

Cross-disciplinary Studies

2014 Chief Assessor’s Report

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## Overview

Chief Assessors’ reports give 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. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, the quality of student performance, and any relevant statistical information.

## School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Commentary

Students were able to achieve in the higher grade bands where commentary tasks were well designed to allow students to clearly address the performance standards. When designing tasks, teachers are encouraged to take advantage of the variety of ways in which students can demonstrate their learning. It is critical that the task design allows students to meet the performance standards that are being assessed.

It is important that teachers clearly state on the task sheet the capabilities that are being assessed (e.g. the specific feature being assessed is KU3). Those students who were able to address the capabilities directly and link their understanding to the learning interest achieved higher grades. Teachers are encouraged to leave feedback on tasks to support where they see the evidence for the grade they are giving.

Assessment Type 2: Group Project

This assessment type is designed to assess each student’s ability to work collaboratively in a group to plan, organise, and implement a group project that focuses on a learning aspect of the content. Students must be given the opportunity to collaborate in the decision-making process and to share responsibilities in responding to the project. It is essential that students have the opportunity to individually reflect on their contributions to the task. Successful students were able to demonstrate their collaboration skills in a range of situations and to reflect in depth on their learning relative to the learning interest. They were then able to apply their knowledge and understanding to solve problems and develop further questions in relation to the relevant disciplines.

Task design needs to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate in-depth, comprehensive analysis and evaluation. The collective outcome, individual outcome or a combination of both needs to be evident for moderation verification. Some group project outcomes were not obvious, which made moderation difficult. If electronic evidence is submitted, it is important to clearly identify the students involved.

Assessment Type 3: Presentation and Discussion

The first part of this assessment type requires a presentation of student learning. The presentations took a variety of formats and allowed students to share their learning in creative ways. Although most students presented their learning through an oral presentation, some students enhanced their presentation with videos, performances, or products. It is important that all presentations are recorded, all electronic evidence is provided in an accessible format, and each student is clearly identified.

The second part of this assessment type requires the teacher to participate in a discussion with the student. The discussion involves the teacher asking questions to allow students to demonstrate evidence of learning against the performance standards. When teachers used the discussion section of this task effectively, they were able to draw out more information and evidence of learning, which allowed students to further develop their coverage of the performance standards. The discussion needs to be recorded and the recording must be provided for moderation in an accessible format.

## External Assessment

Assessment Type 4: Analysis

A range of analysis tasks were presented for this assessment type. Teachers provided a variety of stimuli for students to respond to in this assessment type, including previously viewed videos or articles, and issue responses, as well as unseen short-answer and extended-response questions. Teachers are asked to ensure that only 60 minutes is permitted for each analysis task.

Task design continues to be a key factor in this assessment type. Teachers are encouraged to use open-ended questions where students are given the opportunity to explore the learning interest and apply their knowledge and understanding, which gives them a better opportunity to meet the performance standards to a high level. It is vital that teachers design questions that provide students with adequate opportunity to meet the specific features assessed by this assessment type. The students who achieved higher grades often had more opportunities to express their knowledge than those who achieved lower grades.

The weighting applied to questions is also important. If only one question is used to address a particular specific feature, and a student does not manage to answer that question due to time constraints, then the student may be disadvantaged. Teachers are advised to provide questions that address more than one specific feature, and to spread these throughout the paper so that time restrictions do not penalise students.

Teachers are reminded again that they must ensure they include an answer sheet for each analysis with their external assessment to support the marking of this task. When students are completing a written analysis, a dark pen colour is encouraged as light colours can be hard to read. Teachers are reminded not to write on or mark student work in any manner.

## Operational Advice

For moderation of school assessment material, teachers are reminded to package student material to include an approved learning and assessment plan, and a complete set of task sheets for all assessment types.

School assessment tasks are set and marked by teachers. Teachers’ assessment decisions are reviewed by moderators. Teacher grades/marks should be evident on all student school assessment work.

Teachers are reminded that for external assessment each student’s work should be identified only by student registration number and that no teacher comments should be made on these submissions.

Teachers should ensure that video and audio material is submitted according to SACE Board advice on preparing Stage 2 materials.

## General Comments

Students who achieved in the higher grade bands were able to clearly demonstrate an understanding of their learning interest through an integration of disciplines being covered. Teachers are strongly encouraged to highlight this integration in the development of the learning interest, assessment plan, and task design.

It is critical that the disciplines and capabilities being addressed are clearly stated on the task sheet, as this assists both students and moderators.

Written comments on school assessment work that identify the specific criteria being addressed are also very useful for confirming marks.

Finally, when teachers are developing or evaluating their program, they are encouraged to ensure a strong learning interest is evident. Some programs were primarily an extension to a subject already provided within the Stage 2 curriculum or certificate course and needed to demonstrate explicitly the disciplines being drawn on and the learning interest being developed.

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