2023 Modified Subjects Assessment Advice

Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the 2023 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.

Across the Assessment Types for this subject, students can present their responses in oral or multimodal form, where 6 minutes is the equivalent of 1000 words. Students should not speed-up the recording of their videos excessively in an attempt to exceed this limit.

From 2023, if a video is flagged by markers/moderators as impacted by speed, a transcript will be produced and markers/moderators will be advised to mark/moderate based on the evidence in the transcript, and up to the maximum word limit (e.g., up to 2000 words for AT3).

If the speed of the recording makes the speech incomprehensible, it affects the accuracy of transcriptions and it also impacts the ability of markers/moderators to find evidence of student achievement against the performance standards.

School Assessment

Assessment is school based for modified subjects. Learning and assessment plans (LAPs) are developed by teachers to meet individual student learning needs and approved by the school’s principal (or delegate). Teachers ensure a high-quality curriculum is delivered to students studying modified subjects. The principal or the principal’s delegate ensure plans meet all the requirements listed in the modified subjects learning and assessment plan checklist. Specific templates for the modified subjects learning and assessment plans, and plan checklists, are available in the modified subjects section of the SACE website.

Teachers assess each student’s evidence of learning in relation to their documented Personal Learning Goals (PLGs) and capabilities and assign a result of ‘completed’ or ‘not completed’ for the modified subject. For a result of ‘completed’, the student’s evidence of learning demonstrates achievement against:

* the personal learning goals identified for the student
* one or more of the capabilities selected for development in the subject.

It is important that:

* PLGs are set within each student’s zone of proximal development, which means that they are both achievable and represent meaningful progress for the individual learner
* assessment tasks provide the scope and opportunity for students to effectively demonstrate that their learning has been achieved
* the number of assessment tasks match the requirements for the subject, 3-5 assessments for a 10-credit subject, or 6-10 assessments for a 20-credit subject.

If a student does not demonstrate learning against the set PLGs, it may be a result of setting these goals beyond the student’s zone of proximal development and therefore they may not have been suitable to support learning development and achievement in the SACE for this individual. In this case, teachers should review the LAP and use the Addendum in the Learning and Assessment Plan form to:

* document changing the PLGs to sit within the student’s zone of proximal development
* amend the assessment tasks to better capture learning.

If the PLG and assessment tasks are suited to the student, but the student was unable to complete the learning, teachers should assign a ‘pending’ decision rather than ‘not completed’. A ‘pending’ can only be assigned against compulsory subjects to allow the student time to complete the learning. If additional time is required for other subjects, then the student should be ‘withdrawn’ from the subject and re-enrolled the following year in which they will be resulted.

Personal Learning Goal (PLG) development

Effective goal setting is pivotal to successful delivery and assessment of the Modified Subjects. Specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time defined (SMART) goals that are set in each student’s zone of proximal development are required to ensure learning in the modified subjects is aligned to identified student learning aspirations. Evidence is collected from assessment tasks undertaken by the student while engaged in learning linked to negotiated PLGs. Evidence of learning directly linked to identified goals and capabilities is needed to confirm a ‘completed’ decision.

The following should be considered to successfully develop and document PLGs:

* consult with the student and key associates to identify relevant, achievable and challenging goals
* begin with specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time defined (SMART) goals to assist in reviewing, refining, and amending personal learning goals
* continue with SMARTAR goals, where ‘AR’ refers to goals that are agreed upon and reviewed further. The addendum section of the LAP provides a place to document any reviewed goals
* evidence of learning aligned to SMARTAR goals inform transparent ‘completed’ and ‘not completed’ assessment decisions for teachers.

Less successful goal development and assessment:

* occurred when goals were generic and ambiguous / did not meet the student’s learning needs
* there were too many goals
* failed to specify assessment tasks to provide evidence of learning reflective of documented PLGs
* did not enable sufficient evidence of learning to be collected to substantiate that learning was successful
* used assessment tools not applicable to modified subjects. Grades, performance standards and rubrics with graduated statements indicating how well students met their goals are not required.

Capabilities Development

To ensure students are supported to develop individually relevant capabilities, teachers are encouraged to have a sharp focus on a few capabilities (one or more) that benefit the student rather than attempting to develop all five in every subject.

Quality Assurance Review

The SACE Board, in partnership with schools, undertakes quality assurance of the modified subjects through a review process. The review is designed to ensure that a school’s interpretation and application of ‘completed’ and ‘not completed’ assessment decisions in compulsory modified subjects are consistent with the state-wide interpretation of the standard.

The modified subjects that are reviewed, which allow students to meet the compulsory requirements of the SACE, are:

* Stage 1 Personal Learning Plan: Modified
* Stage 1 English: Modified
* Stage 1 Mathematics: Modified
* Stage 2 Research Project: Modified.

In 2023, the review process continued to be undertaken online using Microsoft Teams.

Schools that have had assessment decisions confirmed in two consecutive years are not required to submit samples the following year. The SACE Board advises schools that are required to participate in the review at the commencement of the school year as a part of the state-wide triennial cycle.

Teachers provide samples of students’ work for the review process in accordance with the requirements in SACE Board guidelines. On a cyclic basis, schools are asked to nominate a teacher to act as reviewer. The SACE Board provides formal feedback to principals regarding the outcomes of the review, and teachers ensure final results reflect the review outcome and recommendations.

Teachers are reminded to include for review:

* a copy of the approved learning and assessment plan (LAP)
* a copy of the Stage 2 Research Project: Modified — school planner, if applicable
* completed student description sheet(s). This should include individual student’s background, adjustments required, learning needs, and the specific PLGs that align with the evidence of learning provided in the sample.

Student Work Samples

The request for a ‘selection of evidence’ was challenging in some cases, as not enough evidence was included to sufficiently demonstrate a ‘completed’ assessment decision. Evidence of learning needs to be aligned with the PLGs described in the LAP/ school planner, described in the description sheet, and sufficient to show learning has been achieved.

When the online submission and presentation of samples followed the guidelines, were clearly identified by file names using student names or SACE registration numbers, and were referenced to the learning goals and capabilities, the review process ran smoothly, and schools’ assessment decisions could be confirmed.

As in previous years, evidence for assessment tasks was primary evidence, secondary evidence, or a mixture of both, depending on the student’s or group’s level of development.

* Primary evidence took the form of student work — written, visual, and oral, such as photo boards, self-assessment, journals, and reflections.
* Secondary evidence included teacher checklists; written, photographic and video observations documented by teachers/educators, as well as by family and key people from adult agencies; and material prepared by scribes.
* Multimodal evidence such as blogs, videos and ‘live’ examples continue to be used to effectively capture evidence of learning.

Students with higher support needs were necessarily dependent on collection of secondary evidence to document their learning.

Successful student work samples:

* showed evidence of solid and meaningful learning
* matched and were clearly linked to identified PLGs and capabilities
* provided evidence of learning in a range of settings and formats rather than an ‘event’
* showed clear progression of student learning as they worked towards their PLGs
* provided insight into all adjustments required in the student description sheet
* provided a detailed student description which assisted reviewers to gain a concise understanding of the student’s functional capacity. For example, including that a student experiences barriers to learning as a result of limited concentration span rather than a general statement that the student has a mild intellectual disability. This enables reviewers to consider evidence of learning in the correct context. Detailed descriptions made evidence much more powerful as a record of student learning
* documented adjustments to PLGs in the LAP addendum to describe variations that occurred over the teaching and learning program to individual goals in the LAP
* ensured personal learning goals and capabilities in LAPs (and the LAP addendum) correlated directly with those documented in the student description sheet
* had a range of tasks that enable students to demonstrate learning
* linked described goals and capabilities in the LAP to samples of learning with signposting and annotation
* used technology that could be easily accessed on general IT platforms and followed the SACE guidelines on submission of non-written materials.

Less successful review samples:

* did not include one or more of the required sample elements, e.g. student description sheet or approved LAP
* did not clearly identify student work with either SACE registration number or name
* identified personal learning goals on the student description sheet that did not correlate to those on an approved LAP and/or addendum or within the student work sample
* confused task completion with learning goal achievement
* assigned school developed performance standards to student work
* did not use the LAP addendum to adjust goals / assessment to reflect student achievement
* provided evidence that that was not accessible by reviewers such as unclear photographs or inaccessible video, PowerPoint, sound bites and other information technology.

General

The Disability Standards for Education outline the obligation for education providers to make reasonable adjustments for students with disability to access education on the same basis as their peers and to consult students (and/or their associates) in the process of planning and implementing adjustments.

Agreement with students, where possible, and their families to access modified subjects must be documented and kept by the school prior to enrolment in one or more modified subjects. Modified subjects can be utilised to make substantial and extensive reasonable adjustments while continuing to support inclusive practices in subject based classrooms.

Delivery and assessment of Modified Subjects in the SACE requires teachers to be familiar with the Stage 1 and Stage 2 Modified Subjects information and resources. These are available on the SACE Board Modified Subjects minisite.

Teachers delivering, and administrators managing, the delivery of modified subjects are advised to participate in professional development activities organised by the SACE Board. Opportunities for planning and clarifying support are available through the online platform, PLATO and cover topics such as setting personal learning goals, designing assessment tasks and organising student work samples for review. Teachers are advised to seek guidance from the SACE Board prior to developing and delivering learning programs for Modified Subjects.