O'Connor Catholic College

Years 7 – 10 Assessment Policy

2018

General Statements

Much of the recent research and literature surrounding best practice and effective learning calls for continuous formative assessment practices. If we do this then assessment of student learning becomes a daily event. Therefore it may be more appropriate to use the expression learning task or activity rather than assessment. The word assessment is still linked to testing, the completion of large projects/tasks or assignments that are submitted and marked or graded. Learning activities however become the focus of every lesson and are linked to the intentions or target and success criteria. Feedback is fast, with the aim of improving student learning/performance.

Our Annual Improvement Plan includes the development of a viable and guaranteed curriculum, differentiation and an engaging learning environment. Teachers can use the data collected from a common task to inform about the teaching and learning between and within classes. The guaranteed curriculum means that students within the same KLA year would be learning mostly the same content/topics over the year. The viable curriculum looks specifically at the design of the learning tasks covering the essential areas of the curriculum that meet our student needs.

At O'Connor we have 5 one hour lessons which means the design of the lesson becomes all important. We have implemented a model for an effective lesson which incorporates the formative learning cycle. The five stages include model and explain, guided practice, a performance of understanding, fast feedback and improved performance. Within the lesson, students should recognise the learning target, know what success will looks like, and become involved in the lesson especially through questioning and accountable talk. Students should also be provided time to reflect on their own work and that of others.

A focus on formative assessment means that their will be changes to traditional assessment ideas especially around end on or summative tasks. Our mantra is that the work is done at school within the classroom. We need to focus less on the marking and more on the design of effective learning tasks and activities where engagement is high and feedback is more instant to shift learning forward.

The Following are the Principles which guide our Assessment Practice.

Principles of Assessment

Assessments need to provide valid information, they should;
- Be based on the knowledge, skills, processes, attitudes and values expected of the students.
- Take account of processes, progress and product achieved by the student.

Assessment criteria should be explicit, students should;
- Know the criteria on which they are being assessed.
- Be given clear and definite instructions.

Assessment should be demonstrably fair to all students;
- Students should work under specific conditions that are essentially the same for all.
- Students may need to be offered different ways of demonstrating outcomes relevant to their own particular characteristics and circumstances.

Judgments on student progress should be based on a comprehensive range of evidence.
- Different sources of evidence should be collected in various situations over a period of time.
- Data to determine achievement may come from a variety of assessment types. These include tests, interviews, examinations, projects, closed or open tasks, short or extended tasks, oral reports, models, journals, testimonials, problem solving, displays, performances, teacher interviews and observation of student work.

Assessment should be educative, and make a positive contribution to student learning;
- Assessment will mostly form an integral part of the learning process.
- Assessment should provide useful feedback which assists students in future learning.
- Assessment practices should encourage in-depth and long-term learning.
- Assessment practices should foster self-directed learning by enabling students to assume responsibility for their own assessment, and to have input into the establishment of criteria. They should be encouraged to discuss their progress with teachers and engage in peer and self-assessment.

Assessment for Learning

Assessment for learning in each subject is designed to enhance teaching and improve learning. It is assessment that gives students opportunities to produce the work that leads to the development of their skills, knowledge and understanding. Assessment for learning involves teachers in deciding how and when to assess student achievement, as they plan the work students will do, using a range of appropriate assessment strategies.

Teachers will provide students with opportunities in the context of everyday classroom activities, as well as planned assessment events, to demonstrate their learning.
In summary, assessment for learning:
- Is an essential and integrated part of teaching and learning
- Reflects a belief that all students can improve
- Involves setting learning goals with students
- Helps students know and recognise the standards they are aiming for
- Involves students in self-assessment and peer assessment
- Provides feedback that helps students understand the next steps in learning and plan how to achieve them
- Involves teachers, students and parents reflecting on assessment data.

The principles of assessment for learning

These principles provide the criteria for judging the quality of assessment materials and practices. They appear below as they do in each of the syllabuses.

Assessment for learning:

- emphasises the interactions between learning and manageable assessment strategies that promote learning
- clearly expresses for the student and teacher the goals of the learning activity
- reflects a view of learning in which assessment helps students learn better, rather than just achieve a better mark
- provides ways for students to use feedback from assessment
- helps students take responsibility for their own learning
- is inclusive of all learners.

Assessment as and of learning

Assessment as learning occurs when students are their own assessors. Students monitor their own learning, ask questions and use a range of strategies to decide what they know and can do, and how to use assessment for new learning.

Assessment as learning:

- encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning
- requires students to ask questions about their learning
- involves teachers and students creating learning goals to encourage growth and development
- provides ways for students to use formal and informal feedback and self-assessment to help them understand the next steps in learning
- encourages peer assessment, self-assessment and reflection.

Assessment of learning assists teachers in using evidence of student learning to assess achievement against outcomes and standards. Sometimes referred to as 'summative assessment', it usually occurs at defined key points during a unit of work or at the end of a unit, term or semester, and may be used to rank or grade students. The effectiveness of *assessment of learning* for grading or ranking depends on the validity and reliability of activities. Its effectiveness as an opportunity for learning depends on the nature and quality of the feedback.

Assessment of learning:

- is used to plan future learning goals and pathways for students
- provides evidence of achievement to the wider community, including parents, educators, the students themselves and outside groups
- provides a transparent interpretation across all audiences.

Using these principles when establishing a course assessment program

Establishing a course assessment program begins when units of work are programed. By incorporating assessment activities into units of work, the needs, interests and abilities of your students will be met, while assessing their progress towards a demonstration of achievement in relation to outcomes.

Teachers can develop programs/units of work using the following process:

1. Identify the outcomes that will be highlighted in the unit.
2. Decide on the subject matter or focus of the unit of work.
3. Decide on the evidence of learning that will be required, how students will demonstrate this in relation to the outcomes and how this evidence will be gathered and recorded.
4. Select the relevant syllabus content for the identified outcomes relating to the knowledge, understanding and skills that students will develop.
5. Plan the learning experiences and instruction and identify the assessment for learning strategies that will provide the evidence of learning.
6. Ensure a range of assessment strategies is used and that meaningful feedback in a variety of forms can be communicated to students.
7. Provide opportunities to reflect on student progress and modify future learning experiences accordingly.

Throughout Stage 4 and 5 students will be given a variety of tasks within the different subjects in order for them to demonstrate their understanding, skills, competence and knowledge. Teachers can use the information gained from tasks to inform learning and teaching practice as well as to determine a grade identifying student achievement at that point in time. Teachers are encouraged to compare student work samples in order to obtain a consistency in awarding grades. Each department should aim for some common tasks across classes. Teachers will also use professional judgement based on class work and other indicators such as observation in awarding grades.

Each department will develop an assessment plan that will explain assessment procedures including monitoring and recording. Each department therefore needs to be able to justify assessment practices.

Recording

Teachers will want to have evidence to support judgements, based on observations and student performance on specified assessment activities. However, there is no requirement for judgements to be explained in a particular way, or to be supported by detailed collections of evidence for each student.

Recording evidence for assessment may take a variety of forms, including individual comments or notations, marks, grades, conversations, digital recordings and/or audio or visual representations. Recording evidence:

- needs to be manageable
- may be formal and/or informal
- should focus on student progress in relation to outcomes, particular strengths and

areas for improvement.

Students and teachers may decide together about the evidence of learning to be gathered and how it should be recorded and organised. Students can use this information, and teacher and peer feedback, to:

- reflect on their work
- make judgements about their learning
- make decisions with their teacher about the next steps in their learning.

Teachers may gather evidence and record:

- a student's strengths and areas for improvement for one activity
- the performance of a particular student, class, group or cohort of students, across a range of assessment activities and across a period of time.

Teachers can work collaboratively, including in the online environment, to develop a shared understanding of syllabus standards. Working collaboratively can assist teachers to:

- make consistent and comparable judgements of student achievement
- decide what to look for when determining the extent of student understanding.

Reporting

In a standards-referenced framework, teachers will make professional judgements about student achievement at key points in the learning cycle, at the end of a semester or year. This is when the college will report on the levels of knowledge, understanding and skill demonstrated by students. The grade descriptions provide a common language for reporting.

BOS Mandatory Requirements

The Board's mandatory curriculum requirements for 7-10 are listed below. This core curriculum is mandatory for all schools.
All time allocations are indicative. Indicative time is the time expected for a typical student to achieve the objectives and outcomes of the course. The indicative time for a course is therefore directly related to that course's objectives and outcomes.
Students undertaking Life Skills outcomes and content in one or more courses must meet mandatory curriculum requirements in each key learning area.
Reference to Years 7–10 in the following table in no way precludes gifted and talented

students from accelerated study programs.

English
The Board Developed syllabus to be studied substantially throughout each of Years 7–10.
400 hours to be completed by the end of Year 10.
Mathematics
The Board Developed syllabus to be studied substantially throughout each of Years 7–10.
400 hours to be completed by the end of Year 10.
Science
The Board Developed syllabus to be studied substantially throughout each of Years 7–10.
400 hours to be completed by the end of Year 10.
Human Society and Its Environment
 To be studied substantially throughout each of Years 7–10. 400 hours are to be completed by
the end of Year 10 and must include 100 hours each of History and Geography in Stage 4 and
100 hours each of Australian History and Australian Geography in Stage 5.
Languages Other than English
 100 hours to be completed in one language over one continuous 12-month period between
Years 7–10 but preferably in Years 7–8.
Technological and Applied Studies
The Board's Technology (Mandatory) Years 7-8 syllabus to be studied for 200 hours.
Creative Arts
 200 hours to be completed consisting of the Board's 100- hour mandatory courses in each of
Visual Arts and Music. It is the Board's expectation that the 100-hour mandatory courses in
these subjects will be taught as coherent units of study and not split over a number of years.
Personal Development, Health and Physical Education
The Board's mandatory 300-hour integrated course in Personal Development, Health and
Physical Education. This integrated course is to be studied in each of Years 7–10.

Principal's determination

This is the initial decision made by the principal at the end of the course, under delegated
authority from the Board, that a student has not satisfactorily completed a course.
Students who have not complied with the course completion criteria and who have received
at least two written warnings can be regarded as not having satisfactorily completed the
course at the time of finalising grades. The principal may then apply the 'N' determination.

For Stage 5 courses, the school will submit both an 'N' determination and a grade through
Schools Online in case of a successful student appeal. Where the 'N' determination is applied
in a Stage 5 course or in a mandatory course in Stage 4, it will appear on the student's Record
of Achievement. A student who is given an 'N' determination in a mandatory course in Stage
5 may not progress to Stage 6.

Where a student's attendance pattern may jeopardise the satisfactory completion of a course,
the reason for absence and its likely effect on the student's course progress should be
established.
Leave may be granted to cover absence from the school's educational program for short
periods, provided that the reason for the absence is substantial and that the progress of the

student towards course outcomes will not be unduly affected.

In cases of prolonged absence and/or where the principal is not satisfied that course completion criteria can be met or that progress can be maintained, the principal may judge that catching up is not feasible. As far as possible, early warning of the consequences for a student of such an absence should be given. The warning must relate the absence to the non-completion of course requirements.

Assessment of Student Achievement
Course Performance Descriptors

Course Performance Descriptors have been developed for each course. They describe the main features of a typical performance at each grade measured against the syllabus objectives and outcomes for the course. Schools should use the set of Course Performance Descriptors developed specifically for the Years 7–10 syllabuses.

Areas for Assessment have been developed for each course, and are published with the Course Performance Descriptors. 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.

For those courses that do not have a prescribed set of CPD the Common Grade Scale will be used.

Assessing and grading student achievement

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

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 (A10, A9, B8, B7, C6, C5, D4, D3, E2).

Where a school wishes to assign an 'N' for a student's achievement in a course, a Grade A to E should still be submitted so that, if the student appeals successfully to the Board, the grade can be reinstated.

The grading system is intended to describe the student's achievement **at the end** of each course in Stage 5. Teachers will make the final judgement of the grade deserved on the basis of available assessment information and with reference to the Course Performance Descriptors. Earlier performance in a course should be used only as a means of increasing the accuracy of the final assessment.

The choice of a particular grade should be made on the basis that it provides the best overall description of the student's achievement of the Stage 5 syllabus outcomes. This applies regardless of whether the student has studied a 100-hour or a 200-hour course.

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 is assessed.
Principals have the authority to decide on and to implement special provisions for school-based assessments and tests.

Where activities or tasks are scheduled throughout a course, greater emphasis 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. Students should be given the opportunity to demonstrate their maximum level of achievement relative to the Course Performance Descriptors.

Students undertaking a course based on Life Skills outcomes and content in Stage 5 are not allocated a grade in that course.

Applying the Course Performance Descriptors

Teachers will make the final judgement of the grade deserved on the basis of available assessment information and with reference to the Course Performance Descriptors. In applying these descriptions, teachers should interpret them in terms of standards that can be achieved by Stage 5 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.
The grade awarded should provide the best overall description of the student's achievement.

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) are not to be used in determining a student's grade.

The following policy and procedures should be used for all courses.

1. The purpose of the assessment procedure is to accumulate data in order to improve learning, know where a student is at in the learning cycle and to inform the teacher about learning practice so that by reflection and evaluation modifications can be made to teaching and learning. Once a variety of evidence of learning is acquired and at the appropriate reporting time a grade could be applied based on the common grade scale or course performance descriptors depending on the Year level.

2. Students are required to apply themselves with **diligence** and **sustained effort** to all set tasks and experiences provided in the course and achieve some or all of the course outcomes. This is a Board of Studies requirement. If a student's work and/or attendance becomes a concern, the Principal may determine that the course

completion criteria has not been met. This can lead to an 'N' determination in the course which would be reflected in the student's record of achievement.

If the student does not respond positively an official Warning Letter can be sent home to notify a student and his/her parents of any failure to meet requirements and allow for the situation to be rectified. Warning letters must be signed by the Principal and AP. Only subject Coordinators can issue a warning letter.

Students who fail to bring appropriate clothing to complete practical subjects can also receive a warning letter if they cannot participate in the set tasks and experiences. It would be an expectation that staff would have discussed any problems with the student and attempt to resolve the issue before a warning letter is issued. Coordinators should be informed of any problems.

Prior to the issuing of a warning letter relating to course work there should be evidence of prior intervention from the classroom teacher and KLA Coordinator.

3. Each department is responsible for assessment tasks and procedures within the overall guidelines provided in the School policy. Teachers will provide reasonable notification and time to prepare for or complete tasks. Students and their parents will be provided with information on the progress made in all areas of study.
4. Assessment tasks will be sequenced throughout 7-10 courses. A Summative schedule will be produced by the Department.

5. Students are expected to submit or complete all assessment tasks on time.

6. If a student has been found to have committed malpractice they will not receive a mark or grade until the task is re submitted or only that part of the task deemed to be the students work will be marked. If a student has suffered from misadventure or illness, this needs to be taken into consideration by the subject teacher.

7. For students in Stage 5 they should be aware that the same set of Course Performance Descriptors apply to both 100 hour and 200 hour courses. This has implications for students who change courses at the end of Year 9, and they must be aware they will be graded according to Board of Studies Course Performance Descriptors based on their demonstrated skills at the end of the course.

Malpractice is any activity undertaken by a student that allows them to gain an unfair advantage over others. It includes, but is not limited to:
- Copying someone else's work in part or in whole, and presenting it as their own
- Using material directly from books, journals, CDs, the internet or other sources without reference to the source
- Buying, stealing or borrowing another person's work and presenting it as their own
- Submitting work to which another person such as a parent, coach or subject expert has made substantial contributions
- Breaching College examination rules
- Contriving false explanations for missing due dates
- Assisting another student to engage in malpractice

Action chart for academic performance 7-10

1. Initial failure to follow a course with due diligence and sustained effort to the set tasks and experiences provided in the course and achieve some or all of the course outcomes. Initial failure to submit assignments, assessments and or concern over attendance, poor effort in tasks and/ or poor grades as a consequence of a lack of effort.

a) Teacher interview of student or contact made with Year Leader over attendance
b) Review time for submission of tasks
c) Allow student to re sit test, resubmit task to acceptable standard based on teachers professional judgement
d) Initial contact with parents
e) KLA Coordinator informed

2. Further failure to follow a course with due diligence and sustained effort to the set tasks and experiences provided in the course and achieve some or all of the course outcomes. Further failure to submit assignments, assessments and or concern over attendance, poor effort in tasks and/ or poor grades as a consequence of a lack of effort.
a) KLA Coordinator informed, measures taken to support student in the completion of work including lunchtime or afternoon detentions
b) Parents informed of measures taken and response of student. Parents informed of intention to issue warning letter

3. Further failure to follow a course with due diligence and sustained effort to the set tasks and experiences provided in the course and achieve some or all of the course outcomes. Further failure to submit assignments, assessments and or concern over attendance, poor effort in tasks and/ or poor grades as a consequence of a lack of effort.
a) Teacher informs KLA Coordinator
b) Parents informed
c) Student can be removed from the class until set work is completed to a satisfactory standard
d) Warning letter is issued

4. Failure to respond to work required in warning letter
a) Follow up warning letter is issued.

5. Further failure to comply with requirements
a) Second or third letter is issued
b) Principals authority to issue N Determination

c) AP or Principal intervention, contact with parents

Additional Needs/Disability Provision

What are disability provisions?

Disability provisions are granted to provide students who have disability needs with practical support. Students' disability needs may include learning, medical, vision or hearing difficulties.

Examples of provisions may include: Braille or large print papers, use of a writer and/or reader, use of an interpreter, extension of test time, rest breaks, use of a personal computer, separate exam supervision, individual supervision, and permission to take medication.

Can disability provisions be implemented for students in school-based assessments?

Yes, principals have the authority to decide on and to implement disability provisions for school-based assessment tasks including examinations.

Adjustments

Teachers may need to make adjustments to teaching, learning and assessment practices for some students with special education needs, so that they are able to demonstrate what they know and can do in relation to syllabus outcomes and content. The types of adjustments made will vary based on the needs of individual students.

These may be:

- adjustments to the assessment process, eg additional time, rest breaks, quieter conditions, or the use of a reader and/or scribe or specific technology
- adjustments to assessment activities, eg rephrasing questions or using simplified language, fewer questions or alternative formats for questions
- alternative formats for responses, eg written point form or notes, scaffolded structured responses, short objective questions or multimedia presentations.

ADJUSTMENTS TO TEACHING AND LEARNING

Adjustments are measures or actions taken in relation to teaching, learning and assessment that enable a student with special education needs to access syllabus outcomes and content on the same basis as their peers. The types of adjustments made will vary according to the needs of the individual student.

Some students may require:

- adjustments to classroom organisation
- appropriate materials and resources that support teaching and learning activities, eg the use of technology, alternate formats such as large print, disk or Braille, simplified texts, subtitled DVDs; oral sign interpreters or readers and scribes; modifications to equipment or furniture; and adjustments to enable participation in field trips and

excursions
- adjustments to the amount of content to be covered in a particular lesson or unit or the time allocated to complete work
- consideration of their individual communication strategies, including verbal and non-verbal communication systems
- additional demonstration of key concepts and skills by the teacher, teacher's aide or a peer
- a range of appropriate learning activities with structured opportunities for guided and independent practice, as well as effective feedback
- additional support through group work, volunteer or peer tutoring.

Specific examples of adjustments are provided below. Some of the strategies may require additional support from the teacher, teacher's aide or peer.

A student may participate in *commenting* and *discussing* by:

- oral contribution to class discussion
- answering closed questions on a topic
- using changes in facial expression, nod or gesture to respond to a closed question, eg 'Are you playing in a sports team at school?'
- selecting photographs, pictures or symbols from visual aids, such as a double item choice board or keyring cluster, eg the student makes a choice between two photographs to express a preference (like/don't like)
- selecting symbols from a communication board to express an opinion
- using a communication device, such as a voice output communication aid (VOCA), eg the student leads a group discussion with pre-recorded questions or a peer records information on a communication device for the student to present to the class during group work
- using assistive listening devices to participate in and contribute to small-group and whole-class discussions.

A student may participate in *writing* or *recording* by:

- writing simple answers to questions
- ticking pre-prepared checklists
- using photographs, pictures or symbols, eg the student sequences pictures to tell a story, combines symbols to convey meaning, circles a selection of symbols on a page to create a lis
- using computer software, eg the student uses a drawing program and pictures to write, uses scanned pictures and/or digital photographs in a multimedia presentation, uses assistive technology to select text or pictures from the screen
- using electronic communication devices, such as speech to text.

A student may participate in *reading* activities by:

- reading simplified texts
- reading transcripts
- following a text being read by a peer or adult
- following an audio or multimedia presentation of a text, or DVD with captioning
- reading a text accompanied by visual images to represent characters, settings and

events
- following a visual sequence of instructions, such as a visual recipe or a visual timetable.

A student may participate in *listening* activities by:

- listening to a text being read by a peer or adult
- listening to an audio text, multimedia presentation, or DVD with captioning
- responding to tone of voice in conjunction with facial expressions, gestures and/or physical prompts
- using assistive listening devices.

A student may participate in *viewing* activities by:

- viewing subtitled DVDs
- reading summaries/descriptions of the visual input from photographs, multimedia presentations, films, pictures and posters
- listening to a peer or adult describe the visual input from photographs, multimedia presentations, films, pictures and posters while they 'view' the visual media or multimedia together
- responding to sensory stimuli, facial expressions, gestures or physical prompts in conjunction with tone of voice.

Decisions are made at school level to offer adjustments to students with special education needs in course work and assessment activities.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Some students may require additional support beyond that required to demonstrate achievement on the same basis as their peers.

This support may be as well as or instead of adjustments, and may involve:

- visual and/or verbal prompts when undertaking classwork and/or assessments
- physical prompts and/or physical assistance when participating in an activity
- provision of partial information/responses to assist the student to demonstrate understanding of knowledge, skill or concepts.