

## Assessment and Reporting Policy Years 7-10

**Mission statement:** Melba Copland Secondary School fosters a supportive environment of respect, trust and inter-cultural understanding. Each student is encouraged and challenged to learn, grow and accomplish personal, academic, social and vocational excellence.

### Assessment philosophy and practices

The overarching goal of assessment at MCSS is to support and encourage student learning. Consistent with our inclusive philosophy MCSS has a policy of continuous assessment of students through diagnostic, formative and summative activities to build a holistic picture of a student's achievement. Teachers apply professional judgment in accordance with the Australian Curriculum Achievement Standards. To meet students' diverse needs and possible futures, teachers are encouraged to develop rich authentic assessment tasks which promote critical and creative thinking and challenge students to develop deep understanding of subject areas.

At MCSS we have a diverse student population with a wide range of cultural backgrounds, learning styles, expectations and educational needs. Assessment and reporting practices support student motivation and commitment to learning through timely and constructive feedback; providing information about student achievement and progress, and indicating areas for further development.

Melba Copland Secondary School has developed assessment and reporting procedures which:

- reflect the integrated nature of teaching, assessment and reporting
- support student progress through constructive feedback on learning progress
- account for a variety of learning styles
- are differentiated for diverse learner backgrounds and provide reasonable accommodations for students with special needs
- provide a variety of assessment opportunities
- use diagnostic and formative assessment to check for student understanding, plan for differentiation and gather a variety of evidence to support student learning
- provide regular summative information about student achievement in relation to the curriculum and the development of personal attributes and approaches to learning
- provide opportunities for students to reflect on their own learning
- engage students to engage with broader issue and ideas through Global contexts
- enable effective partnerships between the school and parents
- support consistency of practice through a range of moderation processes within and between year levels
- meet the requirements of the Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA) in assessing student progress against the Australian Curriculum Achievement Standards

## **ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES**

### **Unit Outlines**

At the commencement of a semester students will be issued with unit outlines for each learning area. Unit outlines clearly document the assessment criteria, assessment tasks and the week the item is due. Parents are requested to sign the unit outline to acknowledge receipt.

### **Types of assessment**

Students at MCSS have multiple and various opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding. Types of assessment activities may include: tests, written or oral responses, essays and reports, research reports, portfolios, reflective responses, practical work, exhibitions and performances.

Teachers scaffold tasks, differentiate activities and provide options to ensure all students have access to the curriculum and are able to demonstrate their achievement and understanding.

Subject assessments encourage students to develop research and inquiry skills, become independent reflective learners, work effectively in groups and build personal organisational skills. They also align to meet the Australian Curriculum Achievement Standards as set out in unit outlines, and IB MYP Approaches to Learning.

### **Criterion related assessment**

Assessment tasks are criterion related. Students should be advised which criteria will be used for any assessment task and what is needed to meet these criteria. Rubrics are used for summative tasks to provide clarity of expectations and clear evidence of learning.

Student work should be placed where the majority of descriptors describe their work. Teachers may need to use professional judgement for a 'best-fit' result.

### **Feedback and Return of Student Work**

Teachers are requested to assess and return student work in a timely manner. Feedback should be clear and constructive, and could be in the form of rubrics, dialogue, written or oral reflection, anecdotal records and narratives, as well as formal numerical assessments. Students are generally provided with feedback prior to submitting their next assessment task. A two-week turnaround, is a reasonable timeframe.

### **Record keeping**

Teachers are expected to keep clear and accurate records of all assessment activities. Faculties use common spreadsheets for ease of record-keeping and accountability.

### **Moderation and Standardisation**

ACT schools are encouraged to moderate student work internally and where possible between schools to ensure consistency of assessment against the Australian Curriculum Achievement Standards. Senior Secondary colleges have formalised moderation days twice a year.

In years 7-10 where more than one class follows the same course of study or with teachers in the same faculty, internal moderation occurs in order to standardise marking across a cohort against the Middle Years Programme assessment criteria. Moderation support includes the use of common tasks or tests and teachers exchanging student work for comparative marking. Student work samples are also available on the ACARA website and teachers are encouraged to participate in moderation sessions organised between schools.

To ensure consistency between subjects, teachers have undertaken professional development on national reporting objectives and procedures. Comparison of work samples across faculties is undertaken during some staff, team and executive meetings.

### **Semester grades and Australian Curriculum Achievement Standards**

In accordance with ACT and federal government requirements The *Australian Curriculum (AC)* provides the content requirements of the School's curriculum.

Local and national government policies also require a summative 5 point A-E grade each semester.

In ACT public schools the Australian Curriculum Achievement Standard is aligned with a 'C' grade. The 'C' grade indicates the student has demonstrated a satisfactory level of knowledge, understanding and skill in relation to the Standard.

The AC Achievement Standards are published every semester on the unit outlines for each subject in each year level.

## **Notification of students 'at-risk' E grades**

If a student is at risk of a final A - E grade parents must be advised in sufficient time to give the student the opportunity to change their approach to learning and improve their performance. This advice should be no later than week 5 of the reporting term. There is a template letter which may be used for this purpose.

## **Late Work and Extensions**

Adequate time is provided for the completion of assessable work. Students are expected to adhere to deadlines for specific assessment tasks as part of managing their learning.

Students having difficulties completing tasks must negotiate with the teacher for an extension **at least two days before the due date**, providing due cause and adequate documentary evidence. Lack of organization or leaving things until the last minute is not an acceptable reason for an extension. Students are generally expected to make up work missed while absent from classes at excursions or sporting events. Technology-related problems such as failure due to lost thumb drives or failure to back up work appropriately are not considered a reasonable basis for requesting an extension unless the problem could not have been prevented or avoided. Parents / carers may negotiate extensions with an individual teacher, the wellbeing team may inform a student's teachers of extensions for their work or allowance may be granted to students as stated in their Individual Learning Plans.

Students should not be able to gain an advantage over others by taking longer to submit work or prepare for tests. Teachers will take into account the extent to which students have demonstrated their ability to complete and submit tasks by the due date (taking into account any extensions granted) in awarding grades.

For assessment work (excluding tests, presentations, in-class assessments) students will have **one week** from the advertised due date to submit their work. If a student submits after this date, and no formal extension was granted prior to the due date then feedback on the assessment item will be provided but it **will not contribute towards the student's results**. Students who miss the sitting date of tests / presentations / in-class assessments, they are to complete these during the next lesson that they attend for that subject.

To ensure the reporting schedule can be adhered to by staff, the last date that assessments (excluding tests, presentations, in-class assessments) can be due is Friday of week 6 in term 2 and 4 (please note during term four, the last due date for year 10 students is Friday of week 5).

## **Academic Honesty (Plagiarism) – see the Academic Honesty Policy**

### **Assessment of Students with Special Needs**

Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) are designed for identified students with special needs to inform the planning, delivery and assessment of the student's educational program. The ILP is developed by teachers in collaboration with parents and appropriate stakeholders. ILPs are required for students receiving support from the Special Education Section, students in care, students referred to Student Support Services and students who are accessing support through the Indigenous Numeracy and Literacy Consultant.

Students on ILPs may have assessment modified by a reduction in the number or length of assessment tasks, the provision of extra time to complete work or the provision of individualised assignments.

Students on ILPs receive the full range of reports provided to other students, and meetings are held regularly to evaluate their progress and programs.

The Australian Curriculum “P” grade may be used for some students with special needs and on ILPs. The school will notify parents formally if this is the case. Students within the school who have an ILP, who need learning support, have learned English as an Additional Language or Dialect, or are in modified classes receive a ‘P’ on their reports which conveys that the unit of study and the nature and number of assessment tasks has been modified to a Personalised Program. Unit Outlines will indicate if they have been modified. These students are not ranked against the cohort in the Summative A-E report.

### **Special Consideration**

Special Consideration is a provision for otherwise well-prepared students whose capacity to complete assessment tasks or tests is adversely affected by short term illness, injury or misadventure. Special consideration may be sought by parents or through recommendation from year level teams to the DP (Assessment and Reporting). Students may be given extended time to complete or submit items; modified, replacement or deferred assessment tasks, or exemption from particular items. The primary goal is to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate evidence of skills or understanding for grading. It will not be granted if it disadvantages other students.

### **Status (S) Grade**

Status may be awarded to a student when the school determines that there is insufficient evidence to provide a final unit grade for the semester e.g due to recent enrolment or prolonged absences from school. Applicants for Status are required to provide a legitimate reason and supporting evidence (e.g. doctor’s certificate). If enough assessable work has been completed to justify an A-E grade, Special Consideration should be preferred and a pro-rata grade can be awarded. The decision to award a Status grade is determined by the Principal in consultation with Year Coordinators and the student wellbeing team(s).

### **Appeals**

Students have the right to appeal against achievement grades. There is no appeal on the assessment of work habits or attitude. The first step in the appeals process is to discuss the assessment item or grade with the class teacher. If the student is not satisfied, they should then discuss it and seek a review from the Executive Teacher of the faculty. If the matter is still unresolved, the student may submit a formal written appeal to the Principal, detailing the grounds for the appeal. This is normally expected on the day following the issue of reports or soon afterwards. All appeals must be made by the student not a second party acting on their behalf.

An appeal to the Principal is the highest level of appeal for students in years 7 and 8, but students in years 9 and 10 may subsequently lodge a system level appeal.

### **System Level Appeals (years 9 and 10)**

A student who is dissatisfied with the result of the high school review process may appeal to the Director General of the Education and Training Directorate. An appeal may also be made against a Principal’s decision not to award an ACT Year 10 certificate. Appeals should be made in writing as soon as possible after notification of the school’s review decision. An ACT Education and Training brochure,

Certification: Year 10 Certificate and the Appeals Process, which gives information about appeals, is distributed to all senior students. Copies are available from the school.

### **Vocational Programs**

MCSS is a lead school in the NW Belconnen Network for Vocational courses in Hospitality, Construction and Horticulture. Students taking accredited vocational programs will be assessed against the criteria and standards referenced in the course frameworks to produce grades and score. They will also be assessed against competency standards as described in the relevant Training Package. Vocational programs are reported on as for all courses undertaken at the school.

### **Standardised Assessments:**

MCSS uses a number of standardised achievement tests and diagnostic tools to support teachers in their planning and provide diagnostic data to inform preparation of special programs. These include the Australian Council of Educational Research (ACER) Progressive Achievement tests (PAT) in reading and numeracy, and the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT). These do not replace formal assessment in the classroom.

### **NAPLAN Testing (National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy)**

All students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 across Australia sit national tests in Literacy and Numeracy. They sit the same tests in the content strands of Reading, Writing, Language Conventions (incorporating spelling, grammar and punctuation) and Numeracy (incorporating calculator and non-calculator papers). Results from the national tests give education systems across Australia vital measures about how students are performing in literacy and numeracy. Individual students and their parents will be given reports which will indicate each student's level of achievement.

### **Reporting**

Reporting is multifaceted, including written reports, parent-teacher interviews, telephone conversations, informal notes, Award Assemblies and Presentation Night. Written progress reports are mailed home late in terms 1 and 3, and semester reports are taken home by students at the end of terms 2 and 4.

All learning areas are reported including co-curricular units and the pastoral care program.

### **Mid-Semester Reports**

Mid Semester Progress Reports are issued towards the end of terms one and three followed by parent teacher interviews.

### **End of Semester Reports**

Semester Reports are issued in July and December following the completion of each semester. The July report is considered a progress report against the Achievement Standards for Australian Curriculum learning areas. The December Report is considered a summative Report for the year against the Achievement Standards for Australian Curriculum learning areas. Each semester report contains AC grades, learning descriptors and comprehensive written comments for each subject, and the student's attitude and commitment to learning. Comments identify student strengths, areas for further development and strategies to support and/or extend learning.

A record of attendance during the semester accompanies the semester report, indicating legitimate and unexplained absences.

Accompanying each semester report is the nationally mandated summary report, which provides a snapshot of a student's performance in relation to the cohort. This summary report indicates the number of students in a child's cohort (all children in a learning area/subject/unit in the same year level) attaining each of the identified A – E grades. To ensure information provided does not breach the Privacy Act 1988, the number of students receiving each grade will not be reported for a cohort of less than ten.

This A-E grade is calculated using a conversion scale from the MYP final grade. For transparency the conversion scale applied is on every page of the student semester report. (MYP Principles to Practice Grade descriptors boundary tables p. 93)

The national A-E grade descriptors are set out below:

Grade	Descriptor
A	Excellent achievement of the standard expected
B	High achievement of the standard expected
C	Achievement of the standard expected
D	Partial achievement of the standard expected
E	Limited achievement of the standard expected
S	Status

### **Parent/Teacher Interviews**

An important feature of the reporting system is that parent/teacher meetings closely follow the progress reports. Interviews are conducted by appointment to maximise the number of parents interviewed and to use time efficiently. Appointments are booked online using the sobs.com booking system. The link to this system is opened up a couple of weeks before interviews are held at the end of term 1 and term 3.

Interviews are ten minutes long. If more time is required, both parties can arrange a mutually convenient time. Precise dates for parent-teacher interviews are advertised in the school's newsletter and website close to the time of these meetings.

While it may be difficult for some parents to attend interviews, the effectiveness of classroom learning is enhanced if teachers and families work together. The school urges all parents to attend meetings, particularly where teachers have requested interviews in the progress reports. Parents who are unable to attend and who would like to make alternative arrangements should contact the appropriate teacher or Year Coordinator.

### **Year 10 Certification**

Students who successfully complete year 10 are awarded a Year 10 Certificate by the ACT Education and Training Directorate. This Certificate states that the student has satisfactorily completed a program of study to the end of Year 10 and that attendance, conduct and achievement have been satisfactory. Any student who has not met these criteria may not receive a Year 10 Certificate. The Year 10 Certificate records grades achieved in each subject studied in each semester of years 9 and 10. The decision not to award a Year 10 Certificate is at the discretion of the school Principal.

## High School Record

Students who have completed at least one semester of year 9 or 10 may request a High School Record when they leave the school. This document details the grades achieved by the student in each unit studied in years 9 and 10 until the date of departure.

At the discretion of the Principal students at MCSS may also be issued with a High School Record according to the following criteria:

- awarded more than seven E grades across two years; and/or
- suspended for more than 10 days in years 9 and 10; and/or
- absent without satisfactory explanation for 20% of school days or more

Since the introduction of the “Earn or Learn” amendment to the ACT Education Act (2004), not obtaining a Year 10 Certificate or High School Record cannot be used to prevent a student from entering College or pursuing further education of a post-secondary or tertiary kind

### Policy documents and resources:

ACT Education and Training Directorate: *Reporting on Student Achievement and progress to students and parents* Policy 2015

BSSS *Policy and Procedures Manual 2015*

ACARA: *Assessment and Reporting: improving student performance 2012*

The *Australian Curriculum* can be viewed online: <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au>

### Attachments:

- MCSS Reporting Style Guide
- Student ‘At risk’ notification letter for parents
- reporting templates mid semester, end of semester

- Reporting timeline semester 1 and 2
- Australian Curriculum Reporting - The 'P' Identifier in the ACT A-E System Report

Review Dates:

June 2015

June 2016

March 2019