ASSESSMENT POLICY

Definitions

Assessment: is the term typically used to describe activities (both formal and informal) conducted by a teacher to obtain information about the knowledge, skills and attitude of students in relation to the learning process. It is a tool for learning and measurement.

Evaluation: is a judgment of the quality or value of a student’s performance. Formative evaluation is for the purpose of enhancing learning whereas summative evaluation is for the purpose of making a decision, typically related to some form of promotion. The evidence used for evaluation comes from assessment.

Criterion-based assessment: where gathered information is based on an established set of criterion that outlines the key concepts and/or skills to be demonstrated in the task.

Norm referenced assessment: the gathered information is based on the relative performance of the student sample i.e. comparing one student to another.

Rationale

Assessment is required to measure what is considered as valuable to the overall educational advancement of the student. It is acknowledged that assessment is a complex and exact process involving varying degrees of effort in observation, description, measurement and judgment. It aims to promote a positive attitude to learning amongst staff and students, encourage the pursuit of excellence and provide information regarding the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process in relation to the course objectives. Assessment is an integral part of teaching and should be planned at the same time as the curriculum. It is an invaluable tool for the teacher to gauge student ability, refine student performance and improve strategies, as well as assisting in the allocation of student grades or marks.

Principles

- The process of assessment should be consistent with the intention and purpose of curriculum. It should not consist simply of marks, but also be a definition of what the student has gained in relation to the learning opportunities provided. Procedures should relate specifically to the course (i.e. assessment should not be an isolated activity);
- Important aspects of assessment include validity, reliability, fairness and equity;
- Assessment should be designed to enable students to have a quality learning experience while they are partaking in the process;
- Activities should be accessible to all. Disadvantage should not occur on the grounds of gender, culture, linguistic background or physical disability as a result of biased assessment tools. Provisions are to be made for consideration of disadvantage and modified tasks and this will be communicated on the school report;
- Teachers are expected to develop a wide variety of means for gathering information about students’ performance so that the most appropriate means can be matched with specific objectives. Such means will include written responses, skill tests, questionnaires, interviews, projects, oral presentations, folio presentations and so on. A variety of approaches should be used, thereby reflecting the complexity of student learning and appropriate to the subject;
- Assessment is ongoing in order to reflect the dynamic nature of the learning process. Opportunities (such as resubmission, if submitted by the due date) should be given to meet requirements. Work should be progressively monitored throughout the course and tasks should be assessed over a reasonable time span. Setting a number of tasks towards the end of the semester should be avoided. Assessed components should be spaced evenly across the semester;
- Assessment procedures must be just and fair for all students by ensuring that the criteria for successful completion of assessment tasks are clearly communicated;
- Assessment procedures should not place an unrealistic work expectation on teachers in terms of correction and recording;
- At times, mutual assessment between student and teachers is appropriate (e.g. through the conferencing or writing);
- Individual subjects should consider the ‘bigger picture’ when ascertaining the number of assessment components. Students should not be over burdened by assessment demands in one subject at the expense of other subjects or at the expense of their own welfare; and
- Assessment should occur regularly and work should be returned to students within a reasonable time (no more than two weeks). Constructive feedback should be given either orally or in writing.
To meet a satisfactory standard for a unit (S) students in VCE Units 1-4 must:

- satisfactorily complete (S), satisfactory late submission (SL) or satisfactory after resubmission (SR) ALL the designated Learning Outcomes according to the teacher’s judgment of what the student has achieved as per the set learning criteria. It is important that all teachers within a faculty or multiple subjects maintain a consistent approach as to what constitutes an S or N for each learning outcome. It is imperative that this consultation occur so that all students receive an equal marking standard. It is highly recommended that cross marking occurs to maintain this uniformity;
- for Units 1 and 2 a student may achieve an S even with a grade of E or below where the teacher has determined sufficient knowledge of the set outcomes;
- for Units 3 and 4 a student may receive an S even if they achieve a score of below 40% as long as they have satisfactorily completed or demonstrated the designated learning outcomes. If a teacher considers that a student has not achieved or displayed an ability equitable to an S, the student has the opportunity to resubmit or demonstrate this knowledge. Following the resubmission, if the task is at an S standard the score stays as per original mark but an S is awarded;
- for the purposes of resubmission and redemption processes alternative forms of assessment may be used.

A unit grade will be calculated for Units 1 and 2 and used for promotion purposes.

Any decisions regarding satisfactory completion of a unit outside these guidelines would be extraordinary cases and should be discussed with the appropriate Learning Coordinator and/or Campus Director.

Communication
At the commencement of each unit, all students must be issued with a document outlining the tasks to be completed and the way in which they will be assessed.

Late Submission Years 7-10
Students are expected to submit work on the due date and penalties will be incurred for those who do not. Effective use should be made of the planner and students should organise themselves so that work is submitted on time. Teachers are to give sufficient notice of due dates, dependent on the size of the task and the demands placed on students in other subjects.

Teachers are to follow the SMS notification to parents/guardians process and follow up procedures.

VCE
- formatted letter sent home to parents if task not submitted by the due date;
- the penalty for lateness for satisfactory work will be recorded as SL for learning outcomes and NAL (not assessed due to late submission) for assessment tasks;
- if a student does not submit the task by the new due date (as per letter), the student will be awarded an N for learning outcomes and NA (not assessed due to non-submission) for assessment tasks. This N can only be changed via a VCE Panel meeting. When calculating the global grade (Units 1 and 2 only), students will be awarded zero for this assessment task and have it included in the grade average calculations;
- Units 3 and 4 - no official School Assessed Coursework (SACs) or School Assessed Tasks (SATs) will be accepted after the due date. The only exception to this is absence supported by a medical certificate or a school authorised absence.

Resubmission
Students are permitted to re-submit unsatisfactory work for a Learning Outcome. This will only be used to enable a student to reach a satisfactory level, it will not affect the initial grade given. Time granted should be no more than one week from the time the teacher returns the work to the student.

Work submitted late or in the last week of a unit will not be eligible for resubmission.

Special Consideration
A student will be considered eligible for Special Consideration for Learning Outcomes and Assessment Tasks if he or she is affected to a significant degree by illness, factors relating to personal environment or by other serious causes which either prevent completion of work or seriously affect it. Some students may also complete modified tasks if their circumstances warrant such action. Information regarding students who undertake modified tasks is available from the Educational Support team.
In the case of Assessment Tasks missed due to severe illness the student’s grade is shown as ABS* with the asterisk indicating that Special Consideration applies. A student who completes an Assessment Task under conditions of disadvantage at C+ standard, for example, has his or her grade shown as C+*.

**Student Extended Absence**

**Homework whilst on family holidays during term time**

It is appreciated that scheduling family holidays is not always easy and some families cannot arrange their holidays during the school holiday period. However, it should be acknowledged that this may have an impact upon a student’s academic progress. Parents are asked to avoid holidays during the school term and it is very important that students are not taken on holiday when exams are being conducted. Parents are asked to refrain from requesting teachers to set work for students who are going on a family holiday during the term. If there is no alternative to a holiday during term time and parents want their child to continue with some school related work, it is suggested that they participate in activities associated with the holiday itself. This could be calculations of distance travelled, costs involved or the populations of towns etc. A travel journal could be maintained to include the religious and cultural background, the history and the geography of the places visited. The geography could include the major industries of the region/s and some sketches could also be drawn.

Students need to take responsibility for advising their teachers of the extended absence in advance and for submitting any activity/work that they wish to have assessed as soon as they return to school.

Students will be marked absent (ABS) for tasks completed during this time and global grades will be calculated based on the remaining tasks and any assessable activities associated with the holiday itself.

Semester Reports should acknowledge an extended absence if the student has missed a substantial part of the semester (e.g. more than two weeks). Students in VCE and VCAL must attend at least 90% of classes and ALL Assessment Tasks (see VCE Administrative Handbook).

Students are expected to attend scheduled examinations. Parents should not take their child out of school during examinations unless there are exceptional circumstances where they have negotiated alternative arrangements (usually in writing) with the appropriate Learning Coordinator or Director of Campus.

Work will need to be provided for students not attending school due to circumstances such as extended illness, bereavement and, in rare cases, suspensions or during negotiated transfers to other schools.

**Authentication**

Measures should be taken to ensure the assessed work is the student’s own. Such measures include:

- sighting plans, drafts etc;
- questioning students about the content of the work and ascertaining whether or not they are well versed on the topic;
- only assessing the parts of the work that the teacher feels the student has completed;
- insisting on the use of the referencing system outlined in the planner;
- asking students to complete at least some of the task in class time, while the teacher is monitoring the progress; and
- awarding students an ‘NA’ if the teacher cannot realistically authenticate the work and the student has not followed the necessary processes. Parent contact is to be made by the teacher.

**Examinations/Testing**

Formal semester examinations will occur for Years 10 and VCE Units 1 and 2, in all subjects except those who have been granted an exemption after a formal application to the Curriculum Management Team.

Testing may occur in scheduled classes at any time. Teachers of Year 7, 8 and 9 may wish to hold more formal tests in a double lesson several weeks prior to the end of the semester. Individual teachers and/or faculties will make such decisions.

Prospective Year 7 students will be independently tested the year before they begin at the College. This data will be used to formulate classes and identify particular needs.

All VCE Unit 3 and 4 units have an external formal examination component worth up to 66% of the total mark.

Year 12 VCE Units 3 and 4 have numerical marks that are subject to external statistical moderation by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA).
Policy Development and Review
This policy was developed by the KLA Heads of Department in consultation with the Curriculum Committee and all teaching staff in 1997. The policy was written by the Director of Learning – Policy and was reviewed in 2005 and 2011. It will be reviewed again in the light of the changes to Commonwealth and State Government directives or as the need arises but no later than August 2014.