2020 Workplace Practices Subject Assessment Advice

Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the 2020 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: Folio

This assessment type relates specifically to the Industry and Work Knowledge area of study and tasks can be presented in a range of suitable formats. For a 10-credit subject, students undertake at least one folio assessment. For a 20-credit subject, students undertake at least three folio assessments.

Teachers need to ensure that all 3 tasks are uploaded for each student, in addition to each task sheet (along with the LAP) with the teacher materials. Also, if any tasks have not been submitted or completed, that a Variations for Moderation Material (VMM) has been completed.

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

* knowledge and understanding
* investigation and analysis
* reflection and evaluation.

The more successful responses commonly:

* addressed each of the criteria twice across the three tasks in a 20-credit subject
* identified their industry and career paths, making authentic learning relevant and meaningful
* allowed students to investigate and analyse, rather than just reproduce the ideas or opinions of others by reading articles or other media provided by the teacher, often using primary sources such as interviewing an expert in their chosen field
* were industry focussed, where students were motivated to work on something relevant to their own future, such as a chosen industry. This allowed students to choose personal and specific resources relevant to the task, and to perform to a higher level
* incorporated meaningful studies of workplace learning that allowed students to investigate topics related to their own industry focus, rather than a ‘one size fits all’ topic, chosen by the teacher
* showed clear evidence of research and an analysis of their findings
* asked students to demonstrate RE – Reflection and evaluation, across more than one task, and students reflected personally on why the topic was important to them and how it would benefit them in the future
* allowed students the depth to explore instead of being overly structured or scaffolded and were written with a specific industry focus and often utilised primary sources; interview or survey data that the student gathered themselves
* showed creativity in how they presented the tasks and addressed the criteria.

The less successful responses commonly:

* assessed performance standards that were not identified on the tasks sheet or not assessed in this assessment type, such as Application
* did not include Reflection and Evaluation in any or enough of the three tasks in a 20-credit subject
* 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), not enabling students to undertake depth and breadth of research, and did not ask the students to analyse, reflect on, or evaluate any of this information
* provided a descriptive recount of information, with little or no analysis, reflection or evaluation
* were over-scaffolded, overly structured, question-answer responses, and did not allow for student voice or individual industry focus
* conformed to a specific word limit (not required in subject outline) and therefore did not necessarily allow scope for the student to address criteria to a higher standard.

Assessment Type 2: Performance

For Assessment Type 2: Performance, students must complete 25–30 hours of Vocational Learning for a 10‑credit subject, or 50–60 hours for a 20-credit. Examples of Vocational Learning can be found in the subject outline. Evidence of Vocational Learning must include significant ‘student voice’ for the higher-grade bands to be successfully reached.

Teachers should ensure that all three components of supporting evidence are uploaded:

1. Student evidence of learning, which may be a journal, photo-story, or portfolio (i.e. what is informally referred to as ‘student voice,’ demonstrating 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), and/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. These forms (available on the SACE website) provide commentary by teachers providing supporting evidence of student’s engagement in a work-related context. These forms are available on the SACE website.

For this assessment type, students are assessed on:

* knowledge and understanding
* application.

The more successful responses commonly:

* had all required components: Teacher’s Report to Moderator; Workplace Supervisor’s Report; VET (where used); plus, the students’ voice demonstrating Knowledge and Understanding and Application of skills
* demonstrated very clear student voice throughout journal/log book evidence, making clear links between theory and practice.
* use of open-ended questions in logbook/journal enabling students to contextualise to own workplace/VET
* used a variety of modes to document evidence– utilising the flexibilities of the Workplace Practices subject outline e.g. an oral discussion with the teacher, which worked well for students with oral skills better than their written skills
* involved students providing supporting evidence to support their learning experiences. This included written statements and annotated photographs of work being undertaken or completed
* used photographs or photo stories of the workplace that allowed students to show greater knowledge and understanding for example WHS precautions that were visible at various sites e.g. exits, fire extinguishers, defibrillator units, etc.
* utilised a different format and were different in scope to AT3: Reflection which is not assessed in this Assessment Type.

The less successful responses commonly:

* lacked evidence to demonstrate Knowledge and Understanding (for instance, no student voice)
* included student evidence that tended to include more recount or reflection (which is not assessed in Performance) and therefore did not demonstrate Knowledge and Understanding to a high level. For example, a day by day account of the tasks performed while on the job
* included photos, but with little or no annotations to demonstrate the students’ Knowledge and Understanding or Application
* provided only Statement of Attainment (VET) or Workplace Supervisor’s Report with no other evidence (student voice) to support the grade awarded
* were not supported by the appropriate forms (listed above), making it difficult to confirm the teacher’s assessment
* were fill-in answer booklets or worksheets, often overly scaffolded thus limiting student providing higher level evidence
* were reflections from AT3 being used for AT2 which is inappropriate
* included very brief journal entries and few details apart from the fact that the required hours were completed.

Assessment Type 3: Reflection

For this assessment type, students must reflect on their learning specifically in the vocational learning component of the course. Students can reflect on a range of learning throughout the program, which is outlined in the subject outline. For a 20-credit subject, two reflections are required. For a 10-credit subject one reflection is required. The Reflections should be packaged as Assessment Type 3: Reflection (not as an addendum to Assessment Type 2: Performance).

For this assessment type, students are assessed on:

* knowledge and understanding
* investigation and analysis
* reflection and evaluation.

The more successful responses commonly:

* had a strong connection to their chosen career or industry, connecting their learning to their future pathway(s)
* for a 20-credit subject, 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 own individual experiences
* had Investigation, Analysis, Reflection and Evaluation interwoven rather than in separate sections
* responded to tasks that had themselves as the focus, for example, a personal reflection or a workplace reflection and self-evaluated, connecting learning to industry practice and their future aspirations, rather than recount only
* featured personal reflections with extended elaborations on the graduate qualities and or employability skills and attributes of students in relation to future pathways
* identified challenges and how they overcame them, or would overcome them
* reflected on and evaluated the learning achieved throughout their vocational experiences and in class over the whole year
* were able to identify specifically what they learnt and how they overcame issues
* addressed all the required criteria — KU, IA and RE.

The less successful responses commonly:

* were a recount/description of tasks undertaken during a work placement or VET course, rather than a reflection with investigation and analysis
* conformed to a specified word limit (not required in subject outline) and, therefore, did not allow scope for the student for the student to address criteria to a higher standard
* had only one reflection task where two are required (20-credits)
* Reflection and Evaluation undertaken, but little evidence of Investigation and Analysis throughout
* reflected on a task undertaken in the Folio, such as a Mock Interview. This duplication often meant that Reflection and Evaluation were also poorly addressed in the Folio section of the course
* used student evidence for AT2 Performance as a reflection task, which is not allowed in the subject outline.

External Assessment

Assessment Type 4: Investigation

For this Assessment Type, students undertake either a practical or issue investigation. Students should be encouraged to choose the investigation type that best suits their career aspirations, industry profile, learning needs and style, rather than a task that the whole class undertakes.

For this assessment type, students are assessed on:

* knowledge and understanding — KU1 and KU2
* investigation and analysis — IA1 and IA2
* reflection and evaluation — RE1.

The more successful responses commonly:

* were related to actual experiences and aspirations of students, not just theoretical. For some students the fact that they were very passionate about the industry and what they were investigating came through clearly, which allowed them to achieve at a higher level, particularly in Reflection and Evaluation
* allowed students to choose their own focus question and investigation in consultation with the teacher
* (for the issues investigation) started with an appropriate question, worded as an issue, that students could engage with and investigate. In the more successful responses, questions were focussed rather than broad and vague. Overly general topics (such as ‘discrimination’ or ‘WHS’) do not allow the student to demonstrate high level KU or IA.
* (for the practical investigation) enabled students to demonstrate their involvement in a real-world (rather than imagined) activity. This allowed them to reflect on and evaluate their learning throughout this task in a real, rather than imagined sense
* (for the practical investigation) gained feedback on final product from knowledgeable sources and used this to make changes or to inform the Reflection and Evaluation. Stronger examples incorporated a feedback and redesign step in their work, giving them an opportunity to discuss reflect on the learning and then self-evaluate and document their redesign or areas of improvement
* (for the practical investigation) the final Reflection and Evaluation were about the product or process, rather than about the writing of the investigation
* used a wide range of sources, including primary and secondary; this applied to both the issues investigation and the practical investigation options
* compared and analysed the findings between sources and their own thoughts or experiences
* when interviews or surveys were used, the more successful students were able to analyse what this data revealed, not just repeat exactly what the information told them (e.g. “I was surprised to find that 75% of respondents believe that WHS laws are inadequate. In order to determine why, I…”)
* 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
* had numerous examples of Analysis, Reflection and Evaluation embedded throughout the student evidence.

The less successful responses commonly:

* lacked a direct link between the industry focus and the student’s chosen topic. Scholarly research questions without the industry link made it difficult to adequately assess KU
* included a single topic for whole class using the same resources
* included brief answers to highly-scaffolded teacher questions that did not allow students to reflect on or evaluate their learning / performance
* had a template, or a scaffold that often did not relate to the task or allow students to address all the Performance Standards to a sophisticated level. This often resulted in a lack of analysis
* inclusion of a timeline for the completion of the Investigation or Report, rather than demonstrating the investigation or analysis. This demonstrated a confusion between ‘planning’ and ‘investigation’. Saying I intend to research x and y, is not the same as demonstrating you have researched and analysed the information
* had topics that were too broad and with no industry focus. This often-included questions appropriate for a Research Project, rather than a Workplace Practices Investigation. Examples include questions such as: such as ‘Is too much made of the ATAR?’, ‘Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace,’ ‘Will new technologies benefit the workplace?’, ‘Why do Australians love AFL?’, ‘What is the difference between paleo and keto?’, or ‘What happens after the fires?’
* included reference to Capability Development, and reflection on research processes or other Research Project specific terms, rather than reference to Workplace Practices specific criteria
* had poor quality video or audio, which made it difficult to assess student evidence provided
* allowed students to work on Investigations in ‘Groups’ without overly similar outcomes and no clear indication of which member was responsible for tasks. This is also problematic when it comes to research, analysis and evaluation and should be avoided
* 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 (such as ‘How To’ or ‘Safety Guides’), without undertaking any further investigation or analysing their knowledge and understanding to any extent. It remains evident that students undertaking the practical investigation were less likely to meet this performance standard to a high level
* used unreliable evidence, such as anecdotal conversations, 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 context
* simply listed facts and statistics, included graphs or included verbatim responses to interview questions, rather than analysing the information
* included important evidence (such as the actual practical completed) in the appendix, meaning that it cannot be assessed by markers
* students who completed a very simple task (practical), were not able to conduct enough research to allow them to begin to achieve at a higher level in Investigation and Analysis. For example, construction of a box, making a coffee or pouring a cocktail
* included only a finished product (practical) with no other supporting evidence to demonstrate investigation, analysis, reflection, or evaluation. This was often the case when videos were produced
* 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
* where video interviews with teacher were used, there was a reliance on leading questions from the teacher, rather than the student offering information and analysing / reflecting on their knowledge, work or performance
* described tasks completed in a VET Course as the Practical, resulting in limited KU and IA being evident. A more appropriate practical would be applying these skills in a new context
* focussed on a reflection on their personal limitations (such as time management), rather than a Reflection and Self-Evaluation of how the product or issue impacts on their own career decisions.