Northern School for Autism

"Learning for Life"

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT & PROGRESS POLICY

Purpose

To ensure Northern School for Autism is aware of its obligations relating to assessment of student achievement across Foundation to Year 10 and in Senior School Year 11 & 12.

Policy

Assessment is an ongoing process of gathering, analysing and interpreting evidence of student achievement and progress, and reflecting on findings. Effective teachers use student assessment results to evaluate the impact of their teaching on student learning, and then adapt their practices to better meet the needs of all students.

Quality assessment forms a foundation upon which:

- teaching can be targeted to student learning needs, thereby maximising the potential for optimal growth in learning
- informed and consistent teacher judgements against curriculum standards can be made, which is critical to understanding how well each student is developing as a successful learner, individual and citizen.

Any account of a student's learning and development needs to be rich, robust and comprehensive, which requires that multiple sources of data and evidence are collected and used.

Documentation of assessment usually involves identifying the what, when, how and who of assessment. Documentation may take the form of an assessment schedule, and/or be included in the school's whole-school curriculum plan.

Formative assessment is any assessment that is used to improve teaching and learning. It is timely and iterative. It can be immediate or planned. Best-practice formative assessment is where each step of the assessment process is deeply embedded in, and carefully considered as part of, the school's curriculum program and teachers' units of work/learning sequences. Formative assessment information enables teachers and students to answer questions like: How is learning progressing? What will be learned next?

Summative assessments usually occur at the end of a unit of work/learning sequence. They are often formal assessment items or tasks that provide evidence of students' knowledge, skills and understanding at a point in time. Summative assessments usually occur at the end of a unit of work/learning sequence. Summative assessments can also be used formatively, since they can inform future planning for student learning.

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Implementation

- The school will ensure there is ongoing assessment of each student's performance, and that this assessment is embedded in the school's curriculum program.

- The school will assess student performance against the Victorian Curriculum F-10 achievement standards. Assessment information will be formally recorded for every student.

- Student performance will be monitored.

- The school has in place policies and procedures that outline expectations for the assessment, recording and monitoring of student performance.

- We will ensure that teachers, parent/carer(s) and students have access to accurate information about student performance.

- The school will document how we will assess student learning as part of our school-based curriculum program, including formative and summative assessment.

- The English Online Interview (EOI) is mandated for all Prep students in Victorian government schools.

- developing and implementing quality school-based assessment across Foundation to Level 10, including assessment of students for whom English is an additional language.

- NSA will assess Senior School student performance against the VCAA Guidance for Assessment, VCAL Assessment, VET &/ or ASDAN program.

- Student Performance and Progress will be communicated to parents &/or carers, see *Reporting Student Acheivement and Progress policy*

Department guidance on assessment

The Department provides guidance to schools on strengthening assessment as part of the broader guidance on improving student outcomes.

Under the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO) the Curriculum planning and assessment dimension is identified as an essential element for improving student outcomes and includes:

- documented curriculum plan, assessment and shared pedagogical approaches:
- the assessment plan includes formative and summative assessment
- assessment is ongoing and integrated in the teaching and learning cycle
- moderation of common student assessment tasks
- moderation of student assessment occurs regularly and explores a range of assessment data sets to inform curriculum development and teacher practice and is used as the basis for regular feedback and reporting to students and their parents and carers.

Schools are expected to align school-based assessment embedded in their curriculum program to FISO.

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VCAA guidance on assessment (Senior School)

To support schools to improve their formative assessment practices, the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) has developed a series of online resources:

- Formative Assessment — provides advice to teachers about how to develop formative assessment rubrics and put formative assessments into practice in the classroom.
- Insight Assessment Platform — a collection of online assessment tools aligned to the Victorian Curriculum F-10. The platform supports high quality assessment practices and provides teachers with information they can use to target the learning needs of students as they progress along the continuum.
- Education State Sample Assessment Programs — a set of assessment tasks to support teachers to assess the capability Critical and Creative Thinking.
- Digital Assessment Library (DAL) — formative assessments to support teachers to know what students have and have not learnt, identify strengths and weaknesses, and to plan their instructions effectively.

VET Assessment (Senior School)

VET contributes to the VCAL through satisfying the requirements of the Industry Specific Skills or Work Related Skills strands. Each completed 90-hour block of VET equals one VCAL unit. The additional VET options for VCAL students will allow students to participate in some day long VET programs.
VET Curriculum must be assessed in accordance with the requirements and guidelines outlined in the curriculum documents for the units. The Assessment for VET will depend on the course requirements. For a VCE VET course with a study score may require a formal end of year examination. For a VET course with a block credit, it may comply with the VCAL assessment requirements.

VCAL Assessment (Senior School)
The purpose of VCAL assessment is to measure a student's achievement of a learning outcome by collecting evidence about their performance and making a judgment about whether they have met the requirements of that learning outcome. These requirements are clearly outlined in the elements of each learning outcome.

Teachers should use a variety of assessment tasks that provide a range of opportunities for students to demonstrate achievement of each learning outcome.

Evidence of achievement can include, but is not limited to, direct observation, written work, oral presentations, object production and project implementation.

Students must be observed to demonstrate achievement of a learning outcome on more than one occasion and in different contexts to make sure the assessment is valid and reliable, fair, flexible and efficient.

An assessment task used to demonstrate achievement of one or multiple learning outcomes in one VCAL unit cannot be used to demonstrate achievement in any other VCAL unit, VET unit of competency or VCE study.

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Assessment principles

The curriculum components in a VCAL learning program must be assessed in accordance with the requirements and guidelines outlined in the curriculum documents for the units.

Assessment within the VCAL should be based on the following principles:

Assessment should be valid and reliable

- Assessment tasks should be designed to reflect the nature of the outcomes/elements of the unit.

- Students should be assessed across a range of different tasks and contexts.

- Assessment should be conducted on a number of occasions.

Assessment should be fair

- Assessment tasks should be grounded in relevant context and be sensitive to gender, culture, linguistic background, physical disability, socio-economic status and geographic location.

- Instructions for assessment tasks should be clear and explicit.

Assessment should be flexible

- Assessment should be open-ended and flexible to meet the specific needs of students.

- Students should have the opportunity to demonstrate achievement at their own level and pace.

Assessment should be efficient

- Assessment instruments that provide evidence of achievement across a range of outcomes/units should be used.

Assessment of students with disability

The VCAL structure provides a number of strategies to support students with disabilities. However, all VCAL students are required to meet the course requirements as outlined in the *VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook* and in the *VCAL Curriculum Planning* guides. Information regarding the assessment of students with disability is available in the *VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook* under the 'Special provisions' section.

Summative assessment

VCAL students may be required to sit tests and/or exams as part of their VET program, VCE studies or as part of further education and training. Therefore, to provide students with test-based assessment skills, it may be appropriate to incorporate test- and/or exam-based assessment into a VCAL program.

However, VCAL assessment principles should remain at the forefront when assessing any VCAL unit.

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Evidence of student learning
Evidence of student learning is anything that supports the assessor's claim that a student has achieved a learning outcome. This can include, but is not limited to, direct observation, written work, oral presentations, object production and project implementation.

ASDAN PROGRAM (Senior School)

At NSA we offer ASDAN to the year 10, 11 and 12 students as an alternative to the VCAL program. ASDAN is a curriculum which supports and promotes our students in preparing them for adulthood. Through our ASDAN curriculum we aim to enable our students to develop their self-confidence in being prepared for life after school, preparing to live independently and becoming valued members of their local community. The activities are designed for students to learn in a variety of settings and contexts, both at school and in the local community.

The ASDAN curriculum allows students of all abilities demonstrate a level of achievement. A student's learning is documented through the development of a portfolio of evidence which is assessed by trained moderators, at school level as well as by ASDAN staff, for the award of an accredited certificate.

Practice principles for excellence in teaching and learning

The practice principles for excellence in teaching and learning provide additional guidance for school leaders and teachers to deliver the curriculum and engage students, including guidance on the school's approach to assessment. The practice principles support teachers to determine student learning needs and how students can demonstrate their level of understanding.

An essential practice principle regarding assessment to supports schools to improve student achievement and motivation is Practice 6 Rigorous assessment practices and feedback inform teaching and learning. This includes four actions:

- teachers design authentic, fit for purpose assessments to reflect the learning program and objectives
- teachers use assessment data to diagnose student learning needs and plan for learning
  - teachers provide regular feedback to students on their progress against individual learning goals and curriculum standards
  - teachers analyse student achievement data to improve their practice.

One essential element to support schools reflect on their school-based assessment is the Understand assessment design — the what, when and how of assessment. This tool comprises of six elements and supports teachers and leaders to evaluate and improve assessment processes and practices in their schools:

- Understand assessment design
- Assess the knowledge and understanding of your students
- Assess the capabilities and skills of your students
- Assess the attitudes, motivations and dispositions of your students
- How to interpret assessment data
- Understand your impact on student learning growth

When considering assessment of student achievement and progress, effective teachers see formative assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning, for both themselves and their students. Using data and feedback, teachers identify important issues, which drive inquiry and actions. Teachers monitor the impact of their actions and adjust their practice accordingly.

English Online Interview
The school will conduct an English Online Interview (EOI) which is mandated for all Foundation (Prep) students.
The EOI will be undertaken within a Department-defined timeframe. The exact timeframe is published on English Online Interview annually.
Note: The assessment of Year 1 and Year 2 students using the English Online Interview is optional.

References:

For further advice, guidance and support for assessment practices and processes, or for teaching resources relating to assessment of student achievement and progress, see the Department's these resources:
https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/assessment-student-achievement/policy
https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/practice/Pages/assessment.aspx
https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/curriculum-programs/policy
https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/fiso/policy
https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/management/improvement/Pages/dimension1curriculum.aspx
https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/reporting-student-achievement/policy
https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/f-10assessment/formative-assessment/Pages/default.aspx
https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/f-10assessment/formative-assessment/DevelopFormativeAssessmentRubrics/Pages/default.aspx
https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/f-10assessment/formative-assessment/formative-assessment-rubric-samples/Pages/default.aspx
https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/practice/improve/Pages/evaluateimpactteaching.aspx
https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/vcal-assessment/Pages/Index.aspx
https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/vet/publications/VETScoredAssessmentGuide.pdf
https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/vce-vcal-handbook/Pages/index.aspx

- Please refer also the school's *Curriculum Framework*, the *Reporting Student Achievement & Progress Policy* and the *Records Management Policy.*

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Appendix A: Whole School Curriculum Plan

Evaluation
Mandatory for VRQA purposes
School Council Approval No Longer Required

Review
This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or if guidelines change
This policy updated June 2021 and is scheduled for review in June 2024