



Southern Cross
SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

Stage 4
Assessment Guidelines
2024

Our school stands proudly on Bundjalung land

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Abbreviations used in this document

NESA -	NSW Education Standards Authority
SCSoDE	Southern Cross School of Distance Education
RoSA	Record of Student Achievement
DEMS	Distance Education Management System

Overview

This booklet contains information about assessment tasks used to measure academic progress in Stage 4 (Years 7 and 8) courses at Southern Cross School of Distance Education.

Mandatory Requirements

Students must study and satisfactorily complete the following courses as stated by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and Department of Education (DoE):

English	Mandatory (400 hours Years 7–10)
Mathematics	Mandatory (400 hours Years 7–10)
Science	Mandatory (400 hours Years 7–10)
Human Society and Its Environment	Mandatory Geography (200 hours Years 7–10) Mandatory History (200 hours Years 7–10)
Personal Development Health and Physical Education	Mandatory (300 hours Years 7–10)
Creative Arts	Mandatory Visual Arts and Music (100 hours in each subject completed by the end of Year 10 but preferably in Years 7 and 8)
Languages	Mandatory- one language to be studied over one continuous 12 month period (100 hours between Years 7–10 but preferably in Years 7–8)
Technology	Mandatory Technology (200 hours Years 7 - 8 only)

Completion of Mandatory requirements

To be eligible for the credential of the Record of School Achievement (RoSA) at the end of Year 10 students must meet the Stage 4 mandatory requirements.

Southern Cross School of Distance Education provides learning programs to students in Years 7 and 8 in the core subjects of English, Mathematics, Science, Geography, History and PDHPE as well as the mandatory subjects of Technology, Music, Visual Arts and Languages. Although students can have until the end of Year 10 to meet the mandatory Stage 4 requirements it is better for students to complete these in Years 7 and 8 ensuring they can focus on meeting the Stage 5 requirements in Years 9 and 10. This pattern of study enables the students to meet all the Stage 4 requirements to maintain eligibility for the RoSA credential by the end of Year 10.

Assessment Guidelines

Teachers are to undertake assessment to collect information about students' learning. This will occur through both formal and informal activities.

“Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. Well-designed assessment is central to engaging students and should be closely aligned to the syllabus outcomes within a stage”. *NESA - NSW Syllabuses for the Australian Curriculum*

Assessment in Years 7 and 8:

- is central to the curriculum and built into teaching and learning experiences
- should take in as many outcomes as practical in one task
- is complex and requires engagement over time
- provides opportunities for students to show what they know and can do
- provides opportunities for students to display their achievements in different ways and to work in a range of situations
- provides opportunities for students to reflect on their work within the task.

Assessments are planned so that:

- students can demonstrate achievement of outcomes for the relevant stage of learning
- a variety of strategies are used
- processes are efficient and manageable for students and staff
- rubrics are provided to students explaining what students need to do to achieve
- valid and reliable data can be collected
- common tasks can be adjusted to meet the needs of students.

Assessment provides information of student achievement at that point in time and is formally communicated to parents via reports twice a year. However, students receive informal feedback throughout the year.

Stage 4 assessment tasks are inbuilt into the expected teaching and learning activities within a unit or module. Tasks that are designated as assessments will be clearly indicated to the student. Rubrics and marking guidelines will also be provided ensuring students know what is expected of them.

NESA recommends that teachers provide a range of assessment opportunities to gather and evaluate evidence of a student's learning.

Teachers vary the type of assessment activity and the way evidence of learning is collected based upon the:

- outcomes being assessed
- evidence to be gathered
- teaching and learning activity
- context
- students' learning needs.

There are three types of assessment:

Assessment for learning:

- is formative and is used to clarify student learning and understanding
- reflects a view of learning in which assessment helps students learn better, rather than just achieve a better mark
- involves formal and informal assessment activities as part of learning and to inform the planning of future learning
- includes clear goals for the learning activity
- provides effective feedback that motivates the learner and can lead to improvement
- reflects a belief that all students can improve
- encourages self-assessment and peer assessment as part of the regular study routine
- involves teachers, students and parents reflecting on the purpose of learning tasks
- is inclusive of all learners and their diverse learning needs.

Assessment of learning:

- is summative and used at defined key points during a unit of work
- is used to plan future learning goals and pathways for students
- provides evidence of achievement to the wider community, including parents, educators, the students themselves and outside groups
- provides a transparent interpretation across other audiences.

Assessment as learning:

- encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning
- requires students to ask questions about their learning
- involves teachers and students creating learning goals to encourage growth and development
- provides ways for students to use formal and informal feedback and self-assessment to build on prior knowledge
- encourages peer assessment, self-assessment, reflection and lifelong learning.

The following assessment for, as and of learning approaches are relevant to all learning areas:

- collaborative activities
- peer assessment
- self-assessment
- teacher observations.

CHAT GPT and artificial intelligence models

A lot of students have heard of Chat GPT and other artificial intelligence models and while it can be a useful tool for language learning and writing practice, it should not be used in the context of completing assessment tasks.

Teachers are aware that some students are using this tool and students are encouraged to develop their critical thinking, writing, and communication skills through engaging and meaningful learning experiences. Chat GPT, is not a reliable tool to use in completing assessment tasks. Here are a few reasons why:

- Chat GPT generates responses based on its training data and algorithms, which may not always be accurate or appropriate for the task at hand. Its responses can be vague, repetitive, or irrelevant to the question being asked.
- Chat GPT cannot evaluate the quality of the content generated by students or the accuracy of the information provided. For example, if students use Chat GPT to complete an essay or research task, it may generate content that is not factual or accurate, leading to lower grades or incomplete learning outcomes.
- Relying on Chat GPT to complete assessment tasks can lead to a lack of motivation, interest, and confidence in your own ability to learn and grow.
- Using Chat GPT in assessment tasks may compromise the integrity of the evaluation process. Assessment tasks are meant to assess students' independent thinking, critical analysis, and communication skills, which are essential for your future academic and professional success. If students rely on Chat GPT to complete assessments, they may not develop these skills and may be at a disadvantage when facing real-world challenges.

Above all the use of Chat GPT may result in a malpractice determination where students may receive zero.

Record keeping

Information related to the achievement of students allows teachers to accurately report to parents. This information is used to determine what stage students are at in their learning, inform what needs to be taught next, allows the opportunity to individualise the teaching learning activities planned and provides a snap shot of student achievement at that point in time. Evidence of student learning must be kept within DEMS in the record card.

Observations made during teaching and learning can be used along with assessment specific information to guide feedback and reporting.

Providing feedback to students

Feedback enables students to recognise their strengths and areas for development. It is essential for students and is integral to the teaching and learning process.

Feedback can take the form of oral discussions, written annotations and provision of exemplar work samples as well as corrections to work. Feedback will be provided to students in both an informal and formal manner.

Feedback of student engagement in learning must be recorded in DEMS along with feedback relevant to specific assessment tasks.

Reporting

Formal school reports are prepared for the end of Semester 1 and Semester 2. These reports will indicate achievement in course assessment activities, development of learning behaviours and include a teacher comment. Comments will identify areas of student strength and for further development. Each of these reports reflects the student's achievement at that point in time.

Common grade scale

The common grade scale describes performance at five grade levels and is used to indicate student achievement on the semester reports.

- A. The student has an extensive knowledge and understanding of the content and can readily apply this knowledge. In addition, the student has achieved a very high level of competence in the processes and skills and can apply these skills to new situations
- B. The student has a thorough knowledge and understanding of the content and a high level of competence in the processes and skills. In addition, the student is able to apply this knowledge and these skills to most situations.
- C. The student has a sound knowledge and understanding of the main areas of content and has achieved an adequate level of competence in the processes and skills
- D. The student has a basic knowledge and understanding of the content and has achieved a limited level of competence in the processes and skills.
- E. The student has an elementary knowledge and understanding in few areas of the content and has achieved very limited competence in some of the processes and skills