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Integrated Learning

2015 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.

## School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Practical

The practical assessment type was generally completed effectively, with a range of opportunities available to students. Importantly, programs must have one practical task for the 10-credit subject and up to three ‘different’ practical tasks for the 20-credit subject. The range of opportunities in a variety of subject areas allowed students to successfully demonstrate the knowledge, concepts, and skills they had developed within the program focus.

The assessment design criteria for this assessment type are application, investigation and analysis, evaluation and reflection, and understanding. Most students were able to provide extensive evidence to meet the application criterion. The evidence included written, multimedia, photographic, and video evidence, all of which gave the students the ability to successfully address the criteria. When photographs or videos are used, it is important to consider that those who included annotations or commentary made it easier to confirm the assessment decision during the moderation process. The application criterion can sometimes be over-emphasised and it should be noted that it is not weighted more than other assessment criteria; therefore, in designing the practical tasks, teachers need to ensure that there are opportunities for students to show evidence in relation to all specific features of the assessment design criteria selected in the learning and assessment program.

The investigation and analysis criteria were more challenging for some students. Those who chose to complete background research related to their practical task and then analysed their findings were often able to meet the criteria to a high standard. Students who undertake research would benefit from a reference list or bibliography to show a range of investigation techniques. It is important to ensure that students do not simply recall the practical activity, but rather that they address the assessment design criteria, for example, students could analyse their skill development with reference to their research.

The subject outline requires that students have the opportunity to complete peer assessment and self-assessment in at least one of the practical tasks. While this was generally completed, many students failed to use the information in the peer assessment to inform their self-assessment — students must analyse their peer assessment and self-assessment, not just include it as a part of their task. It is also recommended that they discuss improvements or changes they may wish to make resulting from their feedback. In this way, those students who achieved a high grade not only completed the peer assessment and self-assessment, they also used the feedback they received to consider their own performance and learning.

The understanding criterion again posed some problems for students. Task design plays an important role in ensuring success for the student. It is vital that students are directed to address the key area of study, or capabilities, and their connection to the program focus. This will allow students to include evidence within their practical task to address the criterion. Students should consider the connections between the topic and chosen capabilities and/or show how they have developed these during the practical tasks.

Importantly, the evidence provided for the practical must be student evidence. Teacher evidence, such as a checklist or notes, can be used to support the student evidence, but it cannot be used to replace the student evidence. Teachers should only assess Integrated Learning criteria. Students could use teacher evidence to evaluate their own performance.

Students who were successful in Assessment Type 1: Practical were able to provide a range of evidence to demonstrate how their knowledge, concepts, and skills related to the program focus had developed and been applied throughout the various tasks. They used a variety of research information and sources, analysed their findings, and related them to the program focus. They were able to successfully reflect on their own learning, using the feedback from peer assessment. Those students in the higher grade band levels were able to effectively make connections to the program focus and comment on their development and understanding of the relevant capabilities.

Assessment Type 2: Group Activity

The group activity was generally completed effectively, with a range of opportunities available to students. Some programs included one group activity for both the 10‑credit and 20-credit subjects, while other teachers chose to include two group tasks for the 20-credit subject. The number included is often dependent on the complexity of the task, with some major tasks, such as dance performances or music festivals, needing more time to develop the necessary skills to meet the criteria. Importantly, students who completed one or two tasks were still given the opportunity to address the performance standards to a high level.

The assessment design criteria for this assessment type are application, investigation and analysis, communication and collaboration, and evaluation and reflection.

As with all assessment types, the group activities were varied depending on the program focus. They included volunteering, coaching activities, working with outside agencies, and developing activities for the community. Due to this variation, it is important to ensure that evidence is presented to allow grades to be confirmed. Students in the higher grade bands included clear evidence of planning, communication, collaboration, and organisation. The evidence was in the form of emails, minutes of meetings, journals including reflections, annotated photographs, lesson plans, or multimedia presentations. Generally this was completed effectively. Photos can provide effective evidence if labelled/annotated correctly by individual students, discussing evidence directly related to performance standards. This evidence also gives students opportunities to address investigation and analysis, and evaluation and reflection.

Most students were able to successfully demonstrate evidence of application, and communication and collaboration. Most students were able to identify their contribution to the group activity and to discuss the process of planning and collaboration with other members of their group. Some teachers spent time discussing with students what group work is and what the outcomes could be for a group activity task. This gave the students a starting/reference point when addressing investigation and analysis, and evaluation and reflection criteria.

An area that was completed less successfully was evidence of investigation and analysis. Those students in the higher grade bands provided evidence of background research and analysis. This included a bibliography of sources and an analysis of how this information contributed to the group task. There was also analysis that outlined what the student did or thought, and how this was developed and/or could be used in the future. As in the practical assessment type, many students included peer assessment and self-assessment, but they failed to use the information provided to improve their learning. This is vital to address the performance standards to a high level. A clear example is the student who in peer assessment discovers that he or she is perceived as quiet and not having much input in meetings, and who then focuses on how to improve personal confidence in group situations. It is important to note that peer assessment and self-assessment can be undertaken more than once during the task(s) to show evidence of improvement/changes the student made/addressed. At times, evidence of communication was lacking — when designing tasks, opportunities for students to demonstrate collaboration, ideas, and opinions from each individual should be included.

As this is a group task, it is very important that individual work is submitted to ensure that in the moderation process it is easy to recognise the achievement of each individual. Each individual member of the team/group should discuss group evidence, and identify and articulate their roles. This, coupled with an in-depth evaluation and reflection, allowed students to meet the performance standards to a high level.

Students who were successful in Assessment Type 2: Group Activity were able to provide independent evidence of their contribution to the planning, decision-making, and successful implementation of their group activity. They also included evidence of relevant individual research, its analysis ,and how it could be used to improve their outcome. They were able to reflect on their own learning and their collaboration and communication within the group using the information gained from peer or community assessment.

Assessment Type 3: Folio and Discussion

The folio and discussion is a single task assessed holistically within Integrated Learning. There is a range of ways that folio and discussion tasks can be developed to ensure that opportunities are provided for students to meet the performance standards to a high level. Some schools develop a separate task for the folio and discussion that focuses on the student’s progress in learning, and links the relevant capabilities to the focus of the course. Other schools use activities that have not been assessed in other assessment types to focus the folio and discussion so that it is about a specific task. Both ways allow for students to meet the performance standards to a high level, although teachers must make decisions concerning where to include evidence of learning to ensure the best possible outcome for students. Students and teachers need to be aware that any work presented for assessment in any of the other three assessment types (including the external project) *cannot* be resubmitted for the folio and discussion.

The assessment design criteria assessed in the folio and discussion are application, communication and collaboration, evaluation and reflection, and understanding. All students must provide evidence of their discussion, which is often done through a video. Teachers should ensure that they meet the SACE requirements for submitting electronic files so that recordings are audible and accessible to moderators. It is important to also consider where the microphone is placed for student responses to be recorded clearly. Often videos include a number of students, so it is imperative that individual students are easily identified. This can be done easily by including clear name cards. If there is no video or audio, students must provide a transcript or notes from the discussion, although including a video or audio is highly recommended.

The best discussions were completed in groups of two, three, or four students, where each individual was given adequate time to cover all criteria necessary, and showing their development of skills in a range of areas with reference to information in their folio, as well as demonstrating evidence of the criteria for evaluation and reflection and understanding. The folio may comprise a variety of materials such as research, annotations, photos, and journals, as well as written formative tasks. This evidence must be different from evidence presented for assessment in the practical and the group activity assessment types.

Those students who were in the higher grade band levels discussed their learning and referred to their folio as back-up evidence. They did not read from a script; rather, they participated in a discussion which was initiated by open-ended questions. Some of the best discussions had minimal input from the teacher and the students discussed their learning among themselves. Presentations by students are not considered discussions — for this purpose, a discussion needs to be focused on their learning, not just a presentation of content.

Teachers must consider the importance of the questions being asked, as this will often determine how effectively students address the criteria particularly in understanding. Examples of some general folio and discussion questions can be found on the Integrated Learning minisite of the SACE website.

Students who were successful in Assessment Type 3: Folio and Discussion had a well-organised folio and a discussion that demonstrated their progress in learning. The focus of the course was clearly demonstrated, and the development of concepts, knowledge, and skills was evident. These students had evidence of their collaboration with others and showed a clear understanding of the chosen capabilities. The more successful students were able to discuss their progress in learning, its value to themselves and others, and how it will help them in future studies or career.

Some students were heavily penalised for only completing a folio. Although the folio and discussion is a holistic task, evidence of assessment design criteria can sometimes be found in the folio alone. If a student does not complete a discussion, evidence in the folio should be assessed against the assessment criteria for Assessment Type 3: Folio and Discussion and a teacher decision regarding grade justified. In these situations the Variations — Moderation Materials form is completed and submitted at moderation to indicate that the discussion was not completed. Students who were successful in Assessment Type 3: Folio and Discussion always have both aspects completed.

## External Assessment

Assessment Type 4: Project

The external assessment was an opportunity for students to explore an aspect of the program and/or capability relating to the overall Integrated Learning program focus. Students completed tasks covering a wide range of topics, including social justice activities, trades, horticulture, hospitality, sport, religion, the arts, information technology, mathematics, and community services. It was particularly evident that those students who were given the opportunity to develop a response related to an area of personal interest tended to meet the performance standards to a higher level.

There was a clear difference between those students who had individually developed tasks to those students who chose tasks that were completed by the entire class. It is important to confirm with students that the external assessment is not a group task and that it must be completed individually so they can show a clear understanding of their learning. While scaffolding is important, those students who achieved in the higher grade bands were given the opportunity to complete their own research and understand the relevance of their learning. They were then also able to analyse the importance of their findings as it had personal meaning. Bibliographies are recommended as a way of encouraging students to use a variety of sources and to confirm the validity of their sources.

There were still some issues with students having difficulty analysing concepts, ideas, and skills development from different perspectives; for example, with a trade focus on building principles, students could discuss the building options from the perspectives of both a client and the builder or architect. If the task is well structured and relevant, and research has been completed, this will help meet this performance standard to a higher level. It is also important to ensure that students do not simply recount personal experiences, as this does not meet the performance standards, particularly in the investigation and analysis area.

Throughout the project, it is imperative that students are able to understand and explain the connections between the program focus and the capability in each chosen key area; for example, to show the link between their focus on learning the skills of a barista and their capability for work. Those who discuss this link explicitly generally achieved at the higher grade levels for the understanding criterion; however, some students did not address their capability, or did so only to a competent level.

It is still recommended that students present the project in two parts: a project outcome and an explanation of the connections between program and capability. It is clear that those students who fully understood the capabilities they were addressing and had a clear focus before starting achieved to a high level of the performance standards.

Teachers need to make sure that the correct capabilities are also being addressed depending on whether Integrated Learning 1 (ILG) or Integrated Learning 2 (ILH) is being undertaken.

Word-count remains an issue, with some projects being well over the 2000-word limit for the 20-credit subject, or 1000 words for the 10-credit subject (or the oral and multimodal equivalents) and, unfortunately, this will have a detrimental impact on the grades achieved, because evidence in relation to some of the assessment design criteria may be present in the part of the project that exceeded the word count and therefore cannot be considered for assessment. It is also important that a word-count is included on the cover sheet and that teachers ensure that students adhere to word-limits and time restrictions.

## Operational Advice

School assessment tasks are set and marked by teachers. Teachers’ assessment decisions are reviewed by moderators. Teacher grades/marks should be evident on all student school assessment work submitted for moderation and this assists moderators to confirm the assessment decisions made.

## General Comments

Learning and assessment plans (LAPs) that focused on the capabilities and identified opportunities for peer assessment and self-assessment in both the practical and group activity assessment types gave students the best chance for success. Any changes to the original approved LAP need to be recorded on the addendum page, which must be submitted with the moderation materials. The principal or delegate must sign the addendum to indicate that changes have been made. Only approved LAPs should be used, and materials matching this plan should be sent to moderation with task sheets that outline the specific features of the assessment design criteria for the task which also match the subject outline for the year in question.

Teachers and/or students need to ensure that they keep all their marked assessment tasks throughout the year in case they are selected for moderation. If, for any reason, a task(s) is missing or not completed, the teacher must include a Variations — Moderation Materials form with their moderation materials. Unfortunately, some schools had many missing tasks with no explanation as to why.

Schools need to ensure that evidence of the group discussion is included in the evidence submitted for the folio and discussion, that students are identifiable, and that DVDs and CDs meet the requirements of SACE for submission of electronic materials. Where students are submitting electronic files, it is essential that there is clear indication as to which file is the final assessed piece of work. Student work needs to be clearly labelled with the student’s details. An indication as to how the final grade level was determined is helpful for moderators. Schools who have multiple teachers and multiple classes would benefit from in-school clarifying and/or moderation activities to discuss standards, even if the program focus areas are unrelated, for example a PE-focused program and a Dance-focused program at the same school. As references, exemplar tasks including assessment decisions can be found on the Integrated Learning minisite.

Teachers need to consult the subject operational information when packaging materials for moderation. Well-packaged materials with clear SACE numbers (and in some cases names) and tasks placed in assessment groups were appreciated by moderators and made the process easier overall.

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