Framework for the development of a Contract of Work

Students must complete a contract of work for Stage 1 Community Studies and Stage 2 Community Studies A subjects to contribute towards their SACE.

An outline of each part of the contract of work is provided below; the parts may be completed in any order. Students may work independently or as part of a team, but each student must develop and submit an individual and detailed contract of work. If students choose a group activity, teachers should ensure that the specific contribution of each individual is clearly evident and assessable, even if the group has a common focus or outcome (e.g. a musical production or a community landscaping or art project).

Deciding on the Community Activity

Students work closely with teachers to determine the focus and scope of their community activity. They identify the desired outcome of the community activity, and decide on the evidence of learning that they will prepare. They discuss ideas that might be relevant to their area of study and ideas that interest them. Students may work with their teacher individually or as part of a whole class or small group to make a decision about their community activities.

Preparing for the Community Activity

Teachers help students to identify existing personal knowledge and skills that they can build on to complete their community activity successfully. Before starting the community activity, students identify the new knowledge and skills needed to engage in planned activities. They explore the link between these and the capabilities and identify one or more capabilities for focused development; this link should not, however, restrict the knowledge and skills that are identified and developed. The following are examples of possible links between the new knowledge and skills identified, and the capabilities:

* If students want to make a coffee table, they will need to learn about occupational health and safety and how to use small hand tools and power tools. They might need to learn about and practise these skills before they start their own community activity. The knowledge and skills that students develop through this activity build their capabilities for information and communication technology, ethical understanding and personal and social.
* If students want to find out about their family history, they will have to know how to contact government departments, and how to ask the questions that will enable them to gain the information they seek. The knowledge and skills that students develop through this activity build their capabilities for literacy, personal and social, and intercultural understanding.
* If students want to find out about financial support for their further education and independent living arrangements, they will have to determine the processes to follow when dealing with the private and government agencies that can help them. The knowledge and skills that students develop through this activity build their capabilities for information and communication technology, personal and social, and numeracy.
* If students want to put a proposal to the local council to improve their environment, they will have to find out which processes the council requires them to use. To gather support for their proposal, they will need to be confident about contacting people, presenting materials in the required way, and answering questions well. The knowledge and skills that students develop through this activity build their capabilities for information and communication technology, ethical understanding, critical and creative and literacy.

Carrying Out the Community Activity

Following their preparation, students start their community activity as described in their contract of work.

Getting Feedback from the Community

Students may ask for feedback at any time to help them in their learning. Students are advised to ask for feedback from a member of the community who has some knowledge and understanding of the type of work the student intends to do. For example, if a student decides to rebuild a car engine, a useful person to provide community feedback would be a mechanic.

If a student is doing a community activity as part of a team, feedback may cover the team as a whole, rather than the contributions of individual students.

Reflecting on Learning

When students have completed their community activity and received their community feedback, they should think about what they have learnt and its value to them, and the value of the community activity to others. The following questions are a guide:

* What were some of the problems or challenges they had to deal with? How did they deal with them?
* How do they feel about the feedback they received? Why?
* What do they think worked particularly well? Why?
* If they were to do this community activity again, what would they do differently? Why?
* What did they discover about the way they learn best?
* Do they think that their new skills will help them in the future? If so, in what way(s)?
* What kind of skills would they now like to learn? Why?
* In what ways could others benefit from the community activity?

Keeping Evidence of Activities and Learning

Students keep evidence of what they have done and learnt throughout their community activity. This can be done in various ways. In the contract of work, students should specify the various forms of evidence that they intend to provide as proof that they have completed their contract. They are encouraged to keep as much evidence of their activities and learning as possible, such as

* a calendar of events
* copies of letters or entry tickets
* drawings done to scale
* emails
* evaluation feedback
* records of contact(s)
* media articles
* models
* newspaper articles

reflections on learning

* oral presentations
* pictures or photographs
* plans
* receipts
* recipes
* records
* samples
* notices
* sketches
* theatre programs
* timetables
* transcripts of conversation

Evidence can also include statements written or made about students by members of the community or their teacher.