



St Joseph's College

Junior Assessment Handbook

**Years 7 & 8
2017**

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PREAMBLE

The information in this booklet is designed to give parents, students and staff an understanding of the Junior Years 7 and 8 Assessment procedures and information.

Those charged with the responsibility of making judgements about the academic progress of the students have expectations of which students and their families should be aware. The completion of set work and commitment to all experiences set by the teacher will contribute significantly to successful outcomes in their studies.

It is the teacher's responsibility to inform students of the requirements for a particular course. However, the student also has a responsibility to become familiar with the requirements of assessment. Teachers are available to answer questions or discuss problems in relation to specific course assessment, as is the College's Leader of Curriculum.

Students should take their time to read this handbook to ensure that they fully understand their responsibilities with regard to Assessment in Years 7 and 8.

ST JOSEPH'S COLLEGE

Assessment of Student Achievement

Years 7 and 8 Courses

INTRODUCTION

St Joseph's College is founded on the person of Jesus Christ. Our philosophy of assessment is one based on the values which He lived and proclaimed. As a Catholic school the understanding of the uniqueness of each individual student must be reflected in our policies and practices of assessment.

The NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) has developed and published mandatory requirements for assessment of students in Years 7 to 12. These regulations and rules must be strictly adhered to in order for students to be eligible for the award of both the Record of School Achievement and the Higher School Certificate. This Policy and Procedures document establishes the structure within which we must operate.

Assessment is intended to recognise individual effort and achievement, to enhance self-esteem and to develop a realistic impression of one's strengths and limitations. The students at St Joseph's College are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and achievement.

Assessment procedures at St Joseph's College recognise personal achievement and performance in regard to course learning outcomes and performance descriptors. However, whilst significant, assessment is only one component of school education at St Joseph's College.

NESA requires that schools assess the performance of students during their Year 10 studies. This is to ensure that the student satisfactorily completes each course and is therefore eligible to receive a Record of School Achievement (RoSA).

ASSESSMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT

Assessment is used at St Joseph's College as a process of gathering information in order to make judgements and to give information about a student's achievement. Assessment is an integral part of each course of study and is linked closely with the course's Aims, Objectives and Outcomes.

The College has a commitment to ensuring that students can achieve as many of the course outcomes as possible and that in setting assessment tasks, teachers will ensure that our students know exactly what is expected of them, the outcomes of the course being assessed and the criteria being used to judge performance.

Justice requires that teachers will clearly communicate the criteria used in measuring achievement and that students will be fully aware of the purpose and scope of any set assessment task. Assessment at St Joseph's College will concentrate on what a student can do and will give the student an honest and realistic measure of achievement and progress.

Schools are currently required by NESA to submit assessments of student achievement by the end of Year 10. This assessment is based on the achievements measured throughout Board courses. It encompasses all syllabus objectives other than those related to attitude and interest and is intended to provide an indication of a student's attainment of a wide range of syllabus objectives.

Each syllabus contains specific objectives, all of which are encompassed by the assessments. Each subject department has developed specific assessment schedules that take into account the syllabus objectives and the various weightings of each component.

At St Joseph's College, we believe assessment should:

- Be conducted regularly on a formal and informal basis.
 - Be integral to the teaching and learning program.
 - Be reflected in the reporting process.
 - Enable students to be clear about what they are expected to know and do.
 - Provide students with adequate notice to prepare for formal assessment.
 - Reflect the outcomes of the teaching and learning of the course/unit/module.
 - Be conducted in an environment that allows students to perform at their optimum level.
 - Be varied according to the specific needs of subjects and syllabus requirements.
 - Incorporate the preparation of the task, the administration, marking, feedback and evaluation components of the task.
 - Allow for students to receive meaningful feedback about their performance and progress.
 - Allow teachers to reflect on their teaching practice and to modify where necessary their approaches to the teaching and learning process.
 - Permit teachers to make consistent judgements about student performance.
 - Allow teachers to exercise professional judgement where necessary to determine final grades for students.
 - Use a variety of task types to incorporate the learning styles of all learners.
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Assessment Procedures

☐ RECORD OF SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT (RoSA)

In Years 7 to 10, students study a variety of courses to qualify for the award of a Record of School Achievement (RoSA). If a student does not complete a Higher School Certificate the RoSA is issued at the time that they leave secondary education after the completion of Year 10. As well as taking the necessary combination of courses, students are also required to apply themselves satisfactorily to their studies.

Students who are satisfying course requirements will be:

- (a) following the course developed or endorsed by the NESA;
 - (b) applying themselves with diligence and sustained effort to the set tasks and experiences provided in the course by the school and;
 - (c) achieving some or all of the course outcomes.
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☐ SATISFACTORY COMPLETION OF A COURSE

A student will be considered to have satisfactorily completed a course, if, in the Principal's view, there is sufficient evidence that the student has:

- (a) **followed the course** developed or endorsed by NESA, and
- (b) applied themselves with **diligence** and **sustained effort** to the set tasks and experiences provided in the course by the school, and
- (c) achieved some or all of the course outcomes. *(ACE Manual Ref: 11.4)*

To receive a result in any course, you must satisfactorily study the course. Satisfactory completion of a course involves:

- a genuine attempt of assessment tasks which contribute more than half of the maximum marks; and
- Participation in experiences that are required by the syllabus, eg. assignments, practical work, participation in class; and
- Enough preparation to enable you to make a serious attempt on all tasks.

Parents/carers of students who are not meeting either a, b, or c above in a particular course are posted an official warning letter indicating that satisfactory completion of the course is in jeopardy. If a second letter is sent indicating course requirements are still not being met, the student will be interviewed by the Principal and Leader of Curriculum to determine if an N (Non-Completion of a Course) Award should be issued.

If a student's attendance is called into question they will be required to prove to the Principal's satisfaction, following a review of their performance, that they are meeting the course completion criteria. *(ACE Manual Ref: 11.4)*

If a student does not satisfactorily meet all the requirements of a course it will not be recorded on the NESA Record of School Achievement (RoSA).

ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME

Assessment procedures are outlined in each teaching and learning program. The nature of procedures differs in accordance with the subject/course. Each KLA (Key Learning Area) makes decisions about the range of tasks covered, the nature of the tasks and the contribution of the tasks to the semester reporting process.

Assessment occurs both 'formally' and 'informally' in Years 7 and 8. Formal assessment occurs, or is due, at a specific predetermined time in the school timetable. 'Formal' assessment contributes to a teacher's overall judgement of student performance relative to the course outcomes. 'Informal' assessment helps teachers develop an image of what students know and can do, and hence guides the teaching and learning process.

Students will be required to complete specified pieces of work called Assessment Tasks for 'Formal' assessment throughout each of their courses.

These tasks may include:

- formal examinations,
- essays,
- assignment work,
- practical work,
- excursion reports and
- oral presentations.

These tasks are derived from:

- (a) NESA syllabus requirements, and
 - (b) Subject/Course Teaching and Learning Programs.
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NOTIFICATION OF TASKS

1. Prior to the scheduled date of the assessment task, and **at least one week prior to the task**, specific details of the assessment task will be posted on the course Moodle page.
 2. The Assessment Task Notification will include:
 - Subject/course
 - Unit/Module
 - Topic
 - Weighting of Task (relative to course overview and if applicable)
 - The date and timing of the task
 - Length/duration of task (eg. reading time, etc)
 - Type/nature of task (eg. hand-up, exam, etc)
 - Outcomes to be assessed
 - Description of Task Requirements – breakdown of marks to indicate relative weightings
 - Marking guidelines and/or marking criteria
 - Task Rubric (optional)
 - Task References (if applicable)
 3. Teachers will explain the requirements of the task and the details listed above. Students will have the opportunity to reflect on the task requirements and ask questions to clarify issues. **Teachers will either ask students to sign a class roll, or will mark a class roll, to record that students were present when told that assessment details have been posted on the College website.**
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4. Teaching and learning will not be specifically directed towards the task. However, teaching and learning will incorporate the outcomes of the proposed assessment.
 5. Task design will be a collaborative activity, involving all teachers who will take part in the administration of the task.
 6. Prior to the marking of assessment tasks, where more than one teacher is involved in the marking, teachers will discuss and clarify the marking criteria to ensure consistency of judgement and awarding of marks takes place.
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SUBMISSION OF TASKS

Students are expected to complete **all** assessment tasks. Students in Years 7 and 8 are to submit assessment tasks to the course teacher during class on, or before, the due date. All assessment tasks are to be **hard copy** unless otherwise stated in the assessment notification details.

Students under suspension must comply with all assessment requirements on or by the due date.

If the student is unable to submit an assessment on the due date and they have a valid reason, the parent/carer should write an explanation in the student's College diary. Valid reasons may include illness, family or College sporting commitments, etc. Misuse of class time to work on the assessment and hence an inability to complete the task on time would not constitute a valid reason for late submission. **It is the student's responsibility to show this note to the course teacher in the first lesson of the relevant subject after returning to school.**

If the assessment is then submitted as soon as possible but **within one week** of the due date, the student will be awarded a mark/grade for the task using the previously published subject marking criteria. If circumstances are exceptional and the assessment task cannot be submitted within one week of the due date, an estimate may be provided by the teacher.

Students who are absent from an 'in class' assessment task will be required to show a parent/carer note written in the College diary. This is to be shown to the course teacher in the next available lesson following the student's return to school. The course teacher will arrange a suitable time for the student to sit the missed assessment task. If sitting the task after the due date is impractical, or if more than one week has elapsed since the original task date, the teacher may elect to estimate a mark/grade for the student after discussion with the relevant Leader of Learning.

Students in Years 7 and 8 at St Joseph's College who are not committing to their studies will be notified by one of the following, or a combination of the following:

- (a) a teacher note in the student's diary and/or phone communication to the parent/carer.
 - (b) A NESA Unsatisfactory Warning letter for continued non-commitment to a course. This letter is posted home.
 - (c) A Zero Mark letter for failure to complete a formal assessment. This letter is posted home and the student will be required to attend afternoon detention until the task is completed. A zero mark will still be allocated.
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☐ SCHEDULE OF TASKS

Formal assessment procedures will normally begin during Term 1. Unless there are extreme circumstances, **no formal assessment tasks will be scheduled in the week prior to major examination blocks** (eg. mid-course and end of course examinations).

Timing for assessment tasks is available through the Skoolbag App. Specific dates for assessments or examination periods are notified to students via the course Moodle page.

Students are warned that compensation cannot be made because of extended illness, misadventure or domestic problems that may have affected a student's performance throughout the course.

The assessment is to measure the student's **actual performance** in the course, not their potential performance.

(ACE Manual ref: 11.13.3)

☐ EXTENSIONS FOR FORMAL ASSESSMENT TASKS

Students who require an extension of time to complete a graded assessment task are to make this request via a parent/carer note in the College diary. The course teacher will determine if the extension required is fair and reasonable and confirm the outcome of the request in the College diary.

Students **must request an extension of time prior to the due date**. Extensions will only be granted for valid reasons such as illness and family commitments but not in cases where the student has not applied him/herself to the task at hand.

☐ COMPUTER PRESENTATION OF TASKS

All assessment tasks are to be **hard copy** unless otherwise stated on the assessment notification given to students. **Computer breakdown or printer failure** is not a valid reason for non-submission of a task on the due assessment date. In the event of a computer and/or printer problem immediately prior to the hand up date, students must provide **some evidence** that the task had been commenced. For example, handwritten notes, part printouts, or email a copy of the assignment to the course teacher.

Students using computers should save and back up their work at regular intervals throughout the period of time allocated to complete the task. Assessment tasks should not be commenced too close to the due date. The **amount of evidence** presented in the event of computer breakdown should have a direct relationship to the length of time allocated for the task to be completed. For example, if the student is given eight weeks to complete a research task, the evidence submitted would need to be substantial.

☐ WRITING A BIBLIOGRAPHY

A bibliography is a list of the information resources used. The sources might include books, magazines, encyclopedia, Websites, etc. In a bibliography you organize information about the publications, listed alphabetically by the authors' surnames. There are different styles, or types, of bibliographies. Students should refer to the St Joseph College diary for a more detailed explanation of writing a bibliography.

PLAGIARISM

All work submitted for assessment must be the **student's own work**. If doubt arises regarding the authenticity of work submitted for assessment, the matter will be reviewed by the Leader of Learning, in consultation with the Leader of Curriculum. If instances of cheating, copying or plagiarism are substantiated, a zero mark will be awarded for those sections of the assessment task deemed to be non-authentic work.

Plagiarism involves copying or using thoughts directly from another person's work as your own work.

Any other student who is determined to have assisted with the cheating/copying will also be liable for a zero result. In a situation where a zero score is imposed, the student and his/her parents will be informed in writing as soon as practical after the task.

In instances where plagiarism has occurred an authentic task will need to be submitted at a date to be determined by the relevant Leader of Learning to satisfactorily complete course outcomes. A zero mark for those sections that have been plagiarised will still be recorded.

To avoid plagiarism try the following strategies:

- Take notes from the information you research and read. Don't copy out paragraphs word for word. Read the information then write notes jotting down the important points or words from memory.
 - If you must copy something word for word, such as a definition, put it in quotation marks (""), noting the source and the page number from where it came immediately so that you don't forget the source.
 - List all the sources that you use in your bibliography.
 - If you need help ask your teacher or the Librarian.
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FEEDBACK FROM TASKS

An essential component of assessment is to provide meaningful feedback to each student. Elements of meaningful feedback could include:

- Providing marks or grades that have meaning by linking marks to specific criteria.
 - Allowing students to self-assess their work relative to the marking criteria.
 - Allowing peers to assess their work relative to the marking criteria.
 - Providing opportunity for teachers to discuss with students (one on one/small group/whole group) the assessment of their performance, which may include their study preparation, their exam technique, their time management, their attitude and application, their commitment to class and home study, etc.
 - Written comments that benefit future student performance, affirm their performance, suggest methods of improvement, areas for development, etc.
 - Providing a link to their future learning in the course.
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REPORTING

Students and parents will receive regular and scheduled school reports on student achievement in each course of study. Reports are issued twice a year at the end of Semester 1 and 2.

SEAAR (Student Engagement and Application Reports) will be issued every 5 weeks with teachers allocating students a grade, ranging from 1-5 based on their behaviour, organisation, effort and application, homework, punctuality and respectful relationships. These grades are averaged and placed against one of five performance bands.

This will allow students and parents to regularly monitor engagement and application, the keystones to realising academic potential.

Grades for each component of a course will be allocated each Semester using both formal and informal assessment strategies. The Grades A to E will be consistent with the mandated performance criteria and/or outcomes as described in each Board of Studies course syllabus. A yearly grade will be submitted to the Board of Studies on the completion of each course.

This feedback, both formal and informal, will provide students and parents with meaningful insights into their work habits and skills, achievements and potential.

The General Performance Descriptors describe performance at each of five grade levels:

- A** The student has an **extensive knowledge and understanding of the content** and can readily apply this knowledge. In addition, the student has achieved a **very high level of competence in the processes and skills** and can apply these skills to new situations.
- B** The student has a **thorough knowledge and understanding of the content** and a **high level of competence in the processes and skills**. In addition, the student is able to apply this knowledge and these skills to most situations.
- C** The student has a **sound knowledge and understanding of the main areas of content** and has achieved an **adequate level of competence in the processes and skills**.
- D** The student has a **basic knowledge and understanding of the content** and has achieved a **limited level of competence in the processes and skills**.
- E** The student has an **elementary knowledge and understanding in few areas of the content** and has achieved **very limited competence in some of the processes and skills**.

MERIT AWARDS

Results earned by students from graded assessments in each course will be recorded by teachers on the College computer network. Merit awards are generated from the formal assessment data. Students receive a Task Merit Award in a subject if they have been awarded a Grade A for a task. These awards are recognised in the reports issued at the end of Semester 1 and 2.

Semester Excellence Awards are generated from semester reports. These are issued to students who achieved an A grade in a both reports for a course.

Yearly Excellence and Special Awards are presented at Presentation Evenings held at the end of the school year.
