

Workplace Practices

2016 Chief Assessor’s Report

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## Overview

Chief Assessors’ reports give an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, the quality of student performance, and any relevant statistical information.

In 2016, there appeared to be a better understanding by teachers of the Workplace Practices subject outline and therefore better student performance overall. A good understanding of the subject outline and reading the previous year’s Chief Assessor’s report is a sound basis for teachers to better assist their students achieve.

Tasks which allowed students a variety of presentation methods — including oral or multimodal forms besides written forms — can assist the full range of students to achieve well against the performance standards.

## School Assessment

Word-limits are not stipulated in the subject outline for the 70% school-assessed component (Assessment Types 1, 2, and 3) and therefore no penalties should be applied for exceeding word-limits.

Student samples from the school-assessed component are moderated. When work is missing from the student samples provided for moderation, a Variations — Moderation Materials form is vital to assist moderators and explain assessment decisions. Packaging that was clearly labelled with students’ names (and SACE registration numbers) assisted moderators to identify the samples for moderation more easily.

Assessment Type 1: Folio

The majority of folio tasks this year (minimum of three tasks for a 20-credit subject and minimum of one task for a 10-credit subject) were chosen appropriately from the five topics specified in the subject outline. Some schools chose negotiated topics for the 20-credit subject, which allowed for more local content and meaning for students when responding to the task(s). In a 10-credit subject, negotiated tasks must be undertaken and have a separate focus to the other four topics available for the 20‑credit subject.

**The more successful tasks and responses**

* enabled students to investigate — using primary and secondary sources — and analyse what they had discovered
* encouraged reflection and self-evaluation in more than one assessment, although this does not need to be addressed in all folio tasks
* had in-built flexibility, allowing students to address and investigate their own industry area
* allowed students to interact with, analyse, question, and reflect on the information that they discovered in relation to the world of work.

**The less successful tasks and responses**

* lacked in-depth self-evaluation, sometimes because the task was not designed to allow for this
* incorrectly applied the performance standards (e.g. assessing application, or not assessing reflection and evaluation)
* reflected on a video watched, restricting the opportunity for students to investigate and analyse and show knowledge and understanding
* were overly scaffolded and did not allow students to provide in-depth and detailed analysis, or demonstrate knowledge and understanding to a comprehensive and perceptive standard
* asked students to undertake basic ‘find and copy’ tasks (e.g. find job statistics, create a brochure, make a PowerPoint presentation, find a job advertisement), but did not ask the students to analyse, reflect on, or evaluate any of this information.

**General information**

* Word-limits are not specified in the subject outline for the school-assessed component, and where a task did include a word-limit, it often limited students’ opportunities to achieve a higher standard against performance standards.
* The criteria assessed in Assessment Type 1: Folio do not include application and therefore application should not be assessed in this assessment type.

Assessment Type 2: Performance

**The more successful responses**

* included all three forms of evidence required:
1. Student evidence of learning, which may be a journal, photo-story, or portfolio (i.e. what is informally referred to by moderators as ‘student voice’ showing knowledge and understanding), collected from 50 to 60 hours of activities related to performance for a 20-credit subject, or 25 to 30 hours of activities related to performance for a 10-credit subject.
2. Workplace Supervisor’s Report (available on the SACE website), or a Statement of Attainment or academic record from an RTO.
3. A Teacher’s Report on Student Performance — Vocational Learning form, or a Teacher’s Report on Student Performance — VET form as supporting evidence of their engagement in a work-related context. These forms are available on the SACE website.
* included evidence that showed knowledge and understanding through a performance journal or photo-story, or verbally
* where scaffolding formats were used, responded to open-ended questions, which enabled students to better demonstrate their knowledge and understanding
* provided commentary from teachers about the student’s undertaking of their performance activity through the use of the Teacher’s Report on Student Performance forms.

**The less successful responses**

* lacked evidence to demonstrate knowledge and understanding (for instance, student voice)
* included student evidence that tended to include more recount and therefore did not demonstrate knowledge and understanding to a high level
* included photos, but with little or no annotation that provided evidence to demonstrate the students’ knowledge and understanding
* provided only Statement of Attainment (VET) or Workplace Supervisor’s Report with no other evidence to support the grade awarded
* were not supported by the appropriate forms (listed above) and were therefore difficult to confirm the grade given.

**General information**

* Knowledge and understanding, and application are assessed in the assessment type, but not reflection and evaluation, so student evidence should not be reflective in its nature.
* Forms such as the Workplace Supervisor’s Report or a Statement of Attainment or academic record from an RTO are the responsibility of the teacher to organise.
* Teachers grades were able to be confirmed more often when in-depth information had been provided on the Teacher’s Report on Student Performance forms.
* Where students have completed work experience for the required hours specified in the subject outline, but a Workplace Supervisor form cannot be provided, it is not appropriate to submit an I result. Rather, a fair grade should be awarded that considers information provided to the teacher by the employer in any previous interactions (given that contact between the school and employer is required as part of the school sectors’ Workplace Learning Guidelines).

Assessment Type 3: Reflection

**The more successful responses**

* reflected on and evaluated two different experiences, rather than two work placements or two different semesters of the same VET course
* responded to tasks that were not overly scaffolded, allowing students to explore and expand on their individual experiences
* responded to tasks that had themselves as the focus, for example, a personal reflection or a workplace reflection
* connected their learning to their future pathway(s)
* reflected on and evaluated the learning achieved throughout their workplace experiences and in class over the whole year.

**The less successful responses**

* reflected on a folio task already completed
* recounted an event or experience without demonstrating reflection and evaluation
* in a 20-credit subject, completed both tasks with reference to the same work placement or VET course.

**General information**

* Word-limits are not specified in the subject outline for the school-assessed component, and where a task did include a word-limit, it often limited students’ opportunities to achieve a higher standard against performance standards.
* For a 20-credit subject, two reflections are required and should be packaged as Assessment Type 3: Reflection (not as an addendum to Assessment Type 2: Performance).

## External Assessment

Assessment Type 4: Investigation

The overall standard of investigations in 2016 was consistent with that of previous years, as was the relatively equal distribution of students choosing to complete practical investigations or issues investigations. The majority of investigations continue to be written, with few choosing multimodal formats.

**The more successful responses**

* responded to a task that allowed students to choose their own focus question and investigation
* had a specific industry focus that supported the undertaking of their investigation
* directly related their investigation to their industry focus in a meaningful manner either in the introduction or in the concluding reflection and evaluation on their learning
* had focus questions or practical tasks that were specific, rather than overly general topics such as ‘discrimination’ or ‘WHS’ which do not allow the student any ability to focus on an actual response; similarly, ‘quoting a job’ and other general topics limited student ability to meet the performance standards to a high level
* used a wide range of sources, including secondary and primary sources; this applied to both the issues investigation and the practical investigation options
* clearly demonstrated an understanding of the difference between presenting information (such as facts, statistics, and graphs) and analysing the information and what it has taught students about their chosen topic
* used the language of the performance standards, such as ‘investigation’, ‘analysis’, ‘understanding’, ‘evaluating’, and ‘reflecting’, to demonstrate how they are actively meeting the performance standards in a manner that was not scaffolded
* (specifically for the issues investigation) started with an appropriate question, worded as an issue, that students could engage with and investigate
* (specifically for the practical investigation) enabled students to demonstrate their involvement in a real-world (rather than imagined) activity related to their focus industry, thus assisting them to reflect on and evaluate their learning in regard to their own career decisions, and how this issue will impact on them as they transition to the workforce, resulting in higher-level evidence of reflection and evaluation.

**The less successful responses**

* asked every student in the class to complete the same topic or task, which limited student ability to engage effectively with the topic
* used evidence such as surveys conducted with friends, interviews with people not closely associated with their topic, or Internet sources from overseas that did not relate to their actual industry context
* included investigation and analysis, or reflection and evaluation in the appendix, meaning that it cannot be assessed by markers
* had the research and investigation as implicit, rather than explicit; this was particularly evident in practical investigations where students applied their learning from VET to a real situation, without undertaking any further investigation or analysing their knowledge and understanding to any extent
* included only a finished product (practical) with no other supporting evidence to demonstrate investigation, analysis, reflection, or evaluation
* concluded without completing a reflection on, or an evaluation of, their findings in relation to the world of work and their own future in their chosen industry
* responded to tasks that asked students to imagine their involvement in a particular work-related task, without ever actually completing the task — meaning that students could not analyse, or reflect on, or evaluate a process.

## Operational Advice

School assessment tasks are set and marked by teachers. Teachers’ assessment decisions are reviewed by moderators.

* Teachers are not required to include formative work, nor the investigation, for moderation.
* If interviews comprise part of an assessment, packaging a digital copy of the interview enables moderators to more easily verify the work assessed (rather than just a note from a teacher).
* Display folders do not enhance the ability to view student work at moderation.
* Packaging work stapled together in assessment types (i.e. folio evidence together, performance evidence together, reflection evidence together) is recommended.
* Submit photocopies of VET documents, not originals.
* Variations — Moderation Materials forms must be submitted to explain why tasks may be missing.

## General Comments

Overall, students who undertook this subject to further their knowledge of a chosen focus industry performed the best in this subject. Where large groups of students were all asked to perform routine or overly structured and scaffolded tasks, students, on the whole, were not as able to meet the performance standards to a high level.

In general this year moderators and markers were pleased to notice that more tasks had been designed by teachers to meet the needs of specific groups of students, as well as the individual needs of students.

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Chief Assessor