# Government of South Australia LogoSACE Board Logo2024 Cross-disciplinary Studies Subject Assessment Advice

Overview

This subject assessment advice, based on the 2024 assessment cycle, gives an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. It provides information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, and the quality of student performance.

Students who achieved in the higher-grade bands clearly demonstrated an understanding of the learning interest, incorporating specific discipline knowledge. Teachers should highlight the specific disciplines being assessed on each task sheet; this will assist student’s understanding.

If the capabilities are being assessed (KU3) these should be clearly identified on the task sheet. It is important to highlight those that are going to be addressed in the Learning and Assessment Plan. This will support achievement in the higher-grade bands; ensuring student responses accurately respond to the capabilities identified.

Across all assessment types for this subject, students can present their responses in oral or multimodal formats. 1000 words is equivalent to 6 minutes, students should not speed up their recording to condense more content into the maximum limit.

If the speed of the recording makes the speech incomprehensive, it affects the accuracy of the transcriptions and it also impacts the ability of markers/moderators to find the evidence of the student achievement against the performance standards.

If a video/audio recording is flagged by markers/moderators as impacted by speed, schools will be requested to provide a transcript and markers/moderators will be advised to mark/moderate based on the evidence in the transcript up to the maximum word limit.

The Subject Renewal program has introduced changes for many subjects in 2025; these changes are detailed in the change log at the front of each subject outline. When reviewing the 2024 subject assessment advice, it is important to consider any updates to this subject to ensure the feedback in this document remains accurate.

# School Assessment

Teachers use two or more disciplines to develop a Cross-disciplinary Studies program that facilitates student learning around a chosen learning interest. The learning interest is a practical or theoretical challenge, topic, or issue that extends throughout the program. The learning interest is usually chosen by the teacher, or a team of teachers, in consultation with students at the start of the Cross-disciplinary Studies program.

Teachers can improve the moderation process and the online process by:

* thoroughly checking that all grades entered in schools online are correct
* ensuring the uploaded tasks are legible, all facing up (and all the same way), and remove blank pages, student notes and formula pages
* ensuring the uploaded responses have pages the same size and in colour (if the original was in colour) so teacher marking and comments are clear.

Assessment Type 1: Commentary

A commentary should illustrate and evaluate the ways in which the selected disciplines (or aspects of a discipline), contribute to the solution of one or more contemporary problems or issues.

A commentary should be a maximum of 1000 words if written or a maximum of 6 minutes for an oral presentation, or the equivalent in multimodal form. Where more than one commentary is undertaken for a 20-credit subject, students may focus on different aspects of a problem or issue, or different problems or issues.

Teachers can elicit more successful responses by:

* ensuring the assessment design criteria, as specified in the subject outline, are clear and explicit in the assessment task design
* ensuring that students can identify and discuss the selected disciplines and how these relate to their contemporary problem or issue
* assisting students to review their learning activities as a collective whole to see the purpose and meaning of what they have achieved, and how it evolved a solution or answer.

*The more successful responses commonly:*

* responded to a smaller number of open-ended questions, providing scope for students to demonstrate in-depth analysis and problem-solving skills
* were able to explicitly identify the discipline knowledge within the learning and assessment plan, and detail this with reference to a clearly identified learning interest
* clearly identified the knowledge and understanding connected to their chosen discipline, and how this relates to their contemporary issue or problem
* clearly stated the capabilities being evidenced (if assessing KU3) and made direct links to learning interests
* used images, photos, and diagrams to support evaluation and conclusions
* provided references to sources of information that had been used in the construction of the students work.

*The less successful responses commonly:*

* focused on a limited selection of disciplines or not clearly defined learning interest
* were overly scaffolded (or without guidance) which led students to provide simplistic responses
* were generalisations and unclear about what knowledge and understanding related to disciplines and learning interest
* did not provide specific evidence of development of capabilities
* did not provide enough detail, within the word limit, of the extent of student learning
* provided charts, graphs and other data without analysis, evaluation, or reference.

Assessment Type 2: Group Project

This assessment type is designed to assess each student’s ability to work collaboratively to plan, organise and implement a group project that focuses on a learning requirement or an aspect of the content. Students must be given the opportunity to collaborate in the decision-making process and to share responsibilities as they respond to the project. Outcomes can be presented as a collective outcome, an individual outcome, or a combination.

Teachers can elicit more successful responses by:

* clearly establishing assessment conditions and student roles and responsibilities in a collaborative decision-making process with students prior to the commencement of the group project
* providing opportunities for reflective check-ins and timely feedback during project implementation.

*The more successful responses commonly:*

* demonstrated collaboration skills in a range of situations
* clearly identified the roles, responsibilities, and contributions of each student throughout the construction and outcome
* provided detailed and in-depth analysis, evaluation of ideas and information regarding the learning interest
* evidenced students’ application of knowledge and understanding to solve problems and to develop further questions in relation to the relevant discipline(s)
* explicitly identified and evaluated the project outcome(s), including the application of knowledge and analysis when evaluating learning in the reflection
* featured responses to the group context in their reflection that were not overly scaffolded, allowing students to explore and expand on their own experiences
* clearly addressed capabilities and explicit actions from feedback (application) within the reflection for this task.

*The less successful responses commonly:*

* recounted the activities the group undertook without analysis
* included the same evidence for all group members without indicating individual students’ contribution to the process and outcome
* lacked sufficient depth of analysis, reflection, and evaluation in the reflection
* provided limited to no feedback, which affected the student’s depth of reflection
* did not adequately identify and reflect on capabilities.

Assessment Type 3: Presentation and Discussion

Students select an aspect of their learning from across the program for a presentation followed by a discussion. This is an opportunity for students to integrate and apply their cross-disciplinary knowledge and skills in the context of the learning interest and to provide evidence of their learning that encompasses the generation of an idea followed through to its conclusion.

The presentation and discussion combined should be a maximum of 15 minutes. Of this, the presentation should be a maximum of 7 minutes.

Teachers can elicit more successful responses by:

* assisting students to identify an appropriate audience and purpose for their presentation
* providing opportunities for refinement of ideas and/or learning evidence in response to feedback, prior to the student presentation
* facilitating student preparation for the discussion component by providing discussion questions in advance and allowing adequate time for personal reflection.

*The more successful responses commonly:*

* evidenced student learning as a speech accompanied by a multimodal presentation
* made a clear distinction between the presentation and discussion elements to this task
* provided a range of evidence of learning that linked to each of the relevant assessment design criteria
* included an accurate transcript of the presentation and discussion
* embedded the learning interest, and relevant discipline/s, in the construction of the presentation and discussion
* scheduled the discussion sometime after the presentation to allow for student reflection.

*The less successful responses commonly:*

* provided a recount of information gathered
* required students to engage in a discussion immediately following the presentation and respond to spontaneous questions.

# External Assessment

Assessment Type 4: Analysis

The analysis assessment must be related to one or more aspects of the learning interest. This assessment type requires an analysis task to be completed in 60 minutes under supervision. For a 10-credit subject, students undertake one analysis assessment. For a 20-credit subject, students undertake two analysis assessments.

Teachers can elicit more successful responses by:

* using open-ended questions in the task design, to allow for students to demonstrate the full scope of their knowledge
* using creative or practical elements in the task design, to allow students to apply their learning incorporating their relevant learning interests
* designing questions to evoke higher order thinking from students
* providing a stimulus for analysis that is related to the student’s area of interest, which is complex enough to allow achievement at the highest level and is within student’s reach
* ensuring stimulus materials also provide an open-ended opportunity for students to demonstrate creative problem solving
* provide context to the student response assisted with the marking, as it was clearer to understand the student’s response to the work submitted.

*The more successful responses commonly:*

* responded critically to open-ended questions that were designed to evoke higher-order thinking
* responded with detailed explanations to questions with the ability to solve problems or provide outcomes as a result of the evidence given
* required students to apply discipline knowledge to analyse content and make reasoned recommendations (problem-solving)
* referenced and analysed data to support an argument and developed a solution in an extended response
* provided opportunities for students to reflect and evaluate their own learning in relation to the disciplines and learning interest.

*The less successful responses commonly:*

* recited the questions with a general answer without providing context or detailing complexity
* recounted information of steps in their process or general information without analysis
* were linked to closed questions, which limited the depth of response
* lacked evidence of problem solving in their responses
* were too scaffolded and did not allow for students to form their own conjectures
* provided an application of discipline knowledge that was inconsistent, or the student failed to make recommendations that elaborated (problem solved an outcome) on the learning interest.