

Senior Assignment Policy

Rationale

Caloundra Christian College is committed to ensure that assignment task conditions provide equity for all students. Firm due dates are given so that all students have sufficient time to complete the task. Anomalies will be considered individually so that no student is disadvantaged due to circumstances beyond their control. Above all, students must meet Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority (QCAA) mandatory requirements with regard to assignment work.

This policy takes account of the QCAA statement on late submission and non-submission of student assessment, the QCAA statement on Revisiting Semesters and Undertaking Additional Assessment and Special Consideration (see Appendices A, B and C). It specifically relates to students working towards senior certification in Authority and Authority-registered subjects.

Definitions

Assignment

An extended summative assessment task that requires work at home and in the classroom. This task is not completed under examination conditions.

Due Date

The final date of submission shown on the assignment task sheet

Draft Date

The date(s) nominated by the class teacher for the perusal of 'work in progress'. This will be shown on the task sheet.

Evidence of Authenticity

Documentation of 'work in progress' giving assurance of the work being that of the student

Selective Updating

Opportunity given to verify a student's level of achievement where necessary, as defined by individual subject work programs

Non-submission

A completed assignment has not been handed in on the due date

Special Provisions

Reasonable adjustments made to conditions of assessment to ensure equitable opportunities for all students

Computer Malfunction

Failure of software or hardware, in particular printers

Due Date and the Concept of Timeliness

Reasonable due dates are set with recognition of the nature of the task and the demands required to fulfill that task satisfactorily. Assignments are deemed to be on time if they are submitted in class on the nominated date and given directly to the teacher.

Drafts

A draft is 'work in progress' which provides the teacher with evidence of authenticity for that assignment. Such work may take a variety of forms (e.g. written piece, printout, page of calculations, rehearsal, oral script, research notes etc).

A draft or checkpoint date is to be recorded on the assignment task sheet.

When a draft is returned with comments to a student, the teacher will record the sighting of that draft.

A draft is to be submitted with the final copy of an assignment for verification purposes. This is dependent on the requirements of the subject work program.

When the class teacher has not sighted a draft, contact will be made with the parents alerting parents to this fact (communication may be by phone, email or a generic letter initiated by the class teacher).

If there are concerns regarding a student's progress prior to the due date of the assignment, the teacher should promptly contact the Head of Department and/or the Head of Secondary for further action. If the student is provided assistance and support through the Independent Learning Centre (ILC), contact shall be made with the Head of Learning Support.

Non-Submission of Assignments

If the student does not submit the completed assignment on the due date the draft will be required. This will be marked and a grade recorded.

If no draft has been received the student will be asked to produce some work, relevant to the task, for placement in their folio as evidence of completion of course requirements. This should take place as soon as possible after the due date.

If there is no evidence of a student's work then Heads of Department, the Head of Secondary and parents will be notified and action taken.

The consequences of non-submission of substantive work may be loss of credit for the semester in that subject.

Selective Updating

Students may have the opportunity to selectively update an assignment task in accordance with the approved subject work program.

Any assignment task used for selective updating purposes must be a modification of the original task.

Special Provisions

Special provisions may be particularly relevant for students with specific educational needs. It is the responsibility of College staff to design inclusive learning and assessment programs and to provide opportunities for alternative assessment arrangements which are consistent with the requirements of

the relevant syllabus or study specification, as well as meeting the requirements of quality assurance processes. The College is guided by the QCAA policy documentation; Special provisions for School-based assessment in Authority and Authority-registered subjects, in particular the Responsibilities, Principles and Guidelines for the provision of educational adjustments and exemptions.

General Considerations

If a student knows in advance of an absence occurring on the due date, the assignment task must be submitted beforehand or arrangements must be made to have it delivered to the College Office on the due date.

In cases of illness, absence or other unforeseen circumstances documentary evidence (e.g. medical certificate) must be supplied. This must be submitted to the designated Head of Department on return to College. A copy of the document and the Head of Department's approval should be attached to the title page of the assignment.

Computer malfunction will not be accepted as an excuse for an extension of a due date.

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. It is a form of dishonesty that occurs when a person passes off someone else's work as his or her own. This can range from failing to cite an author for ideas incorporated into a student's work, to handing in a paper downloaded from the internet or copied from another person. An assignment, which is found to be heavily plagiarized, will incur penalties.

Appendices

Appendix A: QCAA Late Submission and Non-Submission of Student Assessment in Authority Subjects and Authority-Registered Subjects Policy Statement, July 2014.

Introduction

This policy defines the responsibilities and principles for managing the late submission and non-submission of student responses to assessment instruments in Authority and Authority-registered subjects. It does not apply to situations where students' reasons for late submission or non-submission relate to specific educational needs. In such cases, schools should refer to Policy 1.2 Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority on Special Provisions for School-based Assessments in Authority and Authority-registered Subjects (2014).

In Queensland's system of externally moderated school-based assessment, schools need to have policies and practices that encourage the participation and engagement of students in their assessment programs. In all cases, schools are responsible for developing and managing these policies and practices.

To ensure the integrity of the levels of achievement reported for senior certification, students must meet the mandatory requirements of a syllabus for Authority and Authority-registered subjects. The mandatory requirements are stated in all syllabuses.

Late submission of student responses to an assessment instrument

This relates to students not submitting a response to an assessment instrument by the due date. The practice of awarding a lower standard as a penalty for lateness is not valid in a standards-based system of externally moderated school-based assessment. Judgments of student achievement in Authority and Authority-registered subjects are made by matching a body of evidence provided by students' responses to assessment instruments, to the standards associated with exit criteria outlined in the relevant syllabus.

In cases where students do not submit a response to an assessment instrument by the due date, judgments should be made using evidence available on or before the due date.

Non-submission of student responses to an assessment instrument

This relates to the non-submission of student responses to an assessment instrument. A standard can only be awarded where evidence has been demonstrated. In cases of non-submission of student responses, an "E" standard cannot be awarded where there is no evidence for it. Judgments of student achievement in Authority and Authority-registered subjects are made by matching a body of evidence provided by students' responses to assessment instruments to the standards descriptors outlined in the relevant syllabus.

Principles for establishing school policies on late and non-submission of student responses to assessment instruments

A school policy should incorporate the following principles:

- Judgments of student responses to assessment instruments are made using standards associated with exit criteria

- Procedures are enacted consistently across subjects within the school
- In cases of late submission of student responses to assessment instruments, judgments are based on evidence available on or before the due date
- In cases of non-submission of student responses to assessment instruments, standards are not awarded when there is no evidence.

Resources

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Moderation Policy 1.2: Special provisions for school-based assessments in Authority and Authority-registered subjects
- Moderation Protocol 2.13: Revisiting semesters and undertaking additional assessment in Authority and Authority-registered subjects
- Moderation Protocol 2.14: Sufficiency of coverage and adequacy of assessment
- Moderation Strategy 4.2: Developing a school-based policy for late and non-submission of student responses to assessment instruments
- QSA Memo 091/08: Sufficiency of Coverage and Adequacy of Assessment for Students to Receive Results on a Senior Statement, 12 Nov 2008 www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/memos/08/091-08.pdf
- Relevant QCAA syllabus documents.

Purpose

In the system of school-based assessment, teachers make professional judgments about student achievement. These judgments are informed by assessment programs that provide opportunities to demonstrate the mandatory aspects of syllabuses. This protocol outlines principles and guidelines to assist schools to develop and implement effective assessment programs.

Resources

This protocol should be read in conjunction with:

- Moderation Policy 1.1: Late and non-submission of student responses to assessment instruments in Authority and Authority-registered subjects
- Moderation Policy 1.2: Special provisions for school-based assessments in Authority and Authority-registered subjects
- Moderation Strategy 4.2: Developing a school-based policy for late and non-submission of student responses to assessment instruments.

Principles

Assessment programs provide the range of techniques and conditions necessary to make valid judgments about student learning over a four-semester course of study.

Effective assessment instruments allow syllabus objectives to be demonstrated and sufficient evidence to be gathered to make judgments about achievement using the syllabus standards descriptors.

The complexity of assessment is relative to the stage of a developmental four-semester course of study and should allow for increasingly independent demonstration of syllabus-specific knowledge and skills.

Assessment programs allow exit decisions to be made at the completion of four-semester courses of study using evidence of the mandatory aspects of the syllabus.

The student's folio is selectively updated based on new assessment evidence.

Guidelines

Schools develop courses of study to be approved by the QCAA through work program/study plan approval processes. Each course of study must include an assessment program that complies with syllabus requirements.

Assessment instruments are designed using the relevant assessment information in the syllabus and other QCAA documents available through the QCAA website.

Each assessment instrument should cover the course of study as identified in the particular work program. Assessment instruments should increase in complexity while allowing for demonstration of greater independence of the learner over the four-semester course of study.

Each approved work program/study plan includes an assessment plan. In Authority syllabuses, the assessment plan includes verification folio requirements. Meeting those requirements allows students to demonstrate the mandatory aspects of the syllabus and schools to gather sufficient information to make judgments about achievement. Those judgments are verified through QCAA moderation processes at a point just prior to exit.

Level of achievement decisions at exit are made by matching the syllabus exit standards with evidence in student responses required in a verification folio and as post-verification assessment.

Level of achievement decisions after one, two or three semesters are made by matching evidence available in student responses with the syllabus standards, given the opportunities presented to that stage of the course.

Further opportunities

Schools may decide to offer further assessment opportunities not specified in an approved work program or study plan when:

- Previously completed assessment did not validly assess the knowledge and/or skills that the instrument purported to assess
- Additional assessment would allow knowledge and/or skills not previously assessed to be demonstrated
- Achievement on an earlier assessment instrument was unrepresentative or atypical.

Assessment information gathered through further assessment opportunities:

- Adds to the evidence available in a folio where the knowledge and/or skills have not been previously assessed (additional assessment)
- Replaces the information in a folio where the knowledge and/or skills have been previously assessed but earlier achievement was unrepresentative or atypical (revisiting within the summative assessment program). The student's folio is selectively updated based on new evidence, i.e. previous evidence is replaced with new evidence.

Further assessment opportunities:

- Require different assessment tasks/items from those of the previous assessment
- May use techniques and conditions similar to the previous assessment
- Should be communicated in advance
- Are made available to all students in a subject
- May not be accepted by individual students
- Are not appropriate where responses are late or not submitted.

Replacing part of an assessment program

- Students may revisit, in whole or in part, one or more semesters of a subject already completed. For OP purposes, results from revisited semesters three and four will override previously recorded results and the final level of achievement will be for four semesters.

Appendix C: QCCA Special Provisions for School-based Assessments in Authority and Authority Registered Subjects Policy Statement, July 2014

Introduction

This policy defines the responsibilities, principles and guidelines to be applied for special provisions in school-based assessments for Authority and Authority-registered subjects. It updates and replaces, and is consistent with, the previous policy on Special Consideration for School-based Assessments in Senior Certification (QSA, Feb 2006). It specifically relates to students working towards senior certification in Authority and Authority-registered subjects.

The responsibility for making decisions about special provisions lies directly with the schools. However, this policy should serve as an appropriate guide and reference for schools in making those decisions.

‘Special provisions’ means making reasonable adjustments to conditions of assessment to ensure equitable opportunities for all students.¹ Special provisions may apply to any student, depending on the circumstances. In making a decision about special provisions, the school is required to consider what adjustments to assessment conditions are reasonable in the circumstances.

The QCAA’s *Equity Statement*² underpins all curriculum development and assessment in Queensland; it states that ‘all young people in Queensland have a right to gain an education that meets their needs and prepares them for active participation in the creation of a socially just, equitable and democratic global society’.

This policy on special provisions should be read in conjunction with the Equity Statement and with policy 1.1: Late and non-submission of student responses to assessment instruments in Authority and Authority-registered subjects.

Scope

This policy covers only school-based assessment that is quality assured by the QCAA for Authority and Authority-registered subjects.

The policy therefore does not apply to the Queensland Core Skills (QCS) Test, the Senior External Examination, the scaling for Overall Positions (OPs) and Field Positions (FPs), and the Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement (QCIA). Separate processes and procedures apply for these.³

Assessment that is quality assured by other jurisdictions, such as assessment for vocational education and training within the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) and approved assessment by other agencies, is also not covered by this policy.⁴

1. Reasonable adjustments are defined in Part 3 of the Disability Standards for Education 2005, Australian Government, accessed Oct 2013, www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2005L00767.

2. QCAA 2011, Equity Statement, accessed Oct 2013, www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/10188.html.

3. The relevant policies and procedures are detailed on the QCAA website www.qcaa.qld.edu.au.

4. Reasonable adjustments are defined by the National Skills Standards Council in Part 1.9 of the Training Package Development Handbook Guidelines, accessed Oct 2013, www.nssc.natese.gov.au, Search for Guidelines Training Pack (note that this policy will be superseded in 2014).

This policy is not intended for use in situations where a critical incident (e.g. disaster, emergency, traumatic event) has significantly impacted the school community and students. In these cases, schools should contact the QCAA, for advice and support.

Specific Educational Needs

Special provisions may be particularly relevant for students with specific educational needs. These needs must be considered in a proactive way — to design inclusive learning and assessment programs, and to provide opportunities for alternative assessment arrangements.

Students with specific educational needs include, but are not limited to:

- Students with disabilities that have a physiological basis, such as those of a sensory, motor or neurological nature⁵
- Students with educational needs arising primarily from socioeconomic, cultural and/or linguistic factors where there may be some form of educational disadvantage, such as students:
 - of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds
 - with language backgrounds other than English
 - who are migrants or refugees
 - from rural and remote locations
 - in low socioeconomic circumstances
- Students with identifiably different patterns of educational development and orientation, influenced by factors such as:
 - gender, for example, the inclusion of learning resources relevant to both females and males
 - special talents (including giftedness), with opportunities for extension programs to be experienced
 - life circumstances that may impact on a student's opportunity to engage in learning and be assessed fairly.

5 Disability is used here as an inclusive term, covering impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions. The World Health Organisation defines impairment as a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation as a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; and a participation restriction as a problem experienced by an individual while involved in life situations. See the WHO website, accessed Oct 2013, www.who.int/topics/disabilities/en.

Responsibilities

Under the Australian Government's Disability Standards for Education 2005⁶, schools are responsible for making special provisions in school-based assessments. The QCAA strongly recommends that schools become familiar with these standards. Each school is responsible for designing the assessment program within the requirements of the relevant syllabus or study area specification, as well as meeting the quality assurance processes for Authority and Authority-registered subjects.⁷ However, the QCAA may

provide advice on special provisions to schools, based on the principles outlined in this policy and the QCAA's Equity Statement.

Principles

Special provisions is a positive act of making reasonable adjustment to assessment requirements and conditions to ensure that assessment is equitable for all students. All students, including those with specific educational needs, should have opportunities to demonstrate their current knowledge and skills.

Schools must strive to identify and minimise barriers that prevent students from demonstrating their current knowledge and skills. To do this, they must plan to ensure that specific educational needs are recognised and reasonable adjustments made to accommodate students. Schools must also take reasonable measures to assess students with specific educational needs so that they can participate in Authority and Authority-registered subjects on the same basis as other students.

Reasonable adjustments for students with specific educational needs must be planned and negotiated as early as possible so that students can be provided with appropriate support in order to commence, participate and complete course of study requirements.

Special provisions involve the application of relevant syllabus criteria and standards against which achievement is judged. Assessment criteria and standards are not modified to suit particular students. The school is required to maintain the intent and rigour of the syllabus or study area specification and any other requirements or components that are inherent or essential to the course of study.⁸ Special provisions do not involve compensating for what the student does not know or cannot do.

The school must consult and involve the student (and, where appropriate, the student's parents/ carers or associates and other relevant school personnel) in the decision-making process concerning special provisions. The school must take into account the student's specific educational needs and balance the interests of all parties affected, including those of the student, the school, staff and other students.

6 Australian Government, accessed Oct 2013, www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2005L00767.

7 See also the section on educational equity in QCAA senior syllabuses and study area specifications, www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/670.html.

8 Federalist Paper 2: The Future of Schooling in Australia (Council for the Australian Federation 2007, accessed Oct 2013, <http://hdl.voced.edu.au/10707/101554>) refers to 'a commitment to rigorous curriculum standards' and clause 3.4(3) of the Australian Government Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Australian Government, accessed Oct 2013, www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2005L00767) states that a school is entitled to maintain the academic requirements of the course or program and other requirements or components that are inherent in or essential to its nature.

Guidelines

Each case must be considered on an individual basis and decisions reached through consultation.

The principal and teachers of the school, with the advice and assistance of the QCAA (if required), should:

- consult with the student and the student’s parents/carers or associates regarding any preferred adjustments, any adjustments that have been provided previously and any recommended or alternative adjustments
- take into account the nature of a student’s disability or the reason for the student’s specific educational needs
- consider the effects of the adjustment on the student, including the effect on the student’s ability to achieve the learning outcomes and to participate in courses of study, and the effect on their independence
- identify assessment instruments that may require reasonable adjustment for students with specific educational needs
- seek advice from other relevant personnel if considered necessary
- make decisions about the nature and appropriateness of the adjustments. This may include considering the costs and benefits of making the adjustment.
- assess whether changes are needed to the adjustment over the period of a student’s education in order to allow for the changing needs of the student over time.

Students with specific educational needs often require adjustment to the form of presentation of an assessment instrument and their response to it. The method of transmission of information about the assessment and the way a student presents evidence of their knowledge and skills may have to be adapted.

When making these adjustments, the principles and practices for high quality assessment should apply at all times.⁹

The school should ensure that the steps taken to identify and implement special provisions maintain respect for the dignity, privacy and confidentiality of the student, their parents/carers and associates.

9 See Australasian Curriculum Assessment and Certification Authorities (ACACA) 1995, Guidelines for Assessment Quality and Equity, accessed Oct 2013, acaca.bos.nsw.edu.au/go/acaca-documents.

Reasonable Educational Adjustments

These involve varying the conditions under which assessment occurs in order to enable students to have opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in a course of study.

Examples of reasonable adjustments include, but are not limited to:

- permitting signing instead of speaking for students with hearing impairments, and computer simulation instead of laboratory work for students with physical impairments
- allowing the use of specialised equipment to accommodate a student's disability (e.g. keyboarding rather than handwriting)
- providing a reader to communicate a text where reading is not the skill being assessed, or providing a scribe to produce an exact transcription of student responses to assessment items where a physical impairment does not permit a student to write

- providing assistance with the interpretation and comprehension of assessment items for students with language difficulties (e.g. students with language backgrounds other than English) as long as this assistance occurs for assessment items that are not designed to assess those language skills
- allowing additional time for students to complete assessable tasks (e.g. written tests or assignments) to give them the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills
- giving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, migrant and refugee students the opportunity to present their cultural experiences in responses to assessment items (e.g. providing an alternative essay question, in consultation with the students, which allows them to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in the subject by applying it to their own cultural context)

Exemption (allowing non-completion of some particular piece of assessment)

An exemption should only be allowed when there is sufficient alternative information to make a judgment about an exit level of achievement without the student having to complete a particular assessment instrument. For example, an exemption may be appropriate where a student has missed an assessment instrument due to illness or because of some other legitimate absence, and completing the assessment would place an unreasonable burden on the student.

An exemption is inappropriate if it results in insufficient evidence being available to make a judgment about the student's exit level of achievement, or the student being unable to meet the mandatory requirements stated in a syllabus or study area specification. Exemptions should not be a substitute for schools making efforts to remove barriers to a student's access to learning and assessment opportunities. Exemption is not an option where reasonable adjustment is appropriate.

Quality Assurance Processes

Folios of students who have been given special provisions do not generally need to be submitted for review for the purposes of quality assurance of Authority and Authority-registered subjects. The exceptions are when these students are part of small groups for which all folios are submitted or when a particular sample student folio is required. In these cases, a brief supporting statement describing the nature of reasonable adjustments can be attached to the folio to help the review panel provide appropriate advice.

Appendix D: Failure to Submit a Draft/Assignment – Letter to Parents

(Date)

Student Name:	
Home Group:	
Assessment Task:	
Subject:	
Teacher:	
Due Date of Assessment Task:	
Due Date of Draft:	

Dear Parents/ Carers

Your child has failed to complete the above rough draft. He/She should ensure that this draft is handed in as soon as possible.

If his/her assignment is not handed in by the due date he/she will be required to complete the task in the following lesson. The work that is completed in this lesson will be handed in and marked accordingly.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Prialx
Head of Secondary