2021 Child Studies Subject Assessment Advice

Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the 2021 assessment cycle, gives 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, and the quality of student performance.

Teachers should refer to the subject outline for specifications on content and learning requirements, and to the subject operational information for operational matters and key dates.

School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Practical Activity

For a 20-credit subject, students undertake at least four practical activities. Students should undertake at least two action plans and at least two research tasks. An individual evaluation report must be included in at least two practical activities.

At least one practical application must be undertaken individually. The remaining practical activity or activities may be undertaken individually, in pairs, in groups, or as a whole class.

Each practical activity must consist of:

* an individual action plan or a research task
* a practical application.

For this assessment type, students provide evidence of their learning primarily in relation to the following assessment design criteria:

* investigation and critical analysis (research task) and/or problem-solving (action plan)
* practical application
* evaluation.

The more successful responses commonly:

* identified issues within action plans that directly related to the practical tasks, rather than identifying and presenting research of the issues
* had evaluations and action plans which were well structured and used specific headings to establish direct links to specific features of the assessment design criteria
* evaluated the process used by explaining why they did something, what the outcome was, and how they responded
* demonstrated analysis of relevant information to substantiate their own findings
* included both visual and written evidence of the practical application
* provided evidence of a range of captioned images that directly addressed how the student met the performance standards
* evaluated the impact of technology on the health and wellbeing of children rather than discussing the technology used
* included photographic evidence that clearly documented the process undertaken to complete the practical
* included visual evidence of the final product
* used a variety of highly relevant sources to support arguments or viewpoints in research tasks
* considered the validity of sources
* used higher order vocabulary and subject specific terminology in written tasks
* demonstrated clear analysis of a topic/issue rather than just providing a recount of information
* specifically linked identification and discussion of an issue to the practical task
* appropriately acknowledged sources and were consistent in the system of referencing used
* included practical tasks that directly related to the research undertaken rather than stand-alone activities
* focused on a smaller number of specific features which allowed for more detailed and insightful responses
* used different modes of presentation when responding to set tasks, for example, short videos
* were in response to contemporary tasks that engaged them more effectively
* were produced in response to clear task design that provided students the opportunity to address the subject specific features

The less successful responses commonly:

* provided lists of dot-pointed issues without discussing these factors
* included practicals that were not specific to the health and wellbeing of children but rather a parent or family member
* focused on what technology they used rather than evaluating the impact of this technology on the health and wellbeing of children
* relied on US sources rather than Australian even when addressing issues specific to an Australian context
* provided a recount of the practical activity in evaluations rather than providing insightful or well-considered evaluation of the processes and outcomes
* were over assessed, particularly in the evaluation, which prevented students from producing responses that were ‘insightful’ or ‘in-depth’ recounted the processes undertaken rather than evaluating them
* were unreferenced or not appropriately referenced which did not allow the reader to interpret the credibility and reliability of the research
* were in response to a narrow range or repetitive tasks that did not allow students to acquire and demonstrate new learning
* included research tasks that were too complex or covered too many components within the 500-word limit, therefore not allowing students to reach ‘in-depth’ investigation
* lacked photographic or written evidence of the practical application, or the photographic evidence was not linked to performance standards through captions
* lacked evidence of practical application
* did not identify specific issues or factors impacting problem-solving/decision-making within action plans — these responses tended to treat this section as research rather than decision-making.

Assessment Type 2: Group Activity

Students work in groups to plan, organise, and implement action to meet a teacher directed challenge that focuses on the health and wellbeing of children. A group activity must relate to a specific area of study from the subject outline and consist of:

* group decision-making
* a group practical application
* an individual evaluation report.

For this assessment type, students provide evidence of their learning primarily in relation to the following assessment design criteria:

* problem-solving
* practical application
* collaboration
* evaluation.

The more successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated evidence of having participated in group decision-making rather than producing a group action plan
* used a range of ways to communicate evidence of group decision-making such as mind-maps, tables, etc
* provided clear, detailed evidence of collaboration (e.g. through the use of screen shots of planning conversations between students)
* addressed collaboration as part of the group decision-making
* were in response to tasks that provided multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate leadership
* provided an evaluation of the student’s own performance, as well as the group’s collaborative efforts
* adopted effective implementation strategies and task allocation amongst group members
* focused on ways in which the health and wellbeing of children would be benefitted
* involved students actually working with a child/children which allowed for more relevant and insightful evaluation.

The less successful responses commonly:

* recounted the tasks or processes performed by the individual/group rather than evaluating them and their effectiveness
* included food related tasks that did not focus on healthy food initiatives or choices, therefore making it difficult to establish a link to performance standards that relate to the health and wellbeing of children
* did not provide evidence of collaboration
* were only provided one opportunity to demonstrate achievement against the collaboration criteria
* were written as action plans rather than group decision-making plans.

General information

* Moderation was hindered by incomplete samples of student work; teachers must ensure that all tasks for a sample are uploaded or a Variation to Moderation Materials Form is included in the teacher materials.
* Teachers are encouraged to upload one folder per student per assessment type; uploading each individual task for each student and each assessment type makes reviewing materials and determining moderation outcomes difficult for moderators.
* Excessive word counts were a concern. Teachers must familiarise themselves with the SACE Board Word Count Policy. Work that exceeds the prescribed word count disadvantages students and impacts their ability to address all specific feature.
* Appendices or additional evidence should not be submitted; these are not moderated and do not contribute to the student’s result for the task.
* Specific feature E2, ‘Appraisal of the impact of technology on the health and wellbeing of children,’ should relate directly to the practical application.
* Designing pamphlets or utilising baby simulators does not meet the requirements of a practical application.
* Australian sources are recommended to support contemporary issues/topics within an Australian context.
* It is appropriate for group decision-making to be communicated in creative ways, such as mind maps.
* Evidence of group decision-making must be included with every student’s work, not just one member of the group.

External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Investigation

This assessment type enables students to investigate and area of Child Studies which interests them. While it is an independent task it is expected the teacher will support and provide ongoing feedback to the student to help direct the investigation. ICA1, 2, 3 and E 4 are assessed in the investigation.

Generally, a good hypothesis or research question led to the production of logical and productive focus questions, which could then be researched extensively, critically analysed, and evaluated.

The more successful responses commonly:

* had a well-constructed question that invited deep analysis
* referenced relevant sections of the introduction
* included data generated by surveys of an appropriate or relevant audience which added to the research
* provided methodologies which were specific to the focus of research and provided a clear idea of what was to come in the investigation
* insightfully highlighted real examples avoiding mentioning lack of time and primary sources
* focused on the health and wellbeing of the child in each focus question
* explained why the selected topic is an issue or trend and how it links to an area of study
* formulated well-constructed focus questions which assisted students in focusing on the topic and drawing relevant conclusions
* included well-constructed introductions that defined the scope of the topic and gave good direction and insight into what was to come throughout the paper
* analysed and interpreted within the body of investigation results/outcomes/conclusions that were drawn from surveys or graphs
* were based on factual research and not the student’s own opinion
* utilised a variety of credible sources which supported comparison and evaluation
* made effective use of graphics that were relevant to the area of research and added to the explanation
* accessed the ‘FoodChoices’ program in order to create their own primary research (in food-related investigations)
* relied mainly on Australian data only referring to overseas studies to support or refute statements in their counter argument
* showed evidence of high levels of analysis, debate, and critical thinking throughout the discussion, culminating in a clear conclusion
* analysed and evaluated the contemporary issue throughout the investigation rather than leaving it to the conclusion
* effectively brought the discussion of the topic question or hypothesis to a clear, concise conclusion
* addressed well-constructed questions which promoted analysis of the topic from a variety of perspectives. Particularly effective were questions that encouraged the student to evaluate and to make assessments or judgments (e.g. To what extent …? How significant …? How important …?) or controversial topics that had two opposing sides which created clear debate
* drew strong comparisons and contrasts between primary and secondary data
* referred throughout to a variety of credible and highly relevant sources to support arguments, rather than just providing a reference list at the end
* tended to have a creative topic or a new spin on an old topic.

The less successful responses commonly:

* addressed broad questions that did not allow for specificity
* did not address bias evident in sources which potentially limited accuracy and depth
* did not include the qualifications or identify the of area expertise of primary sources
* relied on a narrow range of resources or resources that did not offer a range of perspectives
* discussed intended methodology rather than the methodology they actually used
* included a bibliography which was a repeat of the reference list
* addressed topics which were not appropriate to the defined age group as per the subject requirement  
  (0–8 years)
* answered ‘what’ based questions (e.g. What is dyslexia?) which encouraged students to recount findings rather than analyse
* had inappropriate guiding questions (e.g. What are the pros and cons of the topic) or questions that could in themselves be entire investigations
* presented statistics within paragraphs instead of tables — this impacted on student word count, reducing words available for analysis
* included statistics but did not analyse or interpret the information
* recounted facts/data or made unsupported generalisations rather than analysing information
* included surveys that were not relevant to the topic or provided no meaningful data
* presented data from surveys of an audience who had no real investment in or understanding of the topic
* relied on surveys that asked closed questions and produced predictable responses that did not contribute any meaningful data to the investigation
* focused on one side of an argument because of the ‘expert’ they had interviewed
* relied on graphs and statistics to demonstrate numeracy when they were neither necessary nor relevant
* included graphs without referring to or analysing the data represented
* addressed statements, the answer to which was self-evident, leaving no room for debate or evaluation thus limiting analysis and discussion (e.g. Childhood obesity is on the rise)
* included mostly American or English data, often assuming that it applied to Australian culture
* explained the benefits to the community of their research — this is an element of Research Project and is not assessed
* did not reference appropriately or produced large sections of work without any acknowledgment of sources.