



ASSESSMENT POLICY

PREAMBLE

This policy document has its foundation in the College Mission Statement where holistic education and assessment as, for and of learning is embedded in the Benedictine tradition. This policy document needs to be read in conjunction with the assessment handbook for each year.

RATIONALE

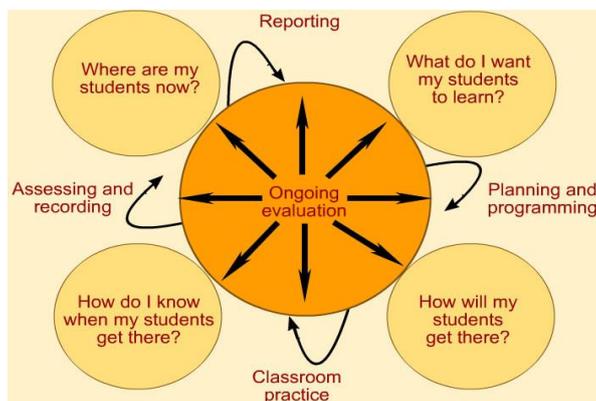
At St Patrick's College there is an acceptance that all members of the community are engaged in learning, ongoing assessment and responding to feedback to inform improvement. There is an understanding that students learn at different rates and in different ways and must be accommodated in this. It is hoped effective teaching and ongoing assessment will develop young women of competence, confidence and compassion. Our understanding is built on Gospel values, which are based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

PHILOSOPHY

Assessment as learning is essential in designing and developing relevant and connected learning and teaching programs. In all programs there are elements of pre-assessment, formative assessment and summative assessment. It is essential to know our learners and through this knowledge, plan to improve learning outcomes for all students.

THE TEACHING AND LEARNING CYCLE

The teaching and learning cycle represents the four stages that occur in the design and delivery of classroom tasks that incorporate an outcomes based approach. The cycle has no start or end point, with each step informing the next. It is the process of gathering data and reflection that dictates where in the cycle you need to be operating. Learning and teaching programs are designed at St Patrick's College to engage our 21st century learners and to provide students with a variety of opportunities to demonstrate what they know and can do.



<http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au>



Students at St Patrick's College experience a number of formal and informal tasks to allow teachers to make professional judgments. Each year group has a published formal assessment handbook with mapped tasks to ensure all outcomes are assessed and students can manage their time accordingly to demonstrate achievement.

AREAS FOR ASSESSMENT

Areas for assessment have been developed for each course and are published in the student assessment handbook. They provide a framework for structuring an assessment program and may be used to inform reporting student achievement. They are derived from the course objectives and are linked to the course outcomes. They can be used as organisers for assessment of student achievement. In designing the assessment schedule for a course, teachers may find it useful to map each planned assessment activity to one or more of the areas for assessment. This allows teachers to ensure that assessment can occur across the year in a manageable way.

PROCEDURES FOR FORMAL ASSESSMENT TASKS

Establishing an assessment program

In establishing an assessment program, teachers should ensure that the types of assessment tasks used are appropriate to the objectives and outcomes being assessed. Generally, it will be necessary to use a number of different assessment tasks in order to ensure that student achievement in all the knowledge and skills objectives are assessed.

Where activities or tasks are scheduled throughout a course, greater weight would generally be given to those tasks undertaken towards the end of the course. For example, in a 200 hour course extending over Years 9 and 10, the assessment information collected in Year 10 provides the more complete picture of student achievement. There are, however, a number of different ways of organising the teaching and learning program for a course. The scheduling of tasks and the weights applied should reflect the course organisation and the complexity and difficulty of the task.

Every effort must be made to map assessment tasks across the terms to ensure that undue stress is not placed on the student in meeting deadlines. Students will not have any more than two tasks scheduled on one day and no more than three tasks in one week (excluding examination blocks). Examination blocks will be preceded with an assessment free week.

Setting assessment tasks

In setting assessment tasks, teachers should give careful consideration to the syllabus objectives and outcomes being assessed. By measuring student achievement of these objectives and outcomes, teachers can build up a profile of the achievement of each student in relation to the course performance descriptors.

Disability provisions

Implementation of disability provisions for school-based assessments and tests is assessed on a needs basis. This process is managed through the Learning Enhancement faculty.



Procedures for setting tasks

- Faculty members design assessment plans in accordance with syllabus documents.
- Assessment plans and due dates are negotiated in consultation with the Assistant Principal Learning and Teaching and published to all students.
- All students must have official notification of tasks no later than two weeks prior to the completion date of the task.
- All formal tasks must be set two weeks prior to distribution. All teachers of this course must have had input into task design.
- All tasks are to be published on school designed proforma.
- All KLA Coordinators must check and sign off on all tasks prior to printing.
- A copy of the task must be forwarded to the Assistant Principal Learning and Teaching, Librarian and Learning Enhancement Coordinator.
- Life Skills task must be set concurrently with other tasks and distributed with the whole cohort.

Distribution of tasks

- Task must be distributed in class on agreed date.
- All tasks must be explained so students can seek clarification.
- A roll needs to be collected indicating absent students on the day of distribution.
- Teacher must ensure absent students receive task in a timely manner. This could be facilitated through electronic means.

Time allocated in class

- Time allocated in class must be clearly indicated in the learning and teaching programs. In the case of multiple classes, care must be taken to ensure equity.
- When students are undertaking assessments, class teachers should not set extra homework on top of this expectation.

Submission of task

- Submission instructions must be clearly indicated on the assessment notification.
- Failure to submit – refer to assessment handbook.
- Failure to submit paperwork must be completed and outcome filed with faculty mark book.

Alternate tasks

- On occasions, alternate tasks need to be set. If this is the case, it will be communicated to teachers through the Assistant Principal Learning and Teaching and the KLA Coordinator.

Feedback

Feedback has a significant impact on learning; it has been described as 'the most powerful single moderator that enhances achievement' (Hattie, 1999). The main objectives of feedback are to:

- Justify to students how their mark or grade was derived.
- Identify and reward specific qualities in student work.



- Guide students on what steps to take to improve.
- Motivate them to act on their assessment.
- Develop their capability to monitor, evaluate and regulate their own learning.

To benefit student learning, feedback needs to be:

- *Constructive*. As well as highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of a given piece of work, it should set out ways in which the student can improve the work.
- *Timely*. Give feedback while the assessed work is still fresh in a student's mind, before the student moves on to subsequent tasks.
- *Meaningful*. It should target individual needs, be linked to specific assessment criteria, and be received by a student in time to benefit subsequent work.

Feedback is valuable when it is received, understood and acted on. How students analyse, discuss and act on feedback is as important as the quality of the feedback itself (Nicol, 2010). Through the interaction students have with feedback, they come to understand how to develop their learning.

Procedures for providing feedback

- All tasks are set and marking criteria are established concurrently.
- Where applicable, the marking criteria are published with the task.
- Faculty members participate in corporate marking where possible to ensure a shared understanding of the standards.
- Marking is monitored by the team to ensure consistency.
- Tasks must be marked, marks recorded and checked.
- Misadventure and non-submission must be monitored and responded to as per assessment handbook.
- Feedback must be comprehensive, constructive, meaningful and timely.
- All tasks must be returned to students within a two week timeframe.

Assessing and grading student achievement Years 7-11

Assessing student achievement is the process of collecting information on student performance in relation to the objectives and outcomes of a course.

In setting activities or tasks, you should give careful consideration to the syllabus objectives and outcomes being assessed. By measuring student achievement in relation to these objectives and outcomes, you can build up a profile of the achievement of each student in relation to the course performance descriptors.

Grading student achievement is the process of assigning a letter (A, B, C, D, E) to summarise the level of a student's achievement in a course. In Mathematics, grades have been further differentiated to nine levels as follows: A10, A9, B8, B7, C6, C5, D4, D3, E2 (for Year 10 only). For students undertaking courses without subject-specific course performance descriptors (ie. Board Endorsed or Content Endorsed Courses), a grade from A to E should be assigned using the Common Grade Scale.



In establishing an assessment program, you should ensure that the types of assessment activities or tasks used are appropriate to the objectives and outcomes being assessed. Generally, it will be necessary to use a number of different assessment activities or tasks in order to ensure that student achievement in relation to all the knowledge and skills objectives is assessed. Principals have the authority to decide on and to implement disability provisions for school-based assessments and tests as required by the DDA. Life Skills students will not be awarded grades, rather they will be assessed on Life Skills outcomes.

The assessment program should also reflect the relative emphasis placed on the assessable objectives of school programs and the syllabus. For example, where a school has placed considerable emphasis on the development of research skills, that emphasis should be reflected in the assessment program. Objectives from the affective domain (ie values and attitudes) should not be used in determining a student's grade.

Where activities or tasks are scheduled throughout a course, greater weight would generally be given to those activities or tasks undertaken towards the end of the course. For example, in a 200-hour course extending over Years 9 and 10, the assessment information collected in Year 10 provides the more complete picture of student achievement. There are, however, a number of different ways of organising the teaching/learning program for a course. The scheduling of activities or tasks and the weights applied should reflect the course organisation. Students should be given the opportunity to demonstrate their maximum level of achievement relative to the course performance descriptors.

Applying the course performance descriptors

Course performance descriptors have been developed for each course. They describe the main features of a typical student's performance at each grade measured against the syllabus objectives and outcomes for the course.

You will make the final judgement of the most appropriate grade on the basis of available assessment information and with reference to the course performance descriptors. In applying these descriptors, you should interpret them in terms of standards that can be achieved by Year 10 students within the bounds of the course. The same course performance descriptors apply to 100-hour and 200-hour courses. This relates to courses studied across Years 9 and 10, and to courses studied exclusively in either Year 9 or Year 10. A similar process is applied when awarding grades at the end of Year 11.

The grades awarded should reflect the relative emphasis placed on the assessable objectives of school programs and the syllabus. For example, where a school has placed considerable emphasis on the development of research skills, that emphasis should be reflected in the assessment program. Objectives from the affective domain (ie values and attitudes) should not be used in determining a student's grade.

Making an on-balance professional judgement

When making a judgement of the grade to be awarded, you need to note the following points:



- You will arrive at judgements by taking into account strengths and weaknesses in performance across a range of contexts and over a period of time, gathering evidence on a number of assessment activities.
- When deciding the number and type of assessment activities, the emphasis should be on the nature and quality rather than on the amount of evidence.
- Assessment activities should give students opportunities to show what they know and can do.
- You should provide opportunities for students to display their achievements in different ways and to work in a range of situations.
- A single piece of work will not cover all aspects of a grade description. Using a single piece of work to make a judgement is therefore not as valid and reliable as an 'on-balance' judgement.
- Each grade description should be considered alongside descriptions for adjacent grades.

At St Patrick's College, data is collected for summative and formative assessment. A mark is generated from the summative assessment tasks and teachers are to use professional judgement when determining grade 'cut off' and justifying grades. This can include reflection of achievement in formative assessment events to inform this judgement.

Communication

- Student achievement is communicated to parents through formal channels of reporting, including but not exclusive to academic reports, interim reports and parent/teacher interviews.
- Where there are concerns regarding a student's underachievement, communication will occur through the notification forms, College emails, phone calls to parents and organised parent meeting.
- Where attendance is contributing to underperformance, this needs to be brought to the attention of the Year Coordinators and/or the Assistant Principal Learning and Teaching and Assistant Principal Students.