

O'Connor Catholic College



Preliminary HSC Assessment Policy

PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Introduction

Formal assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Information gathered and judgements made about students will assist their learning. The formal assessment structure will allow students to provide evidence toward satisfactory course completion. Preliminary assessment is managed internally by the school, but it will provide students with a model of mandatory HSC practices.

Satisfactory completion of the Preliminary course or its equivalent is a prerequisite for entry into an HSC course. (Exception: HSC Mathematics Extension 1)

For HSC examining purposes, **the Preliminary course** is regarded as assumed knowledge that has been covered by all candidates. Examination specifications ensure that the major focus of the examination will be on HSC course content.

The HSC course is defined in terms of course content (ie knowledge, skills and understanding outcomes) achievable following completion of the Preliminary course or its equivalent.

The Board's syllabuses and assessment and reporting documents provide information about the mandatory assessment system for the HSC courses and suggestions for assessment in Preliminary courses. The suggestions include a possible set of components, weightings and tasks that may be varied to suit school needs. At O'Connor each department and subject teacher will develop an assessment schedule with appropriate weightings.

In setting assessment tasks, teachers will 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 Common Grade Scale for Preliminary courses.

Schools are required to submit grades for all students completing any Stage 6 Preliminary Board Developed or Board Endorsed Course, except VET courses and Life Skills courses.

The grade awarded to each student at the completion of a Stage 6 Preliminary course should indicate the student's overall achievement in relation to the Common Grade Scale for Preliminary courses.

No specific allocation of marks is required for any syllabus objective or outcome.

The Board's grading system is intended to describe the student's achievement at the end of each Stage 6 Preliminary course. Teachers will make the final judgement of the grade deserved on the basis of available assessment information and with reference to the Common Grade Scale for Preliminary Courses and other material produced by the Board to support the consistent awarding of grades. In applying the Common Grade Scale for Preliminary Courses, teachers should interpret them in terms of standards that can be achieved by Stage 6 Preliminary students within the bounds of the course.

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 6 Preliminary

syllabus outcomes. Students should be given the opportunity to demonstrate their maximum level of achievement relative to the Common Grade Scale for Preliminary courses.

The Common Grade Scale shown below should be used to report student achievement in the Preliminary Stage 6 year in all NSW schools.

The Common Grade Scale describes performance at each of five grade levels.

A

The student demonstrates extensive knowledge of content and understanding of course concepts, and applies highly developed skills and processes in a wide variety of contexts. In addition the student demonstrates creative and critical thinking skills using perceptive analysis and evaluation. The student effectively communicates complex ideas and information.

B

The student demonstrates thorough knowledge of content and understanding of course concepts, and applies well-developed skills and processes in a variety of contexts. In addition the student demonstrates creative and critical thinking skills using analysis and evaluation. The student clearly communicates complex ideas and information.

C

The student demonstrates sound knowledge of content and understanding of course concepts, and applies skills and processes in a range of familiar contexts. In addition the student demonstrates skills in selecting and integrating information and communicates relevant ideas in an appropriate manner.

D

The student demonstrates a basic knowledge of content and understanding of course concepts, and applies skills and processes in some familiar contexts. In addition the student demonstrates skills in selecting and using information and communicates ideas in a descriptive manner.

E

The student demonstrates an elementary knowledge of content and understanding of course concepts, and applies some skills and processes with guidance. In addition the student demonstrates elementary skills in recounting information and communicating ideas.

Assessment components and weightings

The Board's syllabuses and assessment and reporting documents provide information about the mandatory assessment system for the HSC courses and suggestions for assessment in Preliminary courses. The suggestions include a possible set of components, weightings and tasks that may be varied to suit school needs. They are included to give guidance on components and strategies in the Preliminary course assessment program.

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 Common Grade Scale for Preliminary courses.

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 is 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. The scheduling of tasks and the weights applied should reflect the course organisation.

Policy

1. Each student is required to undertake those tasks which are part of each subject's formal assessment programme. In addition students are required to apply themselves with diligence and sustained effort to other set tasks and experiences provided in the course by the school.
2. Each 2 unit subject has a maximum of 4 formal tasks. Each 1 unit subject has a maximum of 3 formal tasks. Tasks are sequenced throughout the year and provide a variety of opportunities to measure student achievement.
3. Students and parents/guardians are given a complete assessment schedule before the commencement of the formal assessment program.
4. Teachers will give specific task information at least two weeks prior to the due date for that task. This will include details about the process and procedures involved in managing the tasks. Students will be expected to sign receipt of Assessment tasks and teachers will sign when the task has been submitted. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all parts to exams are submitted. If the subject teacher is absent on the due date the KLA Coordinator or the front office will sign the receipt of the task.
5. Each task will provide students with clear indications of how to succeed such as marking criteria or guidelines.
6. Students will receive specific feedback for each task to inform them of their progress in the learning continuum.
7. 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 concerned and ultimately put the student's Preliminary HSC at risk.

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 Curriculum Coordinator.

After two *N Determination* warning letters the Principal may award the student an N (non-completion of course) determination, meaning that the course will not be recorded on the students record of achievement, thus placing their entire HSC program in jeopardy.

8. Absence from tasks or failure to hand in completed tasks on the due date and in appropriate format will be recorded as a non-attempt and a zero mark will be awarded. Students who know they will be absent on the due date must make prior arrangements with the subject teacher to negotiate the submission or completion of the task.
9. If a student has been found to have committed malpractice they will also receive a zero mark. Students will be issued with an *N Determination* warning letter, placing their potential to progress to the HSC in jeopardy.
10. Students are entitled to apply for *Special Consideration* in case of Illness/Misadventure. The appeal must be made on the appropriate form and supported by independent evidence. If circumstances are known, students should apply for special consideration prior to the due date.
11. If students fail to submit a task or are absent on the due date and a *Special Consideration* form appeal is not lodged by students ***within a week of the original due date*** or is not approved, they will be issued with a *N Determination* warning letter.
12. The Curriculum coordinator, in consultation with the relevant KLA coordinator and subject teacher will determine an appropriate alternative assessment in case of a successful *Special Consideration* appeal. This could include an alternate time, task or estimate.
13. Students have the right to appeal the procedure of a task, the administration of tasks, or whether the task conforms to the College's Preliminary Assessment Policy. This appeal must be made on the *Preliminary Assessment Task Appeal Form* within ONE week of the task in question being handed back to the student and returned directly to the Curriculum coordinator.
14. If students have had equal to 50% or more of their assessment tasks recorded as non-attempts in any course the Principal will not certify that the course has been satisfactorily completed and therefore a student cannot progress to the HSC.
15. Students will be required to complete all course work to a satisfactory level before they can progress to the HSC. This could mean completing any course work including assessments.

Malpractice

All tasks submitted as part of the College's Preliminary assessment program must be the student's own effort and any proven malpractice, including plagiarism, will result in serious penalties, including the award of a zero mark for that task.

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

Non Serious attempt – Examinations

From BOSTES

Description

The [HSC Rules and Procedures](#) require students to attempt a range of questions throughout the examination paper. Attempting multiple-choice questions is not sufficient. Supervisors of marking report students who submit frivolous or objectionable material.

Case studies

- A student attempted multiple-choice questions only and did not engage with other question types across the examination.
- A student submitted an obscene response which was considered to be highly objectionable.

Penalty range

Students engaging in a non-serious attempt generally receive no result in that course. This in turn may jeopardise the award of the Higher School Certificate.

O'Connor Catholic College Policy

If a teacher considers that a student has made a non genuine attempt at an examination or part of the examination they should consult with their KLA Coordinator and the Curriculum Coordinator. Together a decision can be made regarding the examination.

Preliminary HSC

If it is considered that an examination or parts of the examination are a non genuine attempt a student can be issued with an 'N' Determination warning if they intend to continue with the course. The 'N' Determination will outline that part or parts of the examination that need to

be completed to a satisfactory standard as agreed to by the subject teacher, prior to the commencement of the HSC course. If a student is not continuing the course the examination mark will stand and will be reflected in the final grade awarded in that Preliminary subject for the RoSA.

Life Skills

Students undertaking a Stage 6 Life Skills course will be assessed on their achievement of the Life Skills outcomes identified in the planning process for the individual student.

Students can demonstrate achievement of outcomes in a number of ways, and across a range of environments including the school, community and workplace. Assessment should reflect the student's ability to generalise the knowledge and skills to a range of adult environments.

The content listed with each outcome provides examples of assessable activities on which teacher judgement will be based. Students do not need to complete all of the associated content to demonstrate achievement of a Life Skills outcome.

Evidence of achievement of outcomes can be gathered through ongoing assessment for learning and assessment of learning at particular points in the course of study.

Students entered for Life Skills courses may achieve the designated outcomes independently or with support.

Disability Provisions

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth) and the *Disability Standards for Education (2005)* require BOSTES to ensure that students with a disability are able to access and respond to an examination.

BOSTES may approve disability provisions for the Higher School Certificate examinations if a student has a permanent or temporary disability that would, in a normal examination situation, prevent him or her from:

1. reading the examination questions; and/or
2. communicating his or her responses.

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

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.

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.

How Assessment is Monitored

1. KLA Coordinators are responsible for the management of the assessment process. It is recommended practice to use word guidelines rather than word limits. The Principal has overall responsibility for the school assessment policy and practice.
2. All assessment notifications and tasks including exams should be provided to the Coordinator before being issued to students. Coordinators are to check that tasks are accurate in the information presented including all necessary requirements. Coordinators are to maintain a file of all tasks and notifications.
3. Coordinators are to ensure that subject teachers follow the Assessment schedule and are to be notified of any changes to the assessment schedule.
4. Subject teachers are encouraged to discuss tasks with the Coordinator to ensure the task demonstrates validity and viability as a learning tool. This is an ongoing process in the department.

Recorded

1. Preliminary HSC assessment marks and ranks will be placed in the Central file after each formal task has been graded. KLA Coordinators are to ensure this by regularly checking the mark site.
2. Subject teachers are advised to maintain their own record of marks taken.
3. Assessment task results and rank are to be recorded on student reports.
4. Sample work is to be maintained across the range of grades. KLS Coordinators are to negotiate where sample work is kept. Judgements of grades should be made according to the comparison of like samples.

5.

Reporting

The college provides two written reports to parents; the first in early term 2 and the second at the end of term 3 in the HSC year. Parents are invited to attend a parent teacher interview in week 4 of term 2. Each report will contain the number of students presenting in a course, the tasks, marks and ranks. The task mark will reflect the raw percentage. The final report will also contain a detailed Pastoral Report. Both reports will have the days absent. The reports are previewed by the KLA Coordinator and the Principal.