Catholic Regional College Sydenham
Policy: Assessment Policy - VCE

Rationale

Assessment aims to discover what a student has learned and what s/he can do with that learning. This involves measuring a student's performance on selected tasks. Different types of learning require different types of assessment task.

At Catholic Regional College Sydenham, assessment is a systematic process by which information is collected and analysed to inform all aspects of the teaching and learning process. Assessment includes both qualitative and quantitative descriptions of an individual's performance and provides timely feedback to students to assist them in improving their level of achievement. As such, teachers at the College plan for the use of both formative and summative assessment.

Objectives

Assessment is integral to teaching and learning and should inform further learning;

Assessment is based on explicit criteria that must be explained to students before they begin an assessment task. These criteria are to be related to achievement of the relevant learning outcomes as outlined in the relevant study design or training package;

Assessment is to be fair and comprehensive, measuring a range of abilities and skills such as recall, comprehension, analysis, synthesis, creativity, transfer of learning to different situations, problem solving, written communication, verbal communication and other forms of communication. A range of assessment techniques is used;

Assessment of a student's learning is used to identify strengths and weaknesses and plan further learning for that student. A series of assessment records gives an indication of a student's progress.

Principles

Teachers plan a variety of assessment tasks related to each objective of the course. The results of assessment are used to plan further learning appropriate to each student's needs and talents;

Records are kept of assessment on SIMON and made available to those who need them for planning or review purposes;

Assessment occurs frequently and students obtain feedback on their performance in all assessment; The results of each assessment task are recorded in a form most useful for planning and feedback;

To ensure appropriate and fair assessment, tasks should allow for the needs of students with special learning requirements;

All subjects use common assessment tasks in which teacher's measure student performance in the task according to the same criteria. Assessment results of these tasks allow comparison of different teaching strategies, enabling teachers to identify and select the most effective strategies. These assessment tasks are recorded as a raw score expressed as a percentage on end of semester reports;

Assessment records and results are considered confidential. They may be released to the student and parents/guardians concerned or to other teachers for educational purposes and only in accordance with the College Privacy Policy;

At the commencement of a unit of study students will be provided with an overview that specifies the relevant dates and details of the relevant School Assessed Coursework (SAC) tasks and/or School Assessed Tasks (SAT) learning activities;

At least one week prior to each assessment task students must be provided with detailed information regarding the time, length, nature of task, procedures and marking criteria; Teachers must endeavour to provide students with feedback about performance on assessment tasks within at least two weeks of the task being completed by all students within the subject.

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Formative Assessment

"The College believes it is essential for all students to engage in meaningful learning tasks which allows for the demonstration of the essential knowledge and skills in all areas of a student's learning program. Satisfactory completion of a learning outcome should be obtained through the completion of formative coursework."

Formative assessment tasks must be used to determine Satisfactory completion of the outcome prior to the scored task. School assessed coursework (SAC) should take place after the initial assessment of the learning outcome to score the level of achievement obtained by the student, for the purpose of tertiary entry.

SAC may also be used, as an opportunity for students to demonstrate competency if the previously submitted coursework was not deemed to be satisfactory.

LACs should ensure that appropriate records are kept for work being undertaken, ensuring that all work falls within the VCAA guidelines.

LACs should promote to all staff, the notion that authentic assessment can be conducted through formative tasks.

Summative tasks are only appropriate for the purpose of scored assessment

Satisfactory Unit Result

In order to demonstrate the satisfactory completion of a unit, students must demonstrate achievement of the set of outcomes/competencies for the unit as specified by the VCAA study design.

A student will receive an "S" result for a VCE/VCAL unit or a "C" (Competent) result in a VET unit when the College determines that all of the relevant learning outcomes are achieved satisfactorily through one or a series of formative tasks.

In order to achieve this a student must:

Complete work that demonstrates achievement of the learning outcomes/units of competency;

Submit work on time;

Submit work that is clearly their own;

Observe all VCAA and College rules.

Academic Concern Protocols

Where teachers have concerns regarding student progress the following actions are advised:
- Complete an appropriate concern letter (VCAL letter of concern, VCE letter of concern, VET letter of concern).
- Contact home to discuss student progress.
- Discuss concern with student's Cluster Coordinator.
- Discuss formative assessment task design with LAC.

Not Satisfactory Unit Result

A student will receive an 'N/NYC' result for the unit when the necessary learning outcomes/competencies are not achieved because:

Work does not demonstrate achievement of the outcomes/competencies;

the student has failed to meet a College deadline for an assessment task or learning task;

student work cannot be authenticated;

there has been a substantial breach of rules, including College attendance expectations.

An N result should be issued only when the teacher is convinced that the student cannot or will not meet the learning outcomes through formative or summative tasks. Students will have the opportunity to appeal the N result and teachers will be required to provide evidence that ample opportunities to demonstrate satisfactory achievement have been provided.

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The Role of the Teacher
Teachers plan a variety of formative assessment tasks in consultation with other teachers of the same subject and the LAC.

They assess frequently and maintain accurate records of assessment. Formative tasks may be completed at home and in the classroom. Teachers use assessment results as a basis for planning.

Where a student is at risk of not meeting the learning outcomes teachers should follow the Academic Concern Protocols described above.

Assessment records pertaining to the achievement of learning outcomes and the completion of units entered by teachers on student reports should be consistent with those provided for entry on the Victorian Administrative Software System (VASS). Assessment records should also be available to students and parents via SIMON in either Class Tasks (for formative assessment) or Assessment Tasks (for scored tasks).

For Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs, results provided pertaining to student completion of units of competency must be consistent between student reports, data entered on VASS and data provided to the relevant Registered Training Organisation (RTO).

VCE Unit 3/4 teachers of the same study must cross-mark or benchmark in all scored tasks to ensure that a common understanding of appropriate levels of student achievement is reached. This common understanding will ensure that teachers are able to rank the achievement of all students within a study in a fair manner.

The Learning Leaders Team supports the professional development of staff in this area and may use the results of assessment as a component in the evaluation of whether the educational goals of the College are being met. Learning Leaders challenge and support teachers in developing and using a broad and appropriate range of assessment tools.

VCE School Assessment
SAC CALENDAR- is posted on the school website, published in the newsletter and will be available on the school's intranet. It is important that students are aware of the SAC dates and plan their study plans accordingly.

Learning outcomes will be graded as either: S (Satisfactory) or N (Not Satisfactory) SACs may be graded on either:
A letter grade scale or percentage (raw score) and/or a criteria sheet (VH, H, M, L, VL, NS) or a test score result.

Any outcome of a standard that is not satisfactory will be awarded 'N' (Not Satisfactory), therefore the overall assessment of the Unit will be 'N' (Not Satisfactory)

An overall assessment of S (Satisfactory) or N (Not Satisfactory) will be given for the unit.

A student must receive a score of 50% as a minimum in order to pass School Assessed Coursework tasks (SAC's) and also to pass the overall Unit in any given subject. All teachers will maintain record sheets of a student's progress. Students will also maintain records of their achievements; these should be carefully monitored by parents.

Unscored VCE Program
The philosophy "every pathway is valid" drives the development of learning programs at the College. It is our aim to provide our students with a broad range of learning programs that will engage them whilst they are at the College. The Unscored VCE Program (UVP) honours the College's commitment to this philosophy.

As outlined by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA), the VCE is awarded on the basis of satisfactory completion of units according to VCE program requirements. The decision regarding satisfactory completion of a unit is distinct from the assessment of levels of achievement. Whilst School Assessed Coursework (SAC) and School-Assessed Tasks (SAT) are generally used to determine both satisfactory completion of a unit and assessment for a study score, it is not a requirement that these tasks be scored. A student whose work is not scored, but assessed only as Satisfactory/Not Satisfactory will still be eligible to complete all of the VCE units that they are enrolled in at the College and therefore will still be eligible to complete the VCE.

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Students entering the Unscored VCE Program will receive pathways counseling and will indicate that they wish to follow a post secondary pathway that does not require an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR). Courses that do not require an ATAR include Certificate IV and Diploma Courses at TAFE.

Students within the program will complete set learning tasks for an S only result. They will receive an 'NA' (Not Assessed) for the grading on all attempted assessment tasks and will not sit for any examinations throughout the year or at the end of the year. Students entering the program will complete all subjects without scored assessment, but will still be eligible for the VCE without study scores; however they will not be eligible to receive an ATAR. It should be noted that every year a significant number (approximately 45%) of Catholic Regional College Sydenham students follow a post secondary pathway that does not require an ATAR. Students must endeavor to remain actively and positively engaged in the learning opportunities whilst at the College. It is an expectation that students will attend scheduled classes until the end of term 3. At this time it is expected that students will have completed all learning outcomes required to be awarded an S result for the units that they are enrolled in. Whilst students in UVP will not be undertaking examinations, they are required to take part in the Unscored VCE Program Transition Course during term 4. This program is designed to support transition from the school environment to further study or employment. This course will involve attendance at the College up to the day prior to the final graduation ceremony. The course includes learning activities such as the creation of cover letters and resumes for job applications, how to search for employment positions, mock interviews with industry professionals, work placements and TAFE applications.

The UVP Program provides an opportunity for students to complete their VCE, graduate with their peers and gain entry into a selected TAFE course. As such, this program is recommended for many students at Catholic Regional College Sydenham as a means of achieving success. (see Formative Assessment section)

There are a number of ways that teachers are able to assess students' ability to meet the requirements for a satisfactory attainment of the outcome. Many of these are found within the study design document for each subject area. These may include, but are not limited to:

- a folio of exercises (manual and ICT-based)
- a test (manual and/or ICT-based)
- summary or review notes.
- an assignment (manual and/or ICT-based)
- a case study (manual and/or ICT-based)
- a classroom presentation (oral or multimedia)
- a report or research report (written, oral or multimedia)
- recording and reporting on data collected in the field;
- data processing, analysis and presentation;
- short-answer questions and/or structured questions;
- role-plays;
- a web page;
- problem-solving tasks;
- modelling tasks.
- a video with accompanying written text;
- a newspaper article;
- a feature magazine article;
- a radio program;
- discussion of the use of language and point/s of view in a persuasive text.