# Government of South Australia LogoSACE Board Logo2023 Outdoor Education Subject Assessment Advice

Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the 2023 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. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, and the quality of student performance.

Teachers should refer to the subject outline for specifications on content and learning requirements, and to the subject operational information for operational matters and key dates.

Across the Assessment Types for this subject, students can present their responses in oral or multimodal form, where 6 minutes is the equivalent of 1000 words. Students **should not speed-up the recording** of their videos excessively **in an attempt to condense more content** into the maximum time limit.

If a video 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, only considering evidence up to the maximum word limit (e.g. up to 2000 words for AT3).

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

School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: About Natural Environments

A variety of tasks were submitted by schools that displayed student understanding against the assessment design criteria of Evaluation and Understanding & Analysis. Creative tasks that were purposely designed for the cohort of students, that addressed the specific features, allowed greater flexibility in student responses allowing the student to achieve at the higher band level. Overly scaffolded tasks limited student success at the higher-grade band.

It is important to note, whether one or two tasks are used, the total word count (or equivalent) is 1600 words or 10 minutes multimodal. For example, one task of 1600 words or two tasks of 800 words (or equivalent).

*The more successful responses commonly:*

* provided ongoing connection to the place being studied during the course which provided insight to issues investigated and how this made students feel
* displayed a comparison of human impact, management strategies and environmental outcomes in a natural environment
* student discussion centred on several varying perspectives from user groups, management authorities, commercial operators, impacted groups etc. Linking back to management or influence to degradation
* student discussions were further substantiated by photographic evidence
* used appropriate secondary sources relevant to the issues being discussed and from subject matter experts (e.g. sustainability/personal development strategies are referenced to observation, management documentation and explained against appropriate current theory)
* investigated an environmental issue from a range of perspectives (e.g., a day trip or journey, where students could recognise firsthand, the different perspectives and issues impacting the natural environments considered, and provide a more unique, insightful, and informed response)
* investigated environmental sustainability providing critical evaluation of strategies and future suggestions
* used appropriate examples and images from personal experience and linked written text to images
* presented a response with appropriate order and flow of ideas using Outdoor Education language
* discussed and analysed the impacts to an ecosystem and how this alters sustainability
* explored interactions of humans in the natural environment and considered at least one other perspective that was relevant to the theme of the task. Such as, sand dune destruction from the perspective of developers, tourism, and the difference in environmental view.

The less successful responses commonly:

* limited evidence or connection to the natural environment
* included little to no references to secondary sources, relying on a personal point of view
* did not incorporate images from personal observation
* attempted to address too many performance standards
* included minimal reference to personal experiences and/or secondary references to explain, illustrate and support personal opinions and ideas
* excessive questions requiring short answer responses did not allow for students to show depth of exploration, understanding or analysis
* included minimal reference to personal experiences and/or secondary references to explain, illustrate and support personal opinions and ideas
* responses did not include varied perspectives relating to human interaction with natural areas
* condensed word counts did not allow for detailed, insightful responses.

Assessment Type 2: Experiences in Natural Environments

Students undertake two tasks that include documented evidence collected and annotated when planning for safe and sustainable outdoor activities or journeys in natural environments (PA1). They also need to reflect and evaluate their planning, leadership, and collaboration with others by consideration of appropriate leadership styles, planning, risk assessment, decision making, and use of interpersonal skills (ERP1).

Students need to focus on both the development and application of outdoor skills (ERP2) and should aim to include personal images, observations, and assessment. One of their experiences should provide the opportunity to plan, lead, and facilitate an activity or journey. Students could use peer and self-assessment together with reflective practice to evaluate development of their planning, practical skills, risk management, self-reliance, leadership, and facilitation skills.

Teachers can elicit more successful responses by:

* ensuring tasks are purposefully designed for specific student cohorts and experiences
* ensuring that tasks do not assess too many Performance Standards for word/time limit. This allows for a narrowing of task scope and greater depth of response by students. For example, only two to three features being assessed in a 1500-word task
* designing tasks that assess PA and ERP (EUA is not suggested for assessing AT2 in the Subject Outline)
* basing tasks on personal experiences that allow assessment of a few specific features, allowing greater depth, analysis, and evaluation.

The more successful responses commonly:

* used multimodal responses that included clearly labelled diagrams, pictures, and video/s to support discussion of personal experiences
* showed detailed evidence of planning and discussed the implications their planning had on the experience in natural environments
* discussed how decision-making impacted the overall experience and analysed the outcomes of the decisions
* reflections and evaluations provided a justification of decision making and/or planning by analysing the outcome of those elements
* reflected on expedition outcomes against the performance standards
* skill development was analysed with evidence to support the development through the use of peer, teacher and self feedback
* report focused on key elements within each criteria i.e. planning, leadership etc. Showed astute and comprehensive evaluation and reflection of these elements
* used visuals from theoretical sources to support ideas/reflection of experiences
* focused on a small number of significant outdoor skills/behaviours to allow for in-depth and critical reflection, rather than superficial description of a comprehensive list of outdoor skills/behaviours
* made good use of appendices to provide supporting documentation of planning and personal responsibility and referred to snippets/artifacts of significant aspects which were then referred to in detail throughout the body of discussion
* presented a response in a succinct manner with appropriate order and flow of ideas using Outdoor Education language.

The less successful responses commonly:

* attempted to address an excessive number of Performance Standards with little opportunity to reflect and evaluate on performance or development
* presented as a recount of what occurred with little reflection or evaluation on how to improve or transfer learning
* included little to no planning evidence or did not specify which aspect of the planning the student had been responsible for
* identified elements of their planning and showed evidence of it in action, however, provided little to no justification or analysis of this planning
* did not evaluate a skill and it’s development
* did not utilise evidence to support their discussions, for example photos, skills checklists, feedback from self, peers or teachers
* focused on a large range of skills rather than an insightful exploration of one or two
* did not include annotation of support material such as photos, images, and diagrams to critically reflect what was being displayed.

External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Connections with Natural Environments

The “Connections with Natural Environments” task requires students to discuss personal experiences and connections in natural environments (ERP3), while also considering other perspectives on human interaction with these natural environments (EUA1), and how exploring these personal connections enhance personal development and/or environmental sustainability (EUA3). This focus provides scope for students to explore an area of personal interest related to, or as an extension of, their outdoor activities, journeys, and experiences in natural environments. While some topics cross-over with, and may draw insight from ecology, geography, agriculture, sport, recreation, tourism, history and so on, it is important that topics are primarily based on students’ personal experiences within “Natural Environments”.

Teachers can elicit more successful responses by:

* ensuring greater flexibility for how students can respond through appropriate task design
* ensuring students develop a topic that allows them to incorporate their personal connections and experiences in natural environments that is within scope of the subject e.g., Environmental sustainability issue/theme and or personal/social/wellbeing development influenced by personal connections/experiences with “Natural Environments”
* ensuring there is a clear understanding of what is implied by a “Natural Environment” i.e., predominantly remnant native vegetation, coast, or riverine area where natural ecological processes prevail which may have management strategies applied to manage sustainability or human impact issues
* ensuring students are not restricted in their response by excessive scaffolding of the task e.g., using a prescribed range of non-specific focus questions.

Teachers/students need to note that for this task the total word count (or equivalent) is 2000 words or 12 minutes multimodal.

The more successful responses commonly:

* investigated a topic with a recent personal interest, connection and/or experience that is consistent with the context and nature of the course (i.e., has an environmental sustainability/personal development focus relating to personal recreation activities conducted in “Natural Environments” such as those participated in during the course)
* were well structured with a clear developmental flow of ideas and concepts using personal examples, thoughts and ideas, supported by appropriate research and theory
* were clearly articulated, used guiding questions to support their evidence, clearly labelled sections, a range of personal pictures, videos etc.
* contained deep reflection and evaluation focused on their experiences and observations in the outdoors which were linked to recent outdoor journeys and experiences
* used a variety of multimodal communication methods. For example, personal observations, journal entries, photos with captions, videos, diagrams, graphs, charts, videos, interviews, power-points with voice over etc.
* presented a topic that clearly addressed the performance standards and was designed with them in mind
* discussed important concepts such as personal connection and experiences throughout their presentation not as an isolated one-off section
* referred to primary and secondary sources to support ideas developed. For example, email from subject matter expert, interview with stakeholder, news article, conservation lobby report, etc.
* reference to credible research and subject matter experts was discerningly ranked against surveys and opinions of classmates or general public
* described in detail their topic or area of exploration, identifying why it was of significance/importance to them, giving clear direction for future strategies or benefits
* discussed health and wellbeing, as part of personal development, meaningfully by underpinning it with credible research/theory and personal observation
* connected their exploration of topic and theoretical knowledge with personal experience, ideas, actions, or future directions (e.g., beach clean-ups, climate rally and trail maintenance)
* included reflection and evaluation relating to the development of personal connections with “Natural Environments” and strong evidence of their learning through personal action and transfer of experience
* analysed how human interaction would impact on the ecosystem and vice versa, considering both positive and negative consequences where relevant
* discussed environmental problems/issues with analysis and evaluation of cause, effect, and environmentally sustainable solutions
* considered a range of perspectives drawn from a wide range of primary and secondary sources including primary data from observation, research, and stakeholder interviews and surveys, supported by credible research and subject matter expert opinion
* wrote in the first person with discussion of their own thoughts, opinions, and feelings (e.g., I found, I observed, I learnt, this led me to believe, on reflection I now understand, my photo below demonstrates, etc.).

The less successful responses commonly:

* focused predominantly on tourism, sport studies, agricultural studies, psychology, child studies, art, history, economics etc. related topics that were not clearly aligned to outdoor education or personal connections with “Natural Environments” (i.e., not within scope of the subject and consequently not adequately addressing the performance standards)
* used heavily scaffolded non-specific task directed focus questions
* interpreted “Natural Environments” to include ‘artificial’ outdoor environments such as backyards, sports fields, or created suburban parks/lakes
* chose topics that were broad, unrelated to Outdoor Education and in some cases, with little or no personal connection. For example: Great Barrier Reef, Commercial Food Waste, Solar Power Initiatives, and Fruit Fly eradication programs. These tended to be mostly internet driven, lacking personal connection, experiences or observations
* presented important and/or new information in tables/charts which were not referred to in discussion and consequently not considered within word/time count
* excluded environmental strategies and/or reflection on personal development or did not link these to personal connections or experiences with “Natural Environments”
* only briefly reflected on personal experiences, connections, and observations
* did not provide adequate evidence of exploration and/or personal connection to topic (e.g., photos, videos, observations, thoughts)
* relied on a narrow range (one or two) of secondary sources for information
* were over the word/time limit while simultaneously lacking, depth of understanding, personalisation, analysis, or evaluation.

General

The term “Natural Environment” should be seen as applying to areas of predominantly remnant native vegetation, coast, or riverine area where natural ecological processes prevail which may have management strategies applied to manage sustainability or human impact issues.

Students in all assessment types should be clear as to what is being included within the word/time count. Use of and reference to artifacts, and text boxes containing supporting detail/documents are highly encouraged but should not contain critical new information as they are not considered part of the word/time count.