

Como Secondary College

Senior School Assessment Policy 2020

COMO SECONDARY COLLEGE has high expectations of our Year 11 and 12 (Senior School) student body. The aim of the assessment policy is to encourage students to take responsibility for their learning and to achieve success. It is the intention that staff, students and parents work together in order to allow students maximum opportunities to successfully complete their assessment program.

Assessment procedures must therefore be fair, valid, reliable and inclusive.

Definitions: The policy refers to WACE courses and Units of Competency (UoC) within Certificate courses. Any statement using the term course will refer to all of the above.

1. Student responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the student to:

- attempt all in-class assessment tasks on the scheduled date and submit all out-of-class assessment tasks by the due date
- maintain an assessment file for each course studied which contains all completed written assessment tasks and to make this file available whenever required by the school (see Section 9 below for details)
- maintain a good record of conduct and progress and an attendance rate of 90% or above, (a student who is absent from a class for five lessons or more per term is deemed to be 'at risk' of not achieving the best possible result)
- initiate contact with teachers concerning absence from class, missed in-class assessment tasks, requests for extension of the due date for out-of-class assessment tasks (prior to the due date) and other issues pertaining to assessment.

2. Teacher responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the teacher to:

- develop a teaching and learning program that appropriately delivers the current Authority syllabus for the particular pair of units
- provide students with access to a course outline and an assessment outline (see Section 3 below for details)
- ensure that all assessment tasks are fair, valid and reliable
- provide students with timely assessment feedback and with guidance about how best to undertake future tasks
- maintain accurate records of student achievement
- retain all original student assessments (in the event of SCASA review) until January of the following year. Students may take a copy of their marked assessments via their mobile phone
- meet college and external timelines for assessment and reporting
- inform students and parents of academic progress, as appropriate.
- enter results on Reporting to Parents within 2 weeks of the assessment deadline.

3. Information provided to students

At the earliest opportunity the teacher will provide to the student a hard copy of the following documents (in addition, these documents are also available in an electronic version on Connect):

- the Authority syllabus for the pair of units which includes the grade descriptions
- a course outline for the pair of units (or unit or semester) that shows:
 - the content from the syllabus in the sequence in which it will be taught
 - the approximate time allocated to teach each section of content from the syllabus
- an assessment outline for the pair of units that includes:
 - the number of tasks to be assessed
 - the approximate timing of each assessment task (i.e. the week in which each assessment task is planned or the start week and submissions week for each out-of-class extended task)
 - the weighting for each assessment task
 - the weighting for each assessment type, as specified in the assessment table of the syllabus
 - a general description of each assessment task
 - an indication of the content covered by each assessment task.

4. Assessing student achievement

At Como Secondary College all students are enrolled in a pair of units. In each pair of units, a number of assessment tasks occur during the year including end of semester exams in all ATAR courses and an Externally Set Task for Year 12 General and Foundation courses (see Sections 5 and 6 below for details).

Each task provides evidence of student achievement. The teacher uses the total weighted mark from all assessment tasks when assigning a grade at the completion of the pair of units.

The requirements for each assessment task will be clearly described in writing (i.e. what the student needs to do, often indicating the steps involved for extended tasks). Where appropriate, the criteria against which the task will be marked will be provided with the task.

Most tasks are completed in-class. Some courses may include tasks that are completed out-of-class (in which case, student achievement will be validated to ensure authenticity).

Some courses may include assessment tasks to be completed by a group of students. In such cases teachers will use strategies to enable them to assess the performance of each individual in the group. Typically this will be identified in the task (or task brief) provided to the students at the commencement of the task.

Where a student's disability, specific education needs or cultural beliefs will significantly affect their access to an assessment task the teacher may adjust the task in consultation with the relevant head of learning area responsible for the course.

5. School examinations and internally set tasks

School examinations and internally set tasks are included in the assessment outline for the pair of units. The weighting (i.e. proportion of the final mark) for these school-based examinations and internally set tasks varies between courses and can be determined from the assessment outline.

A written examination will be held in all ATAR courses at the end of Semester 1 and the end of Semester 2.

An Internally Set Task (IST) will be held during Semester 1 and Semester 2 around examination periods for Year 11 General courses. An IST is to model and provide practice in preparation for the Year 12 Externally Set Task.

A practical/performance/oral exam will also be held in those courses with a practical, performance or oral ATAR examination.

In Year 11 and 12 all written examinations are between 2.5 and 3 hours duration except for courses with a practical, performance or oral examination which are 2.5 hours plus a separate practical, performance or oral examination.

The examination timetable and rules/instructions are issued to students before the start of the exam period.

If an examination contains an error or questions are based on content that is outside the syllabus or there is a breach of security the college will:

- remove the question containing the error or based on content outside the syllabus, **or**
- set a new examination if there is a breach of security that affects all students, **or**
- penalise the students involved if there is a breach of security limited to only them (i.e. a mark of zero).

Where health issues or personal circumstances prevent a student from completing one or more school examinations, as for all other assessment tasks, the college will determine whether the reason is acceptable (see Section 13 below for details) If it is not acceptable, the student will be given a mark of zero. Students are to complete a sickness or misadventure form, and if the reason is acceptable to the college an alternate date will be set. Where this is not possible, the student will not sit the examination and their marks for other tasks will be re-weighted.

6. Externally set task

All students enrolled in a Year 12 General or Foundation course are required to complete an externally set task (EST) for that course. As this is a task that is set and governed by the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA) the college will follow all guidelines set by the SCSA.

The EST is included in the assessment outline for the pair of units. This assessment task has a weighting of 15% of the final mark for the pair of units.

The EST is a written assessment task developed by the Authority based on content from Unit 3. It is completed in class under standard test conditions.

Where a student does not complete the EST they will be required to complete the task at the first available opportunity (generally within two days of the student's return to school). If this is not until after the date that the Authority requires the college to submit the EST marks then the college will determine if the reason for non-completion is acceptable (see Section 13 below for details) and if not acceptable the student will be allocated a mark of zero. If the reason is acceptable to the college the teacher will:

- decide on an alternate assessment task (if, in the opinion of the teacher, the task is no longer confidential), **or**
- not require the task to be completed and re-weight the student's marks for other tasks.

7. Cheating, collusion and plagiarism

Students must not cheat (i.e. engage in a dishonest act to gain an unfair advantage).

All work in each individual assessment task must be the work of the student. Students are not permitted to submit for marking, as original, any work which is:

- prepared or substantively contributed to by another person (e.g. student, teacher, tutor or expert)
- copied or downloaded from the internet without acknowledging the source
- paraphrased or summarised from the work of others.

If a student is believed to have engaged in cheating, collusion or plagiarism, the teacher will refer the matter to the relevant head of learning area. As part of this process, the student and the parent/guardian will be informed of suspected inappropriate behaviour. The student will be provided with the right of reply.

If it is demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that a student has cheated, colluded or plagiarised, one of the following penalties will apply:

- a mark of zero for the whole assessment task, **or**
- a mark of zero for the part of the assessment task where the teacher can identify that the work is not the student's own.

The parent/guardian will be informed in writing of the decision made, the penalty and any further disciplinary action.

8. Security of assessment tasks

Where there is more than one class studying the same pair of units at the college, all or most, of the assessment tasks will be the same to ensure student marks are on the same scale. In such cases, to ensure that no students are unfairly advantaged, the question papers used for in-class assessment tasks will be collected at the end of the lesson and retained by the teacher until the task has been completed by all classes. In their own interests, students must not discuss the nature of the questions with students from the other classes until after all classes have completed the task. Discussion of the questions will be treated as collusion and the students will be penalised.

Where the college uses the same assessment task or exam as other schools, the task/exam and the student responses will be retained by the teacher until the task/exam has been completed by all schools.

9. Retention and disposal of student work

While students are responsible for retaining all of their marked written assessment tasks, the college will assist students in establishing an assessment file for each student for each course/program. The file holds all marked written assessment tasks. Students will have access to this file for revision purposes. The college retains the files until the marks have been accepted by the Authority. The written assessment tasks are available to students for collection after that time. All materials not collected by the end of the school year are securely disposed of by the college. All recorded evidence of performance for non-written assessment tasks is deleted/erased at the end of the school year.

The college will retain all non-written assessment tasks (typically as audio or video recordings or digital products). This material is required by the teacher when assigning grades at the completion of the pair of units and may be required by the Authority for moderation purposes.

The college will not use the materials for any other purposes without the written permission of the student/parent.

10. Modification of the assessment outline

If circumstances change during the teaching of a pair of units, requiring the teacher to make adjustments to scheduled assessment tasks, then students will be notified and the modified assessment outline will be given to students and replaced on Connect

Where a disability, special education needs or cultural beliefs has resulted in the inability of a student to complete one or more assessment tasks the assessment outline will be adjusted and provided to the student and parent/guardian in the form of an IEP.

11. Students with a disability

Students with a diagnosed disability will, where their disability, impairment or medical condition will significantly affect their access to a particular assessment task, have written and/or practical assessment tasks (including school examinations) adjusted by the teacher in consultation with the relevant head of learning area responsible for the course. These adjustments will be consistent with those described in the Authority's *Guidelines for disability adjustments for timed assessments*, which can be accessed from the Authority website. Adjustments, depending on the individual students' education needs, can include special equipment, provision of a scribe, or additional time to complete the task, consistent with those considerations allowed in WACE examinations.

Students who are unable to complete an assessment task because of their disability will be provided with alternative opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understandings.

12. Completion of a course at Como Secondary College

A grade (A, B, C, D or E) is assigned for each pair of units completed in a WACE course.

Competent or Not Yet Competent is assigned to each Unit of Competency in a Certificate course.

For all courses at Como Secondary College students are required to:

- attempt all in-class assessment tasks on the scheduled date
- submit all out-of-class assessment tasks on or before the due date.

If an assessment task cannot be submitted directly to the teacher it is to be submitted to the relevant head of learning area.

Where health issues or other personal circumstances may prevent a student completing an in-class assessment task, the student (or the parent/guardian) must discuss the matter with the teacher at the earliest opportunity before the scheduled date. The college will determine whether the reason is acceptable (see Section 13 below for details).

Where the reason for not submitting an assessment task or attending a scheduled in-class assessment task is **acceptable** to the college (see Section 13 below for details) the student's assessment outline will, where possible, be adjusted and a grade assigned.

If a student does not submit an out-of-class assessment task or attend a scheduled in-class assessment task, without providing an acceptable reason, the teacher will contact the parent/guardian to discuss the possible impact of the penalty on the student's grade and negotiate actions to prevent this re-occurring.

Where an out-of-class assessment task is submitted after the due date or is not submitted, and the student **does not** provide a reason, which is acceptable to the college (see Section 13 below for details), the following penalties apply:

- 10% reduction in the mark of 10% per day (e.g. if a student receives a mark of 80% and the work is 1 day late the student will have will receive an adjusted mark of $80\% - 8\% (80 \times 10\%) = 72\%$)

- to a maximum of 40% reduction in the mark (e.g. if a student receives a mark of 80% and the work is over 4 days late the student will receive an adjusted mark of 80% - 32% (80 x 40%) = 48%)

Where an in-class assessment task is missed and the student **does not** provide a reason which is acceptable to the college (see Section 13 below for details) the student will receive a mark of zero.

13. Acceptable reasons for non-completion or non-submission

The penalty for non-completion or non-submission of an assessment task will be waived if the student provides a reason which is acceptable to the college. For example:

- where sickness, injury or significant personal circumstances prevents a student attending on the day that an in-class assessment task (including school examinations and the externally set task) is scheduled
- where sickness, injury or significant personal circumstances for part or all of the period of an out-of-class assessment task prevents completion or submission by the due date.

In such cases the parent/guardian must:

- contact the college before 8:30 am on the day of the in-class assessment task or due date for submission of an out-of-class assessment **and**
- provide either a medical certificate or a letter of explanation immediately upon the student's return to school (the Principal may require that a medical certificate be produced if there are ongoing concerns about a student's absences).

For each semester all assessment items must be submitted prior to the commencement of the scheduled examination period.

Where the student provides a reason, which **is acceptable** to the college for the non-completion or non-submission of an assessment task, the teacher will:

- negotiate an adjusted due date for an out-of-class assessment task or an adjusted date for an in-class assessment task (generally, within two days of the student's return), **or**
- decide on an alternate assessment task (if, in the opinion of the teacher, the assessment is no longer confidential), **or**
- not require the task to be completed and re-weight the student's marks for other tasks (if, in the opinion of the teacher, sufficient evidence exists in the other tasks completed to meet the Authority requirements for the course and to enable a grade to be assigned).

Events that can be rescheduled are not a valid reason for non-completion or non-submission of an assessment task (e.g. sitting a driver's licence test, preparation for the college ball, **family holidays**). The final decision on acceptable reasons for non-completion or non-submission of an assessment task lies with the college Principal. In exceptional circumstances, the parent/guardian may negotiate with the teacher/HOLA the development of an individual education plan. This plan will show how the missed lesson time will be compensated for and any adjustments to the assessment outline.

Where a catastrophic event (e.g. a pandemic) affects delivery of the teaching program, the completion or submission of one or more assessment tasks and/or completion of the college examination timetable, students will be advised by the college of adjustments to the task requirements and/or the assessment outline.

Long Term Absences

The penalty for non-completion or non-submission of an assessment task will be waived for students with long term absences but not at the price of creating 'different' standards or diminished standards.

In the case of a student missing a significant period of school for an acceptable, reason (see Section 12 above) the college will:

- ensure that the requirements outlined in the WACE manual are adhered to in particular, WACE Manual page 18 in the section on Unit completion requirements that students 'must have completed the education program and the assessment program.
- in appropriate circumstances use teacher professional judgements to find alternative ways to determine an appropriate individual standard ensuring the standard for the whole group is not compromised.

14. Transfer between courses and/or units

Should a student commence a pair of units late they will be at risk of being disadvantaged compared to others in the class. An application to transfer between types of courses or between courses is made through the Deputy Principal, Program Coordinator Operations and/or HOLA. A meeting may be held with the parent/guardian to discuss student progress and the requirements necessary for the student to be assigned a grade in the pair of units into which they wish to transfer.

At Como Secondary College the deadline for student transfers in Year 11 and Year 12 is Friday of Week 4 in Term 1 as all courses are assessed as a pair of units.

In Year 11, students can also transfer at the end of Semester 1, where class numbers enable this to occur. Students studying a Foundation course can transfer to a General course after the OLNA results are received from the Authority.

When a student transfers to a different course within the same subject (e.g. from English ATAR Year 11 to English General Year 11) or to a similar course (e.g. Human Biology ATAR Year 11 to Integrated Science General Year 11), the marks from completed assessment tasks will be used, where they are appropriate, for the unit into which the student is transferring. These marks may be statistically adjusted to ensure that they are on the same scale as the marks for all students in the new class.

Where additional work and/or assessment tasks are necessary to enable a grade to be assigned, the teacher will develop an individual education plan showing the work to be completed and/or an adjusted assessment outline. The plan and/or the adjusted assessment outline will be discussed with the parent/guardian and provided to the student.

15. Transfer from another school

It is the responsibility of any student who transfers into a class from the same course at another school, to provide the college with evidence of all completed assessment tasks. The Deputy Principal/Program Coordinator Operations will contact the previous school to confirm:

- the part of the syllabus that has been taught
- the assessment tasks which have been completed
- the marks awarded for these tasks.

The head of learning area responsible for the course will:

- determine how the marks from assessment tasks at the previous school will be used
[Note: Where necessary these marks will be statistically adjusted to ensure that they are on the same scale as those at Como Secondary College.]
- determine the additional work, if any, to be completed
- determine the additional assessment tasks, if any, to be completed to enable a grade to be assigned.

Where additional work and/or assessment tasks are necessary, the teacher will develop an individual education plan showing the work to be completed and/or an adjusted assessment outline. The plan and/or the adjusted assessment outline will be discussed with the parent/guardian and provided to the student.

16. Reporting student achievement

The college reports student achievement at the end of Semester 1 and at the end of Semester 2. The report provides for each course:

- a grade¹
- the percentage mark in the school-based examination (for ATAR courses)
- the percentage mark¹ (calculated from the weighted total mark).

1 The Semester 1 mark and grade are interim as they are not finalised until the pair of units is completed at the end of the year.

At the end of the year, students will be provided with a Como Secondary College statement of achievement, which lists the school mark and grade for each pair of units. These are the results which will be submitted to the Authority. Successful completion of VET qualifications and endorsed programs are also listed on the statement of achievement.

All final grades are subject to approval by the Authority at the end of the year. The student (and parent/guardian) will be notified of any changes that result from the Authority's review of the student results submitted by the college.

17. Reviewing marks and grades

If a student considers that there is an issue about the delivery of the course, the marking of one or more assessment tasks or the grade assigned for a pair of units they should, in the first instance, discuss the issue with the teacher.

If an assessment issue cannot be resolved through discussion with the teacher then the student (or the parent/guardian) should approach the relevant head of learning area responsible for the course.

The student or their parent/guardian can request, in writing, that the college conduct a formal assessment review, if they consider that the student has been disadvantaged by any of the following:

- the assessment outline does not meet the syllabus requirements
- the assessment procedures used do not conform with the college's senior secondary assessment policy
- procedural errors have occurred in the determination of the course mark and/or grade
- computational errors have occurred in the determination of the course mark.

The Principal, or a nominated representative, will conduct the review. This reviewer will meet with the student and parent/guardian and the teacher independently and prepare a written report. This report will be provided to the student and their parent/guardian.

If this review does not resolve the matter, the student (or parent/guardian) may appeal to the School Curriculum and Standards Authority using an appeal form which is available from the Deputy Principal/Program Coordinator Operations or the Authority website. Authority representatives will then independently investigate the claim and report to the Authority's student appeal committee.

If the committee upholds a student appeal the college will make any required adjustments to the student's mark and/or grade and where required the mark and/or grade of other students and re-issue reports and/or the statement of achievement as necessary.