

Work Education

2009 ASSESSMENT REPORT

Flexible Learning Programs



Government
of South Australia

SACE
Board of SA

WORK EDUCATION

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GENERAL COMMENTS

As with previous years, teachers are to be commended for the work done with such a diverse range of students working across a broad range of work and vocational options. Group 1 enrolments have again proven to be more popular than Group 2 for Vocational Studies, with approximately 62% of students completing either Vocational Studies A or B as a Group 1 subject.

The majority of schools chose November for Work Education subjects to be moderated. The reasons for adjusting marks at final moderation were similar to those identified in previous years. This year, however, there was an increase in the number of classes adjusted due to an apparent lack of understanding about how VET should be evidenced in the vocational courses undertaken, resulting in subsequent incorrect interpretation of some areas of the curriculum. The more common causes for adjustment encountered during the moderation process will be outlined in this report against the individual assessment components.

The following comments relate to problems encountered during the final central moderation process, and which caused considerable time spent moderating a relatively small number of classes. In particular, the following variances with the Work Education curriculum statement and the learning area were noted:

- the inclusion of formative as well as summative student work—the Flexible Learning Programs manual indicates that only summative work is required
- the excessive number of very lengthy tasks for disproportionately small weightings
- the lack of student evidence to confirm marks awarded by teachers
- the lack of evidence to confirm marks awarded for the Workplace Learning component, particularly the Teacher Report to Moderator on Workplace Learning form and the Employer's Report on Workplace Performance form
- the apparent unfamiliarity of some teachers with the current curriculum statement and assessment criteria, including the usage of terms for describing the learning outcomes and the criteria for judging performance
- the lack of evidence of student completion of vocational attainment, as differentiated from their enrolment in VET units, which is a requirement for all students undertaking Vocational Studies.

The majority of these problems could have been avoided if teachers had used the 2009 Work Education curriculum statement and utilised the supporting information available in the Flexible Learning Programs manual (published annually).

Moderators ask that teachers use the appropriate forms available from the SACE Board website and from the Flexible Learning Programs manual to report on workplace learning in their preparation of materials for moderation. Teachers are also asked to package materials in separate bags for class groups according to the yellow result sheets and, within these bags, by individual student, rather than bundles of assessment tasks. It would be appreciated if teachers could indicate which software packages are needed to access work sent in on USB, CD or DVD.

ASSESSMENT COMPONENT 1: WORKPLACE LEARNING

This component has two tasks: the Workplace Performance task for which the Employer's Report on Workplace Performance form and the Teacher Report to Moderator on Workplace Learning form should be included as evidence, and the Workplace Reflection task for which the students reflect on, review and evaluate their experiences in the workplace.

The Workplace Learning component comprises 50% of the assessment for each course. For each Work Studies unit this should represent 25 to 30 hours of work placement and for each Vocational Studies course this should represent 50 to 60 hours. Variations to this should be checked with the school's nominated support moderator, as it appeared that some Work Studies and Vocational Studies students fell short of their time in work placements. In these situations, moderators are required to award a proportion of marks unless other provisions have been made on the student's behalf. Teachers are reminded that for Vocational Studies students, time spent in workplace placement(s) should be reflected in the skills and understandings gained through their vocational attainments. In instances where these requirements are either not, or tenuously, met, it is difficult for the student to demonstrate meeting the full criteria against which their performance in Workplace Performance and Workplace Reflection are judged. It should be noted that, if necessary, students can use a number of workplaces to meet the required hours.

Teachers are reminded that they should use the Teacher Report to Moderator on Workplace Learning form to present a summary of each student's assessment for this component. In completing this form, teachers take into account their own observations, the content of the Employer's Report on Workplace Performance, and the student's reflection about his/her experiences in the workplace. Where students have a range of placements to make up the hours of experience of work, teachers should briefly explain the circumstances in the comments section of the Teacher Report to Moderator on Workplace Learning form.

ASSESSMENT COMPONENT 2: COURSE WORK

This component requires students to demonstrate effective research skills and a depth of understanding of work related issues. In the more successful examples of the Course Work component, students accessed primary resources. These included individuals in the community as well as other workers. When tasks are based solely on secondary sources of information, students find it difficult to meet all the criteria for judging performance, particularly in understanding the responsibilities of individuals or groups in relation to the current 'world of work'.

For some Vocational Studies programs, moderators expressed concern about the excessive number of very lengthy tasks for disproportionately small assessment weightings. For some, the Course Work component lacked a connection to vocational attainment and/or the group requirements. For others, moderators were concerned about the lack of evidence of any course work undertaken by the students. As before, it is difficult for students to demonstrate all of the criteria for judging performance when the curriculum statement requirements are not met.

ASSESSMENT COMPONENT 3: STUDENT RECORD OF VOCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The curriculum statement states that 25 to 30 hours of vocational training are to be completed for each Vocational Studies A and B course. The most successful Vocational Studies students undertook their vocational training as industry-specific and related to their work placements. Where students are enrolled in Vocational Studies as a Group 2 subject, the vocational training must have a technical focus.

A great deal of time was spent by moderators contacting schools where evidence from registered training organisations of their students' vocational attainment had not been provided. Failure to provide evidence of vocational attainments may result in no marks being awarded to the student for this assessment component. (Please note that evidence of enrolment in VET is not evidence of attainment.)

This year there appeared to be a lack of understanding about how vocational attainments contribute to this assessment component. This was evidenced by the increasing tendency for some teachers to attempt to grade this component on the yellow results sheets submitted to the SACE Board. For some students, this meant that, although they achieved competence in the VET units they were undertaking, they were given a proportional mark rather than 100% of the nominated weighting for Vocational Attainment. Teachers are encouraged to refer to the curriculum statement, contact the school's nominated support moderator, or contact the Curriculum Services Officer at the SACE Board if further clarification about this point is needed.

ASSESSMENT COMPONENT 4: INVESTIGATIVE PROJECT

The Investigative Project comprises 25% of the assessment for Work Studies B and Vocational Studies B. Successful Investigative Projects identified a work-related issue that had varying viewpoints and was phrased as a question rather than a topic. They included the use of both primary and secondary sources of information with links to the students' personal workplace experiences. In the better projects, it appeared that the teacher had supported students in their planning and management, and in the subsequent analysis and presentation of the conclusions of the project, so that the student could then present a variety of perspectives.

Chief Assessor
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