



TAS
THE ARMIDALE
SCHOOL

Title:	Stage 6 Assessment Policy
Summary:	Policies and procedures related to assessment of students in NESA courses for Stage 6. Including appeals, 'N'-determinations.
Intended Audience:	Students
Author:	Director of Studies
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Stage 6 Assessment Policy

Background

This document outlines the policy and procedures associated with the assessment of the Preliminary and HSC course at The Armidale School of the New Higher School Certificate and draws on the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) advice contained in the ACE Manual and other relevant documents available on their website.

Students must have completed the NESA “All My Own Work” course that is available online. Successful completion of each module must be sent through to the Academic Assistant before enrolment in any Preliminary or HSC subject can be made.

Assessment Program

Assessment programs for a Stage 6 course have the following features:

- Assessment is based on the syllabus objectives and outcomes and is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Tasks clearly relate to the outcomes being assessed and must cover all the outcomes with the exception of values and attitudes.
- A variety of assessment tasks and contexts will be provided so that all students are given the opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of outcomes in an authentic manner. Tasks chosen will also allow for a full range of student achievement.
- Assessment tasks will be sensitive to gender, disability, culture, background language, socio-economic status and geographical location.
- At TAS, we avoid over-assessing by recognising that a single task can often provide information about more than one outcome. It is expected that a course assessment schedule meets any NESA requirements and is, therefore, likely to contain 3 tasks in Year 11 and 4 tasks in Year 12 for a 2 Unit subject including an End of Course exam (Trial HSC for Yr 12) and 3 tasks including a Trial HSC for a 1 Unit subject.
- When designing a task, staff will make the requirements of the task as clear as possible in a language understandable by the students, which uses NESA terminology in a correct and consistent manner.
- Where a task is common to more than one class, the same staff member will issue the above information.
- A marking scheme will be provided for each task. This may occur at the time that the task is given or as feedback when the marked task is returned.
- While values and attitudes are an integral part of learning, their attainment is not assessed for HSC assessment purposes. Staff may, however, wish to comment on this area in report comments.

Assessment Schedules and Notifications

Departments produce assessment schedules prior to commencing teaching a Year 11 or Year 12 course. These schedules must conform to the component and weighting requirements of the relevant syllabus.

Assessment is concerned with describing the student's achievement at the end of the course and assessment schedules will be weighted to reflect this, although specified NESAs requirements for each course needs to be adhered to.

Assessment schedules will specify:

- The nature of tasks
- The relative importance (weighting)
- The approximate week when they will be held
- The outcomes being assessed

At least two weeks prior to each task, students must receive written information of the exact date, duration, knowledge and skills outcomes being assessed and any other relevant information. Tasks that have been worked on out of class should, where possible, indicate any rules regarding submission (eg. "must be submitted during our timetabled lesson that day"). If the precise time for submission is not listed on the notification then it is expected that it is handed to either the class teacher or Coordinator by 3:30pm. If neither of them are able to be found then it can be handed directly to the Director of Studies or Academic Assistant. Marking criteria/scales should be supplied at the time of notification when possible. Students are able to receive these assessment notifications in hard copy or via email.

Adjustments to the assessment schedules are permitted in consultation with the Director of Studies, the Coordinator and the class with at least two weeks notice. The students should then receive a copy of the revised full assessment schedule.

It is the responsibility of students who are absent when task notices are issued to obtain the notice on return to school. It is good practice to check in with the teacher and other students whenever a class is missed as sometimes notifications are distributed with more than the minimum two weeks notice. No more than two in-class tasks may fall occur on the same day. If a student has more than two in-class tasks set for a particular day they must immediately (at least 10 days prior to the tasks being say) bring it to the attention of the Director of Studies who may move tasks to less congested days/weeks provided appropriate notice is given.

Students are entitled to feedback in the form of marks, grades, and/or comments within two weeks of submission. Where possible, students should be given the opportunity to check the marking before results are recorded. If students feel there are grounds to appeal the marking of an assessment task then they must notify the teacher before the end of the lesson and must hand their task back to the teacher without alteration.

If, after the completion of a task, it is found that the task design or the conduct of the task had a significant fault the Coordinator, in consultation with the Director of Studies, will recommend changes to the published assessment schedule for that course that may include a substitute task or exclude the task and re-weight other tasks. The Director of Studies must ratify these recommendations before the date of the next task in that course, and students must be issued with a revised schedule.

In all cases where a student does not meet the assessment requirements of the course, by failing to submit or attend a task without adequate reason, the Coordinator and advisor will be informed by the classroom teacher and, in most cases, a formal N-warning from the Director of Studies will be issued. The student's teacher is required to contact a parent/guardian of the student and acquaint them with this breach of the student's responsibilities.

Where the mark received for an assessment task is zero, the question of whether the attempt was a genuine one is a matter for the Coordinator's professional judgement in consultation with the Director of Studies. If a student disagrees with this decision then they have the right to appeal (see Appeal Procedure below).

Where a student undertakes a course provided by another school or institution, assessment will occur as per the policies of that institution. It is the responsibility of that student to ask for a copy of the relevant advice including their assessment policy and assessment schedules. Students studying at another school or institution will be assessed as part of the total enrolment for that class and not as part of the cohort at TAS. In the case of an appeal, students must follow the host school's rules and procedures.

Responsibilities of students

Students in their Preliminary or HSC year are responsible for:

- Ensuring that they obtain and understand the school's assessment policy for Stage 6.
- Attempting, or submitting, each assessment task on the date due to the best of their ability.
- Ensuring that an in-class task has been submitted directly to the teacher at the end of the lesson and before their departure.
- Ensuring that any concerns that they have about the marking or comments concerning assessment tasks are addressed during the lesson that the task is returned and that the task stays with the teacher until it is resolved.
- Demonstrating through application and achievement, that they have met the requirements of each task and, ultimately, each course.
- Completing appropriate appeal procedures should they fail to meet task deadlines due to reasonable absence, illness or misadventure.
- Discussing any concerns with the Director of Studies in a timely manner (within 48 hours unless that is not possible).

Appeal procedures

- Students who fail to submit or attend a task on the advised date will receive a mark of zero for that task. The Coordinator will be notified of this failure to submit or attend by the class teacher. The class teacher will speak to the student and notify their advisor and parent(s)/guardian(s).
- A student must complete an Appeals form immediately they become aware of a possible absence from a task. This is to be done prior to the task if at all possible and covers situations including approved absence from school and attendance at a conflicting school activity.
- The student may choose to appeal a mark if they consider that they have reasonable grounds for appeal. These may include illness, misadventure as defined in the ACE Manual, absence due to an approved school activity or exchange.
- An appeal on illness grounds must be accompanied by a Medical Certificate that covers the required dates.
- An appeal on misadventure grounds must be accompanied by reasonable independent documentation.
- Technological problems (including but not limited to saving, printing or hard drive issues) are not grounds for appeal. Students using technology to complete an assessment task are advised

to plan to complete with a few days spare so as to deal with any printing or saving issues. It is recommended that students consider how they will systematically and regularly back up their work.

- Appeals MUST be submitted on the school appeals form in hard copy to the Director of Studies (DoS) within 48 hours of the task or the student's return to school. The student and staff member concerned should complete the appeal before submitting it to the Director of Studies. If the Director of Studies grants the appeal, he/she may determine that an extension, an alternate date to submit the task (including before departing on an approved school activity), a substitute task or, if all of these options are not feasible, an estimate based on other completed assessment tasks is appropriate. Students are responsible for this paperwork to be completed and should not leave it to a teacher to fill in or submit. The office of the Director of Studies will respond to the student and the teacher via email regarding the outcome of the appeal within 7 days.
- Students have the right to appeal the decision of the Director of Studies to the School's Appeals Committee. This committee includes the Coordinator of the course and two teaching members of the School Executive. The purpose of the School's Appeal Committee is to ensure that the Director of Studies has complied with the published Stage 6 Assessment Policy. Students are to appeal to the School's Appeals Committee by requesting in writing or email to both the Director of Studies and the Coordinator of the subject within 48 hours of becoming aware of the outcome of the original appeal. The Director of Studies will outline to the Appeals committee the grounds on which the appeal was denied.
- If the Appeals Committee upholds the appeal they are able to determine whether an extension to the due date is granted, an alternative task is to be sat or an estimate is to be given.
- Students have the right to then appeal the determination of the Appeals Committee to the Headmaster within 48 hours of becoming aware of the outcome of the decision. This should be requested in writing or by email to both the Headmaster and the Director of Studies. The decision of the Headmaster is final and any further appeal to the NESAA can be made, as per NESAA's recommendations, only if:
 - the weightings specified by the school in its assessment program do not adhere to the NSW Education Standards Authority's requirements;
 - the procedures used by the school do not conform with its stated assessment program;
 - there are computational or clerical errors.
- After the final HSC examination, you can obtain your rank order for assessment in each course via your Students Online account. If you feel that your placement in any course is not correct, you should talk to the Director of Studies immediately. If you are still not satisfied that the ranking is correct, you may apply to the Headmaster for a review.

THE NESAA guidelines for this review by the Headmaster are as follows:

- There is no provision for a review of the marks you received for individual assessment tasks. Reviews are limited to the assessment process. The only matters that the school will consider are whether or not:

- a) the weightings specified by the school in its assessment program conform with the NESA requirements as detailed in the relevant syllabus
 - b) the procedures used by the school for determining the final assessment mark comply with its stated assessment program
 - c) computational or other clerical errors have been made in the determination of the assessment mark.
- If you wish to apply for a review, you must do so by the date specified by NESA. The school will advise you of the outcome of its review, and will advise NESA of any changes to assessment marks.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the school review, you may advise the Headmaster that you wish an appeal to be sent to NESA. You cannot appeal against the marks awarded for individual assessment tasks. NESA will consider only whether:

- a) the school review process was adequate for determining items (a), (b) and (c) above
- b) the conduct of the review was proper in all respects.

N Determination

The NESA allows an N to be determined in a course if the student has failed to meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Followed the course developed or endorsed by the NESA; and
- Applied themselves with diligence and sustained effort to the set tasks and experiences provided in the course by the school; and
- Achieved some or all of the course outcomes

Should any student be in danger of an N determination, the school will give the student adequate notice to allow them to rectify the situation. At TAS, this takes the form of at least two warning letters and an interview with the student and parent(s) or guardian(s) with the student's advisor and Director of Studies accompanying the second warning letter.

A warning letter will be issued as soon as serious concerns become apparent that have not been addressed by normal academic counselling processes. It is assumed that the normal process of school detentions (where appropriate), notifying the student's advisor, House Master (HoM) and Coordinator for counselling/intervention would have occurred before a letter would be issued. The exception to this may be a missed task of significant weight.

Warning letters are only issued by the Director of Studies using details supplied by the class teacher with the support of the Coordinator. The student's advisor will contact the parents of the child by phone to notify them that the letter is being sent home and what support the child can receive in meeting the actions required. Students must be given adequate time to complete the tasks, taking into account the time it takes for the parents to receive the warning letter by post.

Academic Honesty

The honesty of students in completing assessment tasks, examinations and submitted works, and of teachers and others in guiding students, underpins the integrity of the Higher School Certificate. Throughout the assessment process, the highest level of honesty is required.

Each student's mark will be determined by the quality of the work produced by the student only. Any component of a student's work that has been written, created or developed by others (including friends, family or tutors) must be acknowledged in accordance with NESAs subject-specific documentation. Use or inclusion of material from other sources, such as books, journals and electronic sources, including the internet, must be acknowledged. General teaching and learning do not require formal acknowledgement.

Dishonest behaviour carried out for the purpose of gaining unfair advantage in the assessment process constitutes malpractice, or cheating. Malpractice in any form, including plagiarism, is unacceptable. NESAs treats allegations of malpractice very seriously and detected malpractice will limit a student's marks and jeopardise their Higher School Certificate. Should malpractice be suspected, students will be required to demonstrate that all unacknowledged work is entirely their own. Serious and deliberate acts of malpractice amount to corrupt conduct and, where appropriate, NESAs will report matters to the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

These requirements should be read in conjunction with NESAs syllabuses and policies in related areas such as malpractice and satisfactory completion of a course. Details can be found on the NESAs website.

Malpractice

Malpractice is any activity that allows you to gain an unfair advantage over other students. It includes, but is not limited to:

- copying someone else's work in part or in whole, and presenting it as your own
 - using material directly from books, journals, CDs or the internet without reference to the source
 - building on the ideas of another person without reference to the source
 - buying, stealing or borrowing another person's work and presenting it as your own
 - submitting work that another person, such as a parent, coach or subject expert, has contributed to substantially
 - using words, ideas, designs or the work of others in practical and performance tasks without appropriate acknowledgement
 - paying someone to write or prepare material
 - breaching school examination rules
 - cheating in an HSC examination
 - using non-approved aids during an assessment task
 - contriving false explanations to explain work not handed in by the due date
 - assisting another student to engage in malpractice.
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- All students must have completed "All My Own Work", the on-line course mandated by the NESAs, and follow these principles and thus have a clear understanding of what constitutes malpractice.
 - Should a student be accused of malpractice in a task, the Coordinator will notify the Director of Studies and the student's advisor. There is to be no further discussion with the student

regarding the matter until their advisor and/or another staff member who can act as their advocate is present. Parents are also to be notified of any allegation.

- The Director of Studies will interview the student with their parent, advisor or staff member who is there to act as their advocate. Notes from this interview will be taken and kept on record. If a student is found guilty of malpractice they may receive a mark of zero or partial marks in the identified part of the assessment task.
- In cases where the malpractice is disputed, the students involved may appeal the decision to the Appeals Committee. The Appeals Committee will determine the extent to which a student's mark is reduced.
- A formal letter written by the Director of Studies and sent to the parent of the student will outline the incident and subsequent sanctions.
- Students found guilty of malpractice will have the incident registered with the NESAs Register of Malpractice (see below).

NESA Register of Malpractice

The NSW Education Standards Authority has decided to implement a Register of Malpractice in HSC Assessment Tasks. Implementation began in Term 4 2013 with the 2014 HSC cohort.

The decision to create this new measure was initiated by an Independent Commission Against Corruption investigation, which required the NSW Education Standards Authority to develop a new register for incidents of malpractice by students undertaking HSC school assessment tasks.

The Register is similar to the existing report on malpractice in HSC examinations and will help inform strategies for schools, school sectors and the NSW Education Standards Authority on how malpractice can be prevented or addressed.

The Register will apply to all HSC students and will collect information on courses where malpractice has occurred, types of offence and the nature of any penalties applied. The NSW Education Standards Authority will publish annually aggregated data in a similar way to the programs which, identify breaches of examination rules, applications for disability provisions and illness/misadventure appeals. Individual schools will not be identified.

At TAS, the Director of Studies will notify the Headmaster when a case of reportable malpractice occurs and either the Director of Studies or the Headmaster will complete the necessary reporting to NESAs.