

# MUDGEE HIGH SCHOOL



*“Developing safe, respectful and responsible learners in a stimulating and inclusive environment.”*

## ***SENIOR ASSESSMENT POLICY 2017 – 2018***

***Guidelines for Staff and Students***

*Issued February 2017*

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## INTRODUCTION

The following Senior Assessment Policy has been formulated to comply with the NSW Educational Standards Authority (NESA) requirements and guidelines. It is intended that the policy be consistently applied by all faculties presenting students for the Higher School Certificate (HSC). The assessment process has been designed to:

- Allow students to demonstrate their ability to achieve a wider range of outcomes than could be shown in a single exam at the end of the course.
- Give students direct credit for consistent work in both the Preliminary and HSC Courses rather than relying solely on one final exam.
- Improve the accuracy of the judgements made about student ability by using an increased number and wider variety of measuring instruments.

To achieve these goals, teachers aim to assess to a HSC standard and style so as to objectively and fairly rank students and report student performance to parents and NESA. Consideration must be given to specific subject guidelines, assessment components, weightings and outcomes as specified by the syllabus. More general regulations are contained in NESA Assessment, Certification and Examination Manual (ACE Manual) as well as various memorandums.

The assessment process places a legal and moral responsibility on teachers to adhere 'to the rules'. Assessment takes up a large amount of a student's time; the assessment mark appears on their HSC and counts for half of their Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR).

Some students may spend more than 2 years completing a HSC and as well they may acquire their credential with a combination of study at school, TAFE or completion of a School Based Traineeship.

It should be remembered that:

- All 2 Unit (2U) courses are broken into a Preliminary Course and an HSC course.
- A student may have a break of a number of years between the Preliminary and HSC Courses.
- The Preliminary Course in a subject must be satisfactorily completed before a student can attempt the HSC Course. This includes 'satisfactory completion' of assessment tasks in the Preliminary Course.
- We are required to conduct assessment tasks for both the Preliminary and HSC Courses. However, only assessment of the HSC Course will count towards the moderated assessment mark that appears on the HSC, therefore we cannot set an assessment task based on a topic taught from the Preliminary Syllabus and include it as part of a HSC Assessment schedule. (Note: there are some exceptions to this rule in the case of Mathematics).

**Students have the right to be treated fairly, consistently and by the rules.**

## **Higher School Certificate Requirements – Pattern of Study**

The following is a summary of the key requirements for Higher School Certificate Study:

- At least 12 units are required in the Preliminary Course pattern of study, and at least 10 units in the HSC Course pattern of study.
- In both patterns of study, at least 6 units must consist of NESAs-developed courses.
- In both patterns of study, HSC candidates must undertake at least three courses of 2 unit value or greater. These may include NESAs-endorsed courses.
- In both Preliminary and HSC Courses a minimum of 4 different courses must be studied.
- The award of a HSC may be accumulated over a period of 5 years. In that case, all the rules prescribed above must be met, but not all in the one year.
- Students wishing to accumulate their HSC and/or repeat subjects should seek the assistance of their Year Adviser and the Senior Assessment Coordinator to ensure that all NESAs requirements are fulfilled.

### **1 Co-ordination of Senior Assessment**

It is the role of the Senior Assessment Coordinator to coordinate the procedures and processes relating to the assessment of senior students at Mudgee High School. This will involve:

- Ensuring that an up to date policy is available each year that reflects any changes to NESAs requirements.
- Liaising with the Year 11 Adviser to ensure that all students receive the appropriate information.
- Providing information to students about the Senior Assessment Policy and providing guidance to students who are struggling to meet course requirements.
- Coordinating a regular evaluation of the Senior Assessment Policy.
- Devising an assessment planner for Year 11 & 12 students to attempt to spread the assessment workload across the year in an equitable manner.
- Being responsible for other specific tasks as outlined in this policy.

Heads of Department are responsible for monitoring of assessment procedures to ensure policy is being followed, communicating any changes to NESAs requirements to staff and monitoring and documenting students who are not meeting course requirements.

Final decisions regarding the implementation of this policy are the responsibility of the Principal. The Principal, or delegate, may alter the policy at any time.

## 2 Notice of Tasks

Student will be provided with an *Assessment Schedule* for each subject they study. This schedule will contain for each subject:

- components and weightings to be assessed across the whole assessment program
- approximate date for each task (i.e. in which term it will occur)
- weighting of each task
- nature of each task.

At least two weeks prior to the assessment date, students will be informed of the:

- syllabus outcomes being assessed by that task
- mark value relative to the total number of marks for the course
- nature of the task
- date and time of task. If possible, the assessment task will be due/completed on the day that corresponds to the allocated week on the *Senior Assessment Planner*.

Students should receive the above details on a green *Notification of Senior Assessment Task* pro forma.

## 4 Timing of Tasks

Students must be assessed for both the Preliminary and HSC Course. Only assessment from the HSC Course will be used as part of the student's HSC (This is an exception in Mathematics courses).

Heads of Department have the responsibility to ensure that syllabus requirements are met and that the correct amount of assessment occurs for each year.

Assessments for the Preliminary year will begin early in Year 11.

No tasks are to fall due in the two week period prior to examinations. No tasks are to be scheduled after the Trial HSC examination.

Each faculty is responsible for formulating its own assessment policy (within the guidelines of this school policy) and for determining the timing of assessment tasks.

Staff and students will operate an *Assessment Planner* with subjects allocated particular weeks in which to conduct their assessment tasks. Variations to these allocated weeks can only occur with the consent of the Principal. This *Assessment Planner* forms an appendix to this overall policy.

Students are required to carry their *Assessment Planner* with them each day.

## 5 Registration of Due Dates

All assessment tasks will clearly be identified as such and will be issued on the green *Notification of Senior Assessment Task* pro forma. Teachers need to register all tasks with the Deputy Principal to enable placement on the school calendar. Registration should be made as early as possible.

Students should be encouraged to maintain a diary and to record all tasks on their *Assessment Planner*.

## 6 Lateness

Students must notify the school if they will be absent when a task/exam is due. Zero marks will apply unless adequate reason is furnished to the Deputy Principal responsible for the relevant year. Assessment tasks will be deemed late if they are not submitted during the relevant period or lesson time on that day.

Students cannot work on assessment tasks during other classes and they cannot absent themselves from classes to complete tasks. Students who are absent for any part of the day when a task is due will need to complete an *Application for Special Consideration* form together with appropriate documentation.

During the Preliminary and HSC Courses, students who submit tasks or sit for exams late will be required to make an application for special consideration by completing the pink pro-forma available from the Deputy Principal. This application must be made either:

- as soon as the student returns to school after an unplanned absence, or
- as soon as a student knows they will be unable to complete a task/exam. Where an unavoidable clash is known in advance this application must be made before the due date of the task.

**Failure to complete this process correctly will result in zero marks for the task. Extensions of time are not granted automatically. Students will require very good reasons for not completing tasks by the due date. Medical Certificates or other documentary evidence should always be supplied where it is available.**

## 7 Non-serious Attempts

Where, in the judgement of a Head Teacher, a student has not made a serious attempt in an assessment task/examination, despite the fact that all other requirements are met, a 'N' Determination Warning will be given. In the case of any appeal, the Principal will make the final decision after referral from the Deputy Principal responsible for the relevant year.

A student whose work is deemed to be a non-serious attempt may be required to resubmit the task showing an adequate attempt to meet the minimum requirements. No marks will be awarded for resubmitted work.

## 8 Non-completion of Tasks/Examinations

All assessment tasks/examinations must be completed. If a student fails to complete a task/examination they will be allocated a 'N' Determination Warning for that task unless adequate reason is supplied to the Deputy Principal responsible for the relevant year. This reason must be supplied to the Deputy Principal before the task/exam if at all possible or **immediately** on return to school after the task/exam. In cases of illness, a medical certificate or Statutory Declaration may be required by the Deputy Principal. At the Principal's discretion, a student may be required to:

- undertake the same task/exam at a later date, or
- undertake an equivalent substitute task/exam, or
- accept an estimate.

An estimate will only be awarded in exceptional circumstances where the Principal considers that the student has adequate reason for not completing an assessment task. The possibility of completing the same task at a later date or a substitute task will be examined before an estimate based on other evidence will be considered.

It is the student's responsibility to notify the school of their absence that day (or earlier if they know) if an assessment task/exam is due and they will be unable to attend. It is the responsibility of the student to approach their teacher **on the day of their return to school** regarding their absence, and to make arrangements for the completion of the missed task/exam. At this time the student will need to collect an *Application for Special Consideration* form from the Deputy Principal responsible for the relevant year group. The application must then be completed and returned in the stipulated time.

In the case of any appeal, the Principal will make the final decision after referral from the Deputy Principal responsible for the relevant year group.

## 9 'N' Determination Warnings

While it is true that a student who is given a 'N' Determination Warning will receive no marks for a particular task/exam, students who follow all the correct procedures and make a serious attempt at the task/exam may still receive no marks if their work is of a very poor standard. In such cases, the student is not regarded as having received a 'N' Determination Warning. 'N' Determination Warnings will be allocated if:

- a task/exam scores no marks under the lateness provisions (see 6 above)
- a task/exam is not completed and no adequate reason is provided
- a student is involved in malpractice, and/or
- a non-serious attempt is made at a task/exam.

If a student receives a 'N' Determination Warning in assessment tasks/exams which total 50% or more of the total available assessment marks for that course, the Principal must indicate to NESAs that the course has not been satisfactorily completed and the student has received a 'N' Determination. The student may not be allowed to sit for the HSC exam in that subject. In this event, a result will not appear on the HSC for the subject. In the case of any appeal, the Principal will make the final decision after referral from the Deputy Principal responsible for the relevant year group.

*A student will not be permitted to enrol in the HSC Course unless they have satisfactorily completed all aspects of the Preliminary Course.*

## 10 Malpractice

All students are required to complete the 'All My Own Work' program before their subject entries can be completed on NESAs. This program covers malpractice which refers to "any activity that allows a student to gain an unfair advantage over other students". (NESAs Assessment Certification and Examination Manual, 2005). The NESAs rules about malpractice apply to all students completing Preliminary and HSC Courses at this school. Please refer to the NESAs Assessment Certification and Examination Manual, 2005, section 9.4 for specific details. This document can be viewed on the NESAs website at the following url:

<http://www.nesa.nsw.edu.au/manuals>.

If a student is caught cheating, copying or plagiarising in any way during any assessment task or exam they will be given a 'N' Determination Warning for that particular task. Students are advised that any salacious, offensive or derogatory comments they write on a task will constitute malpractice. As is the case of the HSC examinations, such comments may result in a 'N' Determination warning.

Any student who deliberately disrupts an assessment may be warned once. If such disruptive behaviour continues, the student will be excluded from the task and a 'N' Determination Warning will be given.

In the case of any appeal relating to malpractice, the Principal will make the final decision after referral from the Deputy Principal responsible for the relevant year group.

### 10.1 Examinations

The school provides examination writing material. Students may take to their seat only the equipment they require to complete each exam, tissues and water. Devices such as mobile phones or those which have communication capabilities are not permitted. All watches must be removed and placed in clear sight on the examination table where the student is seated.

A record will be kept of all variations to examination routine, including: any warnings given, students getting equipment from bags, students leaving the examination room. Any student who requires the use of the toilet during an exam will be accompanied by a teacher and the duration of their absence from the examination room will be recorded.

No student will be permitted to leave the examination room for any purpose in the last 15 minutes of any examination.

## 11 Parallel Classes

Where parallel classes do the same work the same assessment task should be given to each class at the same time. The same number of assessment tasks should be given to each class. When more than one class per subject exists, the faculty must put in place a process to ensure consistency. These processes include one teacher marking an entire question, a moderating procedure or other arrangement deemed appropriate

Where students within one course are undertaking different option topics or presenting work in a variety of mediums (e.g. Art, Industrial Technology), a HSC standard will be applied to the setting and marking of tasks to allow a valid ranking of students.

## 12 Scaling – Moderation – Number of Tasks Given

The whole question of scaling can invoke doubt and uncertainty in the minds of teachers. While it may help, it is not necessary that teachers fully understand the very complicated mathematical procedures involved.

The paragraphs below attempt to set out the general principles that teachers should follow in attempting to adhere to our goal of treating each student fairly, consistently and by the rules.

### 12.1 How to be fair to all our students

It should be stressed that when it comes time for NESAs to moderate (adjust) our assessment marks the total number of marks available to our class is equal to the total number of marks that they scored in the HSC examination. The logical conclusion then is that in order to maximise our students moderated assessment marks we must do all that we can to maximise their exam mark. This simple fact is often lost in all the ‘hype and emotion’ about scaling and attempts to ‘beat or work the system’.

*The best and fairest approach is to use the full range of available marks to accurately show the relative difference in performance between students.*

Tasks should be set in such a way to allow our best students to demonstrate the extent of their ability.

### 12.2 Adding assessment tasks to reach a final ranking

The marks returned to students after each task and on School Reports may be raw or scaled results. Faculties should use that set of marks which indicates:

- relative abilities within the group, and
- for students, the type of mark that they may have received had that piece of work been submitted at a HSC examination

When assessment task marks are added at the end of Year 12, scaled scores may be used, not the raw scores that may have been written on their assessment task.

### 12.3 Tasks from different option topics

When students study different option topics within the same course, scores in those different assessment tasks should be moderated against a common task before they are added together. This is necessary to achieve accurate comparability.

## **12.4 Number of tasks to be given**

Setting a large number of tasks may give students a greater chance to shine and eliminate the importance of one poor performance. However:

- Spending excessive time doing a multitude of tasks must impinge on the time available to complete other valuable activities.
- If a large number of tasks are given, each task becomes meaningless in terms of indicating the relative abilities of students.
- NESAs advice clearly states that an appropriate assessment schedule must limit the number of tasks and that once given, no task can be discarded.

HSC Assessment is completed over 4 terms and the number of non-exam assessment tasks must be limited. Consideration must be given to pre-exam non-assessment periods and other interruptions. It is strongly recommended by NESAs that the total number of tasks per subject is limited to between 3 and 5. (See individual syllabus assessment guidelines for further information)

## **13 Students with Disabilities or Injured Students**

Students with known disabilities such as visual, hearing, learning difficulties, hand or arm injury, chronic fatigue, diabetes, physical disability, psychological conditions, infectious disease, pregnancy or post-natal depression are responsible for applying to the school for special provisions.

Applications for special provisions must be made to NESAs for the HSC. School Principals have the authority to grant special provisions for all assessment tasks and the Trial HSC examination.

Applications must be submitted with evidence indicating the precise nature of the disability and consequent handicap. The Year Adviser should consult Section 13 of the ACE Manual for specific application and special provision details. The school should make all students aware of assistance available to them as early as possible so that approval for special provisions may be sought.

## **14 Repeating or New Students**

For students who transfer before school assessment has commenced no action is necessary. The student will be assessed with all other students in the course at the receiving school.

For students who transfer between the commencement of HSC Course assessment and the final date of the HSC entry, the receiving school is to prepare final assessments based on those tasks which the students complete at the receiving school.

For students who transfer between the final date for HSC entry and the time that the schools are required to submit assessments, the sending school is responsible for the student's assessment.

For students who repeat the HSC Course, an assessment will be made which is based on their work in the repeat year only. All past assessments are void since the students were ranked against a different candidature. This includes mandatory assessment items. New HSC Course students, whether transferring or repeating, have to be 'meshed' into the rankings of their new groups, using their HSC Course assessment only.

## **15 Documentation of Records**

HSC Assessment requires accurate and safe storage of records. At a faculty level, it is the responsibility primarily of teachers to record marks. However, it is the responsibility of the Head Teacher to oversee the collation, entry and checking of marks

The marks should be forwarded to the Principal by the due date in the HSC year in time for submission to NESAs.

Non-completion of an assessment task would necessitate a letter being sent to the parent/guardian by the Head Teacher. Copies of such correspondence should be kept by the Head Teacher with notifications sent to the Deputy Principal responsible for that year and copies stored in the student's personal file in the office.

Due to the fact that students may break their HSC study between the Preliminary and HSC Courses, it is important that student records be kept, and securely stored, for a period of up to five years.

## **16 Appeals**

Students who consider that their placement in the rank order for any course is not correct on the basis of feedback on their performance during the course may seek a school review. This appeal must be in writing and submitted to the Principal by the due date. Students should be made aware that they have limited time (approximately 5 days) to lodge an appeal. Reviews will be resolved within the school and NESAs notified if the appeal is upheld.

There is no appeal available to students regarding the mark received for an individual assessment task.

The Appeals Committee (consisting of the Principal, Senior Curriculum Coordinator and the relevant Head Teacher) will investigate the appeal and consider only the following:

- Does the weighting specified by the faculty assessment policy conform to NESAs requirements as detailed in the subject guidelines?
- Do the procedures used by the faculty for determining the final assessment mark conform with the stated faculty assessment policy? In particular are the weightings used for the various assessment tasks consistent with those specified in the assessment schedule?
- Are there any significant arithmetical or clerical errors in determining the assessment mark?

The school is not permitted to tell students their final assessment mark. However, the school may inform students of their rank in each course. This can be done progressively throughout the course and once the final rank has been determined. It is recommended that faculties do this in case errors have occurred which can then be corrected immediately.

## **17 Use of Email and Electronic Media**

Unless it is specifically requested in the written assessment requirements issued by your teacher, no assessment tasks are to be submitted in electronic form. Nor are they to be emailed to the teacher or to the school.