girls High School with the permission of the principal]