

Marking: Stage 2 external investigations

Procedures and guidelines 2019

Introduction

This document provides key information about the marking processes for Stage 2 external investigations. Its purpose is to promote a shared understanding of the roles and procedures that contribute to the integrity of students' external assessment results.

In Stage 2 subjects the external assessment can take a variety of forms: investigations, external examinations, and performances.

The term 'investigation' includes the range of external assessment types such as practical skills; report; folio; product and documentation; analysis; reflection; project; evaluation; language study; special study; issues study; issues analysis; investigation.

Note that investigations are double marked, usually by the teacher as the first marker, and an external assessor as the second marker.

Purposes of external marking

The purposes of external marking are to ensure:

- that the performance standards in a subject have been interpreted and applied consistently to the assessment
- that externally assessed results awarded to students across schools are comparable and fair
- valid and reliable external assessment results for students.

Operating principles

The following operating principles underpin the procedures for marking investigations for SACE subjects at Stage 2:

Comparability

The procedures for assuring the integrity of SACE assessments maximise the consistent application of standards to all student assessment across all places of learning in the SACE.

Fairness

The procedures for assuring the integrity of SACE assessments should be fair to students.

Interdependence and responsibility

The procedures for assuring the integrity of SACE assessments are based on the interconnected and complementary responsibilities of the student, the teacher or other provider, school leaders, and the SACE Board in the assessment process.

Transparency

The procedures for assuring the integrity of SACE assessments are explicit and open to scrutiny.

Definitions

The following terms are used in this document:

- *benchmarking* – the process of selecting and using student assessment materials to illustrate performance standards at different levels, and training markers with these materials, to ensure that assessment decisions are consistent both in the one year and from one year to another year
- *calibration script* – a common investigation that may be used in the marking process for markers to calibrate their standards. May also be referred to as ‘seed script’
- *external assessment (component)* – the assessment specifications for assessment tasks defined by the SACE Board; each student’s performance is assessed by at least one person who is appointed by the SACE Board, and who is not the student’s teacher
- *external assessment grade* – the final result for the external assessment component of a subject
- *grade band* – the five bands of achievement described in the performance standards: A, B, C, D, E
- *grade level* – the levels of achievement that are reported to the SACE Board by schools and reported to students by the SACE Board: A+, A, A–, B+, B, B–, C+, C, C–, D+, D, D–, E+, E, E–
- *marker* – a person who makes an assessment decision based on the evidence of learning provided by the student, and with reference to the performance standards
- *marking guidelines* – a set of instructions used to determine the allocation of marks for assessments
- *numeric equivalent* – the number corresponding to a grade level
- *PLATO* – Professional Learning in Assessment and Teaching Online, the SACE Board’s online platform used for benchmarking and other online learning
- *supervisor* – a subject expert selected from the lead practitioner panel and appointed by the SACE Board to re-mark investigations that are identified as having marks that are out of tolerance.

Roles and responsibilities

External assessment leadership team

- SACE Officers – Curriculum and Assessment
- Executive Manager, Information Services
- Manager, Curriculum and Assessment
- Assessment Support Officers/Coordinator, Assessment Operations
- Lead Practitioner(s)

The SACE Board:

- appoints an assessment panel for external marking of each subject, consisting of
 - Lead practitioner(s) (appointed to support the SACE Officer in the leading and training of investigation supervisors and markers)
 - supervisors (selected from the lead practitioner panel. The number depends on the size of the student cohort and the number of markers appointed)
 - markers (the number depends on the size of the cohort)
- prepares a marking schedule or marking timeline
- trains markers in the marking processes using PLATO
- advises markers about work health and safety
- advises markers about the Independent Commissioner Against Corruption (ICAC)
- requires all assessment panel members to:
 - maintain confidentiality throughout and after the marking process in accordance with the

- requirements for assessment panel members and the Code of Conduct Declaration
- declare any potential conflicts of interest
- ensure the security of student results, information, and materials.

The SACE Officer – Curriculum and Assessment:

- manages the production of an online benchmarking course
- with the Assessment Scheduler, oversees the preparation of the marking schedule and timelines
- monitors participation in the benchmarking process, using PLATO
- oversees the marking process
- oversees the quality assurance processes
- supports reliability by responding to markers' queries and outcomes of marking calibration scripts.

The Assessment Support Officer/Coordinator, Assessment Operations:

- monitors progress of online marking
- ensures that markers are not allocated investigations from
 - their own school
 - a school with which they have an association
 - a school with which they have a conflict of interest
 - any individual student with whom they have a conflict of interest
- refers potential breaches of rules to the Manager, Curriculum and Assessment.

The Lead Practitioner:

- may prepare benchmarking materials calibration scripts for use during the marking process
- contribute to the production of an online benchmarking course.

Supervisors:

- complete the online supervisor training
- where appropriate, support the lead practitioner (for external investigations) and the SACE Officer – Curriculum and Assessment in selecting and preparing benchmarking materials
- participate initially in the marking process
- mark investigations that are identified as having marks that are out of tolerance
- complete the justification comment box for each student identified and assessed through the supervision process.

Markers:

- complete the online marker training and benchmarking exercise
- follow the marking schedule published by the SACE Board or by using the online status indicator
- follow specified marking procedures and guidelines
- advise the SACE Board of any concerns about individual investigations, using the appropriate alert form or online procedure
- submit a marking report to the SACE Officer – Curriculum and Assessment.

Confidentiality and security

All markers and supervisors receive an appointment notice from the SACE Board of South Australia. The notice is accompanied by forms for:

- the Code of Conduct Declaration, including notification of potential conflicts of interest
- electronic banking details.

These forms are required once per calendar year, and are to be completed and returned to the SACE Board before marking begins.

When marking paper copies of investigations markers and supervisors are responsible for and security of investigations in their possession. When marking online markers and supervisors are responsible for the care and security of their password and login details, and for the deletion of any files related to the marking process.

Marking must not be done in the presence of others, or in any other way that breaches the confidentiality of the investigations.

External marking procedures

Marker and supervisor training

All markers and supervisors must complete the benchmarking exercise online using PLATO, where appropriate; complete the online marker training and, in the case of supervisors, complete the online supervisor training.

Markers refer to the benchmarking pieces and the benchmarking decisions during the marking period.

Each marker is given a marking timetable (online marking) or a marking schedule (paper marking). If the marking involves assessing paper scripts the markers must collect their batches from Assessment Operations, on the ground floor at the back of the SACE Board building, during the allocated times.

Batches of papers for country markers will be couriered during the allocated timeframe. Country and Northern Territory markers will be provided with courier bags, consignment notes, and instructions for couriering marked batches back to the SACE Board.

Marking must proceed according to the schedule. Supervision is additional to the initial schedule.

Markers maintain close contact with the SACE Board. They must advise the SACE Officer – Curriculum and Assessment if there is a problem, such as illness, that may affect their ability to meet the due dates.

For end-of-year marking, Assessment Operations is open from 8 am until 6 pm each weekday and, from the third Saturday in Term 4, from 9 am until 3 pm on Saturdays.

Markers telephone 8115 4724 if they have any queries about batch collection and delivery.

Marking guidelines

Marking

The investigations are marked with reference to the performance standards and in accordance with the marking guidelines. The relevant assessment design criteria and specific features are identified in the subject outline.

Markers determine a grade (in the range A+ to E-) and a corresponding numeric equivalent (out of 30) for each student's investigation. (Note the variation for Community Studies, for which markers allocate a grade in the range OA, A, B, C, D, E.)

Completing results sheets (paper process only)

For paper based marking a batch of investigations includes:

- *a batch cover sheet* (white) – used to alert Assessment Operations to issues such as blank/corrupt CDs/USBs, missing pages, incomplete work, or submission of a wrong assessment type
- *an external investigations marking alert form* (pink) – used to notify the SACE Board of issues such as an excessive word count or plagiarism, or to include any other relevant notes
- *student investigations* – markers must not write on a student's investigation
- *a batch results sheet* (blue) – used to record the grade and the corresponding numeric equivalent using blue or black pen.

All results must be recorded inside the boxes so that the batch results sheet can be scanned accurately. These sheets indicate the investigations that were received and the investigations that were not submitted. If an investigation has been submitted, the marker does not record a result on the sheet. If an investigation is submitted without any evidence of learning, a zero is recorded on the results sheet.

To make a change to a result after it has been recorded, the marker crosses out the result and writes the correct result to the left of the student's SACE registration number.

Markers assess any additional investigations in the batch that are not listed on the batch results sheet. The student's SACE registration number and results are recorded on the batch results sheet.

Markers must sign the batch results sheet and record their marker number.

Monitoring reliability

Calibration scripts are used in the online marking process to support markers' understanding of the performance standards.

Word count

When the marker identifies a word count that is obviously excessive, markers should give credit for what falls below the specified word count. Markers should not spend unnecessary time counting words. Words that are clearly beyond the specified word limit are not taken into account in the assessment decision, as indicated in the SACE Board Word Count Policy.

Markers can seek additional advice from the SACE Officer – Curriculum and Assessment.

Breaches of rules

Markers should record all cases of suspected plagiarism, collusion, or other possible breaches on an external investigations marking alert form, or if marking online, using the issues tab on the online marking page. Any relevant information should be included (e.g. specific pages where plagiarism is suspected; possible plagiarised sources) to help SACE Board staff to investigate the potential breach.

When a breach is suspected, the investigation must be marked at face value by the marker with reference to the performance standards and in accordance with the marking guidelines. After the marking process, SACE Board staff will investigate the breach and, if it is confirmed, apply the appropriate penalty.

Topics outside subject scope

A topic outside the subject scope is not usually a breach of rules. When a topic is outside the subject scope, the investigation:

- is not automatically awarded a result of zero
- should be marked by considering evidence against the performance standards for the subject.

Markers should record, on an external investigations marking alert form or on the issues tab on the online marking page, details of any topics outside the subject scope and how these were managed in the marking process.

If a marker feels unable to mark an investigation because of ethical concerns, the marker must notify the SACE Officer – Curriculum and Assessment.

Marking reports

Markers are required to submit a marking report to the SACE Officer – Curriculum and Assessment as soon as they have finished marking. The report should contain comments on the quality of student performance, and other information relevant to helping teachers and students interpret the assessment requirements of the subject. The marking reports are used when the subject assessment advice is written.

Supervision guidelines

Supervisors re-mark investigations that are identified as having marks that are out of tolerance.

Supervisors read the entire response, mark the investigation, and record the mark. They record a comment for each of their decisions in the boxes on the supervisor decision comment sheet (purple) or in the online justification comment box.

In the paper process the supervisor must mark only those scripts that are identified at the top of the results sheet or as advised by the SACE Board.

Marking and supervision process for investigations

- Investigations are marked by at least two people to provide more than one judgment on the quality of the work.
- The second marker, who is a SACE Board-appointed marker, assesses the work and awards a mark *without* knowing the mark awarded by the first marker.
- A supervisor's judgment is sought when the marks awarded by Marker 1 and Marker 2 fall outside the established tolerance for that subject.
- All students' work is marked in accordance with a defined and consistent process.
- The reliability of SACE Board markers is checked through the marking process and the collection and review of statistical data.

Quality Assurance Process

Marker 1 and Marker 2

1. Marker 1 (teacher) marks the investigations. They provide a score out of 30 for investigations in all subjects (except for Community Studies where grades in the range OA, A, B, C, D, E are awarded).
2. Marker 2 (SACE Board marker) marks the investigations as batched. They also provide a score out of 30 for investigations in all subjects (except for Community Studies where grades in the range OA, A, B, C, D, E are awarded). Marker 2 does not know the marks given by Marker 1.
3. When the marks provided by Marker 1 and Marker 2 are within tolerance the two marks are aggregated to determine the final mark.

Marker 1, Marker 2 and the supervisor

4. Investigations where the difference in marks provided by Marker 1 and Marker 2 exceeds the tolerance are identified for re-marking. In Community Studies, investigations where there is a difference in the grades given by Marker 1 and Marker 2 are identified for re-marking.
5. The supervisor re-marks all investigations that are identified on the results sheet. If the supervisor's mark is within tolerance of the marks provided by Marker 1 or Marker 2, the supervisor's mark replaces whichever is further from it.
6. If the supervisor's mark is equidistant from the marks provided by Marker 1 and Marker 2, or is outside the tolerance with both Marker 1 and Marker 2, the supervisor's mark replaces the marks provided by both Marker 1 and Marker 2.
7. The supervisor completes the supervisor decision comment sheet for each student identified and assessed through the supervision process.

Final integrity check

8. A SACE Board panel conducts a final integrity check of results.