Assessment and Reporting in Society and Culture Stage 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effective from</th>
<th>2018 Year 11 and Term 4, 2018 Year 12</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date published</td>
<td>July 2017</td>
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</table>

This document contains the NSW Education Standards Authority requirements for assessing and reporting achievement in the Year 11 and Year 12 courses for the Higher School Certificate, and provides details of the HSC examination in this course. From time to time, changes are made to HSC assessment and examination requirements. Such changes will be made available through updates to these materials. Please note that the version on the NSW Education Standards Authority website is always the current version.
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Introduction to Assessment in Stage 6

The NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) promotes a standards-referenced approach to assessing and reporting student achievement.

Assessment is the process of gathering valid and useful information and making judgements about student achievement for a variety of purposes.

In Stage 6, those purposes include:
- assisting student learning
- evaluating and improving teaching and learning programs
- providing evidence of student achievement and course completion in Year 11 and Year 12 courses
- providing data for the end of school credential, the Record of School Achievement (RoSA) or Higher School Certificate (HSC).

Schools are required to develop an assessment program for each Year 11 and Year 12 course. NESA provides information about the responsibilities of schools in developing assessment programs in course-specific assessment and reporting requirements and in Assessment Certification Examination (ACE).

Assessment for, Assessment as, Assessment of Learning

Assessment is an essential component of the teaching and learning cycle. Assessment for, assessment as and assessment of learning are approaches that enable teachers to gather evidence and make judgements about student achievement. These are not necessarily discrete approaches and may be used individually or together and formally or informally.

Assessment is most effective when students:
- are involved in setting learning goals
- know and understand assessment criteria
- are able to monitor their own learning and reflect on their progress
- receive feedback that helps them understand how to improve their learning.
School-based Assessment in Stage 6

All teaching and learning activities are considered important for understanding course content and developing knowledge, understanding and skills in a subject. School-based assessment involves a range of informal (formative) assessment and formal (summative) assessment to provide information about student achievement of syllabus outcomes. Informal and formal assessment assists teachers to make judgements about student progress. A range of assessment activities and tasks provides opportunities for students to demonstrate achievement of syllabus outcomes in different ways.

Informal assessment

Teachers use informal assessment opportunities throughout the teaching and learning cycle to gather evidence about how students learn and what they know. Informal assessment includes activities undertaken and anecdotal evidence gathered throughout the teaching and learning process in a less prescribed manner than formal assessment.

These activities provide evidence for teachers and inform feedback to students in relation to improving their learning. Informal assessment may include a range of strategies such as questioning, class discussion, observations and student self-evaluation.

Formal assessment

Formal school-based assessment provides opportunities to gather evidence about student achievement of syllabus outcomes in different ways to the HSC examinations. Formal assessment tasks are those which students undertake as part of the school-based assessment program, reflecting specific course requirements, components and weightings.

A formal assessment task may contain more than one part. The task notification should detail the requirements for each part, including that all parts are to be submitted and/or completed together.

Tests of limited scope (ie include a small number of content areas or topics or modules) will continue to be relevant and appropriate methods of formal assessment. These types of tasks are not considered as formal written examinations.

A formal written examination is defined as a task such as a Half Yearly, Yearly or Trial HSC Examination completed during a designated examination period. It is undertaken individually, under supervised examination conditions and includes one or more unseen questions or items. A formal written examination is used to gather evidence about student achievement of a range of syllabus outcomes, at a point in time. A formal written examination is often in the format of an HSC examination and typically draws from most or all content areas or topics or modules completed at that point in time. Schools are able to schedule more than one written examination to provide opportunities for students to prepare for and experience examination conditions. However, only one formal written examination can contribute to a formal assessment schedule.

Evidence gathered through formal assessment assists teachers to report on student achievement in relation to syllabus outcomes and standards at a point in time, and is often used for grading or ranking purposes. The components and weightings and the prescribed nature of some tasks ensure a common focus for school-based assessment in a course across schools, while also allowing for flexibility in the design of some tasks at the school level.

Further guidance and advice can be found on the NESA website.
Year 11 Society and Culture School-based Assessment Requirements

The components and weightings for Year 11 are mandatory.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weighting %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and understanding of course content</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application and evaluation of social and cultural research methods</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication of information, ideas and issues in appropriate forms</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Year 11 formal school-based assessment program is to reflect the following requirements:
- three assessment tasks
- the minimum weighting for an individual task is 20%
- the maximum weighting for an individual task is 40%
- only one task may be a formal written examination.
Year 12 Society and Culture School-based Assessment Requirements

NESA requires schools to submit a school-based assessment mark for each Year 12 candidate in a course. Formal school-based assessment tasks are based on course requirements and components and weightings that contribute to the determination of the final mark for a course. The mark submitted by the school provides a summation of each student’s achievement measured at several points throughout the course.

The marks submitted for each course group at a school should reflect the rank order of students, and must be on a scale sufficiently wide to reflect adequately the relative differences in student performances. The actual mark should not be revealed to students as it is subject to moderation and may become confusing for students when they receive their results. Students must be informed that they can obtain their Assessment Rank Order Notice from Students Online after the last HSC examination at their centre and within the period of time for appeals.

The school-based assessment marks submitted to NESA for Year 12 must not include measures of outcomes that address values and attitudes or reflect student conduct. Schools may decide to report on these separately to students and parents.

The collection of information for the Year 12 school-based assessment mark must not begin before the completion of the Year 11 course.

The components and weightings for Year 12 are mandatory.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weighting %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and understanding of course content</td>
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<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Year 12 formal school-based assessment program is to reflect the following requirements:
- a maximum of four assessment tasks
- the minimum weighting for an individual task is 10%
- the maximum weighting for an individual task is 40%
- only one task may be a formal written examination with a maximum weighting of 30%.

Information about the formal written examination in Society and Culture

This task may assess a broad range of course content and outcomes. Schools may choose to replicate the timing and structure of the HSC examination.

If a school includes assessment of the process of the externally assessed Personal Interest Project in conjunction with the written paper, the combined weighting of the tasks must not exceed 30%.
Information about school-based assessment of the Personal Interest Project (PIP) in Society and Culture

Since the final project will be assessed externally, no part of the product is to be assessed as part of the school-based assessment program. The PIP process, however, may be assessed. Students may report in written or oral form on the progress they are making. They may outline their choice of research methods, justify these and report on their application to the research topic. The student's PIP diary may provide a basis for assessment.
HSC Examination Specifications

The external HSC examination measures student achievement in a range of syllabus outcomes.

The external examination and its marking relate to the syllabus by:

- providing clear links to syllabus outcomes
- enabling students to demonstrate the levels of achievement outlined in the performance band descriptions
- applying marking guidelines based on criteria that relate to the quality of the response
- aligning performance in the examination each year to the standards established for the course.

Society and Culture HSC Examination Specifications

The examination will consist of a written paper worth 60 marks and a Personal Interest Project worth 40 marks.

Time allowed: 2 hours plus 5 minutes reading time.

The written paper will consist of TWO sections.

Section I – Core – Social and Cultural Continuity and Change (20 marks)

- There will be objective response questions to the value of 8 marks.
- There will be short-answer questions to the value of 12 marks.

Section II – Depth Studies (40 marks)

- For each of the four (4) Depth Studies there will be 1 question in two unrelated parts worth a total of 20 marks:
  - the first part will be worth 5 marks
  - the second part will be worth 15 marks
- Candidates will be required to answer a question from two (2) Depth Studies
- The expected length of response for each Depth Study will be around six pages (approximately 800 words).

The Personal Interest Project (PIP) requires students to apply appropriate social and cultural research methods to investigate a topic related to the course. The completed project will be a substantial piece of research containing a number of components, including a log that outlines the development of the project and the procedures undertaken in researching the topic.

See Requirements for the Personal Interest Project.
Requirements for the Personal Interest Project

Society and Culture students must each undertake, on an individual basis, a Personal Interest Project worth 40% of the HSC examination mark. The PIP requires students to select a suitable topic related to the course, develop and apply appropriate research methods and submit a completed project containing the required components.

Development of the PIP may commence from the beginning of the HSC course.

Schools must have procedures in place to ensure the effective supervision of the development of students' PIPs. This is particularly the case where work is done away from school. Schools must be confident that effective supervision and sufficient documentation of this work is possible before giving consent for students to begin work on their PIP.

Each student is to report their progress at three points during the development of the PIP. Both the student and the teacher are to sign these reports. A proforma for the reports is included with this document.

In addition, a brief written record of each student's progress throughout the project must be kept by the teacher. Teachers may refer to students’ PIP diary and progress reports as well as observations and discussions to maintain the record of student progress. This should not be submitted with the project, but may be requested in exceptional circumstances where the examiners require further information. This record should be retained in the school together with assessment records. A Practical Project: Record of Student's Progress proforma is available to download from Schools Online.

Students will be required to certify that the PIP is their own original work, and that any material drawn from other sources and any outside assistance is acknowledged. Group projects are not permitted.

Teachers must certify that the work has been completed under their supervision, and that the rules and procedures described here and in the ACE website have been followed.

Principals must be able to endorse the teacher’s declaration that the work:
- has been done under the teacher’s supervision
- is the student’s own work consistent with earlier drafts or any changes as negotiated with the teacher and other examples of the student’s work
- was completed by the due date.

The PIP enables students to demonstrate the development of their interests, research skills and personal experiences concerning the interactions between persons, societies, cultures and environments across time. In particular, students will be able to demonstrate the development and application of social and cultural research methods in completing their PIP.

The Personal Interest Project must:
- be a topic of the student’s own choice
- be related to the course
- develop appropriate methods
- include a cross-cultural perspective
- address continuity and/or change.
The PIP will have a substantial amount of subject matter brought together by the individual student on the basis of their reading, research and personal experience. While the PIP will be the student's own work, published material should be consulted to provide background material and/or comparative data.

The student should submit a research proposal outlining the topic and its relationship to the course as a whole. Accompanying this research proposal should be an outline of how the topic will be approached, including the research methods to be employed. This outline should be submitted to the teacher before detailed work is begun, so that the teacher may advise on subject matter and research methods. As a result of this feedback from the teacher, the student may need to rethink the topic and/or the approach. A proforma for the proposal is included with this document.

If a student is considering a PIP topic or method of research that might be controversial or possibly unethical, the student should discuss the topic selection with the teacher or the school's principal.

The student should use a range of research methods that are suited to the topic being studied. These research methods may be those studied during the Year 11 course or those introduced to the student during the HSC core study.

Appropriate research methods and instruments may be:

- survey
- case study
- participant observation
- content analysis
- focus group
- questionnaire
- interview
- observation
- statistical analysis
- personal reflection
- secondary research

The student should keep a Personal Interest Project diary that will later form the basis of the log. In this diary, the student should record the progress of the PIP, showing a sequential record of the research and details of the processes followed, problems encountered and how these were overcome. This PIP diary will not be submitted with the final PIP, but may be submitted as part of the school-based assessment program.

**Presentation of the Personal Interest Project**

The PIP should be carefully prepared for submission. It must be word-processed, with the body text in 12 point Times New Roman or Arial, with 1.5 line spacing.

The following must be submitted or accessed via Schools Online:

- HSC Society and Culture PIPs must be submitted to the NESA electronically
- Schools are also required to electronically certify each student’s PIP
- Instructions on the process of submitting and certifying HSC Society and Culture PIPs are available under Memos and Documents.

Word limits are indicated for each component of the PIP. The word count is based on all words written, as shown by a computer word count or manual count of each word. In-text referencing or footnotes are NOT included in the word count.
The presented project must contain the following components:

**Introduction**
The introduction requires a brief description (no more than 500 words) of what the topic is about, why this topic was chosen and in what ways it contributes to a better understanding of Society and Culture. The choice of research methods should be explained and justified.

**Log**
The log should be based on the student’s PIP diary and will be a summary (no more than 500 words) of the development of the final product, outlining the procedures undertaken in researching the topic.

**Central material of the PIP**
The central material will be in written form and may be accompanied by photographs, tables, graphs and/or diagrams that should be labelled and incorporated into the text through discussion. The central material should be between 2500 and 4000 words. The central material must contain a cross-cultural perspective and address continuity and/or change. The cross-cultural perspective and continuity and/or change should be integrated in the central material of the PIP.

**Conclusion**
The conclusion requires a statement (no more than 500 words) of what the student learnt from the PIP.

**Resource list**
The resource list should include annotated references used in the PIP and/or a list of other kinds of resources, for example films, internet sites or electronic resources referred to during the preparation of the project, and resource persons (eg people interviewed). The references should be accurate and include publication/production details. For each internet site, the URL and the most recent date the site was visited should be included, along with a short annotation on its usefulness to the PIP.

**Personal Interest Project examination criteria**
The following criteria will be used to mark the Personal Interest Project:
- Evidence of achievement of the course outcomes related to the PIP.
- The clarity of the topic, purposes and procedures of the PIP.
- A demonstrated understanding and application of the concepts of the course.
- The appropriate use of research methods essential to the course.
- The accuracy and relevance of the subject matter for the purposes of the PIP.
- A demonstrated knowledge and understanding of viewpoints different from the immediate culture of the student.
- A demonstration of how continuity and/or change have been addressed.
- An integration in a coherent structure of various aspects of the course.
- Conclusions that proceed from the stated introduction and arguments presented in the PIP.
- Evidence that personal experience is related to public knowledge.
- Effective communication of the student’s ideas to a wider audience.
- Evidence of originality of design, analysis and execution.
- Evidence of social and cultural literacy.
- Evidence that sources of information are referenced.
Students should consider the following in the preparation of their Personal Interest Project:

**Clarity**
Is the topic clearly stated? Are the purposes and procedures of the PIP clear?

**Conceptual content**
Does the PIP reflect the concepts of the course?

**Social and Cultural research methods**
Does the PIP demonstrate some of the research methods essential to the Society and Culture course plus any other distinctive procedures? Are the research methods appropriate for the topic? Is there evidence of a systematic approach to the study of the topic? Is there an awareness of both the limitations and the values of the research methods used? Students should consider the ethical implications of both their topic and the methods they employ to research that topic.

**Subject matter content**
Is the subject matter accurate, relevant to the topic and adequately explained for the purposes of the project?

**Cross-cultural content**
Does the topic reflect some knowledge and understanding of viewpoints different from that of the immediate culture of the student in terms of, for example, socioeconomic group, gender, ethnicity or location?

**Continuity and change**
Does the topic reflect some knowledge and understanding of continuity and/or change, for example viewpoints of different generations, links between the past, the present and the future?

**Integrative skills**
Has the PIP integrated various aspects of Society and Culture? Does the PIP achieve a coherent structure? Do the conclusions proceed from the statements in the introduction and the arguments presented in the central material? Is personal experience related to public knowledge?

**Communication skills**
Has the student effectively communicated her or his ideas to the external audience?

**Originality**
Does the PIP give evidence of originality in design, analysis and execution?

**Social and cultural literacy**
Is there evidence of social and cultural literacy?

**Acknowledgement of sources**
Does the PIP acknowledge all sources of information consulted during research?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Student proposal:</th>
<th>Teacher comments:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is your general area of interest?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your specific question or hypothesis? Include what you hope to find out</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which part of the HSC course does your topic relate to? Include relevant syllabus content and concepts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which research methods will you use? Include why these methods are appropriate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will you address continuity and/or change? eg the past, present, future</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the cross-cultural component? Include research from a different perspective</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How will your topic help improve your understanding of Society and Culture? Include reference to social and cultural literacy</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What measures will you put in place to ensure you conduct research in an ethical and effective manner?</td>
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</table>

Student signature: ___________________________ Date: / / Teacher signature: ___________________________ Date: / /
### Personal Interest Project Progress Report

**Student comments:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are there any changes to your topic or question or hypothesis?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment on the progress of your diary.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment on the progress of your research.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment on the progress of analysing, synthesising and interpreting your results.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outline your next steps towards completing your PIP.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions or other comments.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Self-evaluation:

Locate your current position on the scale 1–10.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Starting your PIP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The finished PIP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Teacher comments:

- clarity
- conceptual content
- subject matter content
- cross-cultural content
- continuity and/or change component
- application of research methods
- appropriateness of resources
- communication skills
- integration skills
- social and cultural literacy
- achievement of outcomes: H1, H4, H5, H6, H7, H8, H9, H10

**Overview** of work in progress and suggestions for further development.

Student signature: …………………………………… Date:    /    /                 Teacher signature: ………………………………… Date:    /    /
Adjustments to Assessment for Students with Special Education Needs

It is a requirement under the Disability Standards for Education 2005 for schools to ensure that students with special education needs can access and participate in education on the same basis as other students.

Some students with special education needs will require adjustments to assessment practices in order to demonstrate what they know and can do in relation to syllabus outcomes and content.

These may include:
- adjustments to the assessment process. Some examples include additional time, rest breaks, the use of a reader and/or scribe or specific technology
- adjustments to assessment activities. Some examples include rephrasing questions, using simplified language or alternative formats for questions
- alternative formats for responses. Some examples include writing in point form instead of essays, scaffolded structured responses, short objective questions or multimedia presentations.

Schools are responsible for any decisions about adjustments to course work and formal school-based assessment tasks throughout Year 11 and Year 12. Decisions regarding adjustments should be made in the context of collaborative curriculum planning. To access adjustments for the HSC examinations, an application for Disability Provisions must be submitted to NESA.

Providing adjustment does not restrict a student's access to the full range of grades or marks.

Examples of adjustments to assessment for students with special education needs can be found in course support materials. Additional advice is available on the NESA website.
Society and Culture Life Skills

Students undertaking the Society and Culture Life Skills course will study selected outcomes and content informed by a collaborative curriculum planning process. Assessment should provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge, understanding and skills to a range of situations or environments. Students undertaking Life Skills courses are not required to complete formal assessment tasks. Teachers are best able to determine the progress of the student.

Students may demonstrate achievement in relation to Society and Culture Life Skills outcomes independently; with adjustments or with support. The type of adjustments and support will vary according to the particular needs of the student and the requirements of the activity.

Additional information about Life Skills eligibility, programming, planning and assessment is available on the NESA website.
Reporting in Stage 6

Year 11

Schools are responsible for awarding a grade for each student who completes a Year 11 course (except Life Skills and VET courses) to represent their achievement. These grades are determined by the student’s performance in relation to the Common Grade Scale for Preliminary Courses. Teachers make professional, on-balance judgements about which grade description best matches the standards their students have demonstrated by the end of the course.

Teachers are required to ensure that the grades awarded are consistent with published standards. This means that the grade a student receives in one school can be compared to the same grade anywhere in NSW. To ensure judgements are consistent with statewide standards, teachers compare their student work with work samples on the NESA website that are aligned to the A to E common grade scale. The grade awarded is reported on the student’s Record of Student Achievement (RoSA), a cumulative credential that allows students to accumulate their academic results until they leave school.

Year 12

The use of both school-based assessment and external examinations of student achievement allows measurements and observations to be made at several points and in different ways throughout the Year 12 course. Taken together, they provide a valid and reliable assessment of students’ demonstration of the knowledge, understanding and skills described for each course.

Students who leave school prior to the Higher School Certificate examinations will receive a RoSA. It records grades for their completed Stage 5 and Year 11 courses and any participation in Stage 6 courses that were not completed.

The HSC credentials received by students report both the school-based assessment and external examination measures of achievement.

Typically, HSC results comprise:
- a moderated assessment mark derived from the mark submitted by the school and produced in accordance with NESA requirements for school-based assessment
- an examination mark derived from the HSC external examination
- an HSC mark, which is the average of the moderated assessment mark and the examination mark
- a performance band, determined by the HSC mark.

For the HSC, student performance in a Year 12 course is reported against standards on a course report.

The course report contains:
- a level of achievement for the performance band descriptors
- an HSC mark located on the performance scale
- a school-based assessment mark
- an examination mark.

The course report also shows graphically the state-wide distribution of HSC marks of all students in the course. The distribution of marks is determined by students’ performances against the standards and not scaled to a predetermined pattern of marks.