

Study of Preliminary and HSC courses

ACE 8063

Last Updated: 1 April 2019

Satisfactory completion of the Preliminary course or its equivalent is a prerequisite for entry into an HSC course. (Exception: HSC Mathematics Extension 1)

For HSC examining purposes, **the Preliminary course** is regarded as assumed knowledge that has been covered by all candidates. Examination specifications ensure that the major focus of the examination will be on HSC course content.

The HSC course is defined in terms of course content (ie knowledge, skills and understanding outcomes) achievable following completion of the Preliminary course or its equivalent.

Commencement of study of prescribed texts

The study of prescribed texts (in any medium) for the Higher School Certificate must not commence until the relevant Preliminary course has been completed. 'Study' of texts or other set works does not apply to attending performances during the Preliminary course study of plays prescribed as HSC texts, nor to taking part in the production of them.

Commencement of HSC projects

Some HSC courses have a project as part of the HSC examination. Work on the following HSC projects must not commence until the relevant Preliminary course has been completed:

- Dance Core Performance, Composition, Appreciation or Major Studies – Performance, Composition, Appreciation, Dance and Technology;
- Design and Technology Major Design Project
- Drama Group Performance or Individual Projects
- English Extension 2 Major Work
- Industrial Technology Major Project
- Music Performances, Core and Elective Compositions, Elective Musicology essays or viva voces
- Society and Culture Personal Interest Project
- Textiles and Design Major Textiles Project
- Visual Arts Body of Work.

School-based assessment of courses for the HSC

For school-based assessment requirements, refer to the course *Assessment and Reporting* document located on the syllabus webpage.

Higher School Certificate school-based assessment

ACE 8069

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The school-based assessment marks submitted by a school for each course are intended to indicate students' achievements at the end of the HSC course.

The school-based assessment marks are based on:

- a wider range of syllabus outcomes than can be measured by the external examination
- multiple measures and observations made throughout the HSC course rather than a single assessment event.

Measuring achievement at several points during the course can provide a better indication of student achievement than a single, final assessment event.

Multiple measures also cater for any knowledge and skills outcomes that are better assessed in specific settings or at specific times (eg research, fieldwork or practical skills).

The assessment marks submitted by the school reflect **the knowledge and skills objectives of the course and the related outcomes**. Schools should not include measures of objectives and outcomes from the affective domain (ie values and attitudes) in their assessments. Assessments should not be influenced by factors such as student conduct.

Students with disability may require adjustments to assessment activities to enable access to the task and equitable opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do. Providing an adjustment does not restrict a student's access to the full range of grades.

Honesty in HSC Assessment: the Standard sets out NESA's requirements concerning students submitting their own work in HSC assessment. Candidates for the Higher School Certificate, as well as their teachers and others who may guide them, are required to comply with the standard. Students who engage in malpractice in school-based assessment tasks will be recorded on the NESA malpractice register by their school.

HSC VET courses

The submission of school-based assessment marks is not required for VET courses. However, schools are required to submit estimated examination marks for students enrolled in HSC VET examinations (ACE 8097). For specific advice on assessment of VET courses see: ACE 8093 HSC assessment of VET courses.

HSC Life Skills Courses

The submission of school-based assessment marks is not required for Life Skills courses. For specific advice on assessment of these courses see: ACE 7008 Assessment of Life Skills outcomes in Stage 6.

Commencement of HSC school-based assessments

ACE 8071

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With the exception of Mathematics Extension 1, school-based assessments for the HSC course must not commence **until after the completion of the Preliminary course**. Students who have been allowed to enter the HSC course on probation will need to complete outstanding Preliminary assessment tasks concurrently with HSC assessment tasks.

Exception: Mathematics

Assessment for the Mathematics Extension 1 HSC course can be based on the whole of Mathematics Extension 1 (both Preliminary and HSC courses). However, assessment for Mathematics Extension 1 should not begin until the school program of HSC assessments for other subjects begins (this is usually no earlier than Term 4 of Year 11).

Development of HSC school-based assessment programs

ACE 8072

Last Updated: 25 August 2023

NESA's syllabus packages, including assessment and reporting documents, indicate the mandatory components for HSC assessment and the weightings to be attached to those components.

Each school will determine:

- a. the practical and written tasks, such as tests, assignments or projects, on which their assessments are to be based
- b. the weightings to be allocated to each task, except when these are specified in the syllabus package.
 1. Schools are required to develop an assessment program for each of their courses.

This involves the following *responsibilities*:

- a. Number of tasks
Identifying the number of tasks that will be used to measure students' achievement in each syllabus component.
- b. Weightings
Allocating weightings to each of the tasks in accordance with the components and weightings in the Assessment and Reporting document for the course.
- c. Scheduling tasks
Scheduling the assessment tasks for the HSC courses, being mindful of the demands these tasks will place on students and teachers.
- d. Written advice to students
Providing students with written advice about the school's requirements for assessment in each course. **The advice given to students must include:**
 - i. the components and their weightings as specified in the assessment and examination materials on NESA's website
 - ii. the general nature of each assessment task
 - iii. a schedule of when assessment tasks are planned to take place. In addition, there must be provision for adequate notice of the precise timing of each assessment task
 - iv. the weight value of each task in relation to the total weighted mark for the course
 - v. details of administrative arrangements associated with each task (eg how the school will deal with absence, late submission of tasks, illness/misadventure immediately before or during the task, etc)
 - vi. details of the school's policy on malpractice in assessment tasks
 - vii. details of the procedures to be implemented if tasks produce invalid or unreliable results. Note: the results of assessment tasks that have been completed by students should not be discarded
 - viii. details of the procedures for dealing with student appeals arising from assessment tasks
- e. Appropriate procedures: marking, recording, reporting
Devising appropriate procedures for marking, recording and reporting students' performance on all assessment tasks. In calculating and reporting marks, teachers need to be aware of the limitations of using statistical procedures on small groups. Furthermore, the reporting of achievement on assessment tasks should be seen within the context of the school's overall reporting policy. Each student should receive clear feedback on their performance.

This advice should indicate:

- the student's attainment in the task relative to the outcomes

- the student's relative position within the school group.

2. Maintaining records

Schools are required to maintain records of marks awarded for each task identified as part of the assessment program of an HSC course.

Schools are **not** required to retain evidence of assessments such as test papers, assignments, projects, practical exercises, etc.

The teacher must assess the student's actual performance, not potential performance. Assessment marks must not be modified to take into account possible effects of illness or domestic situations.

Schools may offer substitute tasks or, in exceptional circumstances, estimates based on other tasks if students have valid reasons for not completing individual tasks. This must be in accordance with the illness/misadventure provisions published in the school's assessment program. Attendance and application are not to be taken into account in either the final assessment mark or in any individual assessment task.

Adjustments for students with disability

Some students with disability will require adjustments to assessment practices in order to demonstrate what they know and can do in relation to syllabus outcomes and content. The type of adjustments and support will vary according to the particular needs of the student and the requirements of the activity.

It is a requirement under the Disability Standards for Education 2005 for schools to ensure that assessment tasks are accessible to students with disability. Schools are responsible for any decisions made at school level to offer adjustments to coursework, assessment activities and tasks, including in-school tests. Decisions regarding adjustments should be made in the context of collaborative curriculum planning. Providing an adjustment does not restrict a student's access to the full range of grades or marks

Completion of HSC school-based assessment tasks

ACE 8073

Last Updated: 1 April 2019

NESA expects students to attempt all assessment tasks set.

For all Board Developed Courses (except VET courses and Life Skills courses) NESA requires all students to follow an assessment program and have a school-based assessment mark submitted.

The **minimum requirement** is that the student must make a genuine attempt at assessment tasks that contribute **in excess of 50 percent** of available marks in the course.

A student who does not comply with the assessment requirements and receives a **non-completion determination** in a course will have neither an assessment mark nor an examination mark awarded for that course.

In the case of **Extension courses**, students who do not comply with the minimum assessment requirements for any co-requisite course will not receive a result in either course.

School-based assessment of HSC Board Developed Courses

ACE 8074

Last Updated: 30 July 2019

For each Board Developed Course (except VET Industry Curriculum Framework courses, English Studies, Mathematics Standard 1 and Life Skills courses), schools and colleges are required to submit a school-based assessment mark to NESA for every student including those who are studying the course with an outside tutor.

Assessment marks for Board Developed Courses are **moderated**, and the moderated marks are reported on the Record of Achievement.

In the event of a successful illness/misadventure application, the examination mark may be derived from the moderated assessment mark or unaffected components of the examination.

Moderation of assessment marks allows comparison across the entire candidature for any course.

School-based assessment of HSC Board Endorsed Courses

ACE 8075

Last Updated: 11 October 2021

This rule is affected by changes made to RoSA and HSC rules and requirements in 2021 and 2022.

Find these amendments in our COVID Changes for 2021 and COVID Changes for 2022 ACE rules.

Schools and colleges are required to submit school-based assessment marks for students undertaking any HSC Board Endorsed Course (except for Board Endorsed VET Courses, University Developed Board Endorsed Courses and School Developed Board Endorsed Life Skills Courses).

They are awarded in accordance with the Performance Descriptions for Reporting Achievement in Stage 6 Board Endorsed Courses. These marks are reported on the Record of Achievement but are not moderated by NESA.

A **further requirement** for the assessment of BECs is that the assessment must be based on the **HSC component only**.

Assessment must reflect the extent to which each student has achieved the objectives and outcomes of the course.

Three to five tasks, including formal examinations, are recommended. At least one assessment task must be a formal examination task.