

Parents



HSC Assessments and Submitted Works

Advice to Parents

As a parent of an HSC student, you want your child to succeed on their own merits.

This pamphlet offers ideas to support your child during the HSC assessment program. It provides advice on:

- how your child can prepare for and manage assessment tasks
- their rights and responsibilities in HSC assessment
- ways to prevent malpractice, or cheating, in HSC assessment tasks and examinations.

The advice here applies to *all* assessment tasks and exams, including projects, practical works, independent research projects and performances.

Help them make a good start

By the start of Year 11, your child must have satisfactorily completed the *HSC: All My Own Work* program, or its equivalent. This program, which you will find on the Board's website, encourages students to follow good principles and practices in assessments and exams. Speak with your school Principal about special arrangements related to this program for students undertaking only Life Skills courses.

There is also very important information that your child **must read** in a booklet called *Rules and Procedures for Higher School Certificate Candidates*. Schools will give students a copy, and it also appears on the Board's website. 'Honesty in Assessment – the Standard' is published on page 7 of that booklet, and is also shown here at the top of page 4.

When your child signs their HSC Confirmation of Entry form, they are telling the Board of Studies that they have read, understood and agreed to follow the rules in the Rules and Procedures booklet. It's important that you understand those rules too.

If your child is enrolled in a subject with a submitted project or practical work component, such as Design and Technology, Music 2 or English Extension 2, they must also certify that the work they submit to the Board for marking is their own. They must acknowledge any assistance they received. The teacher and Principal will also have to say whether they believe the work is really the student's.





What is the purpose of assessment in the HSC?

Your child's HSC marks are in two parts. Half the marks are from external exams set by the Board of Studies. The other half are from school assessments leading up to the final exams.

Assessment in the HSC is mainly to:

- assist students in their learning
- provide information on student achievement and progress in each course
- provide evidence that students have satisfactorily completed a course
- allow reporting of the standard achieved by each student at the end of a course.

Your child's teacher will set several assessment tasks to help determine the final HSC mark.

How can I help my child to prepare for assessment tasks?

The Board of Studies encourages you to take an active interest in your child's education. You can give them support with their HSC assessment tasks by encouraging them to:

- be aware of due dates
- keep an up-to-date diary of all their assessment activities and other commitments
- start tasks early so that they will have time to ask for help if they need it
- break tasks into smaller steps and set themselves deadlines for each step
- record their information sources when they find them so that acknowledgements don't become a major task at the end

- frequently save and back up all computer work. Technology failure is generally not an acceptable excuse for submitting work late
- keep all their earlier drafts and copies of their resources
- keep a copy of everything they submit for marking.

A wall calendar, study planner or whiteboard can be useful for keeping track of due dates and deadlines.

Remember, however, that while your support is important, you must not do your child's school work for them. Doing their own work will benefit both your child's learning and their overall sense of achievement in the HSC.

Why does honesty matter in the HSC?

The Higher School Certificate is a well-respected and widely recognised educational credential. Many students use the HSC to enter employment and further education.

Cheating is absolutely unacceptable in the HSC as it undermines the integrity of the qualification. It distorts a student's achievements and disadvantages other students.

What is cheating in HSC assessment?

Cheating, or malpractice, is dishonest behaviour by a student that gives them an unfair advantage. It includes:

- copying, buying, stealing or borrowing any part of someone else's work and presenting it as their own
- using material directly from any source – books, magazines, CDs, DVDs or the internet – without acknowledging where it came from
- handing in work that contains an unacknowledged contribution from any other person, including yourself, or a tutor, coach or author
- paying someone to write or prepare material associated with a task. This includes process diaries, logs or journals.

Why would a student cheat?

Some people cheat when they feel they are under pressure – perhaps they haven't organised their time well, and they may take shortcuts to meet the course requirements. They may feel pressured if they are trying to achieve unrealistic goals at school.

Some people cheat because they don't understand the seriousness of what they are doing and tell themselves it doesn't matter. Others cheat accidentally because they do not understand plagiarism.

What happens if a student cheats?

The Board of Studies treats cheating very seriously. It penalises students caught cheating in HSC written examinations, projects or practical works.

Students who cheat will face one or more of the following serious consequences:

- reduced marks for part or all of the examinations
- zero marks for part or all of the examination
- an interview with a 'malpractice' panel at the Board of Studies
- loss of one or more courses counted towards the award of the HSC
- damage to their ability to apply for entry to TAFE or university courses or scholarships.

Cheating in school assessment tasks is dealt with at school. Your child's teachers and the school principal have to certify to the Board of Studies that all of your child's work is their own, particularly in take-home tasks. Any help they receive must be acknowledged. Cheating may result in zero marks for the task and, depending on the task, a student may lose that course from their HSC award. The school may refuse to certify practical works or projects as 'authentic work' before sending them to the Board of Studies, and may also take further disciplinary action.

Just as importantly, someone caught cheating is likely to lose their fellow students' trust as well as their own self-respect.

When your child is working on assignments, your support and the support of teachers and friends is very important, but they must not let anyone else do their work for them. Remember that when your child does their own work, they are not only

learning – they are adding to their overall sense of achievement in completing the HSC.

Preventing malpractice



You need to be aware that your child's school safeguards the authenticity of students' work in take-home tasks in many ways, including:

- thoroughly briefing them about the requirements of each task
- allocating class time to the planning of a response to the tasks
- requiring them to maintain a process diary or journal to show how their response has been developed
- requiring them to submit a task for consideration by the teacher at critical points as the tasks are developing
- asking them to submit their original drafts with the final copy of their assignment
- getting them to deliver a short presentation or answer some questions about their work
- showing them how to acknowledge the ideas or assistance of other people.



Honesty in HSC Assessment – the Standard

This standard sets out the requirements of the Board of Studies NSW concerning students submitting their own work for 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.

The honesty of students in completing assessment tasks, examinations and submitted works, and of teachers and others in guiding students, strengthens the integrity of the Higher School Certificate. Throughout the assessment process, the highest level of honesty is required.

Each student's mark will be determined by the quality of the work produced by the student only. To demonstrate honesty, any component of a student's work that has been written, created or developed by others must be acknowledged in accordance with the

Board's subject-specific documentation. Use or inclusion of material from other sources such as books, journals and electronic sources, including the internet, must be acknowledged. General teaching and learning do not require formal acknowledgement.

Dishonest behaviour carried out for the purpose of gaining unfair advantage in the assessment process constitutes malpractice, or cheating. Malpractice in any form, including plagiarism, is unacceptable. The Board of Studies NSW treats allegations of malpractice very seriously and detected malpractice will limit a student's marks and jeopardise their HSC.

Should malpractice be suspected, students will be required to demonstrate that all unacknowledged work is entirely their own. Serious and deliberate acts of malpractice amount to corrupt conduct and, where appropriate, the Board of Studies NSW will report matters to the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

Your child's rights and responsibilities in the HSC

Your child also has the following rights:

- to be informed of the assessment policies of their school and the Board of Studies
- to receive clear guidelines on the requirements of each assessment task
- to be told in advance of the due date for each assessment task
- to receive feedback that assists them to review their work
- to query the mark for an individual task at the time it is returned to them
- to request a review of the calculation of the final assessment mark if they believe their final assessment rank is incorrect.

Your child also has the following responsibilities:

- to become familiar with and follow the assessment requirements set by the school, and the rules in the *Rules and Procedures for Higher School Certificate Candidates* booklet
- to complete all set tasks on time, or talk to teachers about what to do if they can't meet a deadline
- not to engage in behaviour which could be considered malpractice, or cheating, including plagiarism, by ensuring that all assessment work is their own or that they acknowledge the contribution of others
- to follow up any concerns with tasks at the time they are marked and returned.

Further help

Contact your child's school if you have questions about their assessment policies. Most schools have a website which usually includes staff contact information.

Look on the Board of Studies website www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au for the *Rules and Procedures for Higher School Certificate Candidates*, *How your HSC works*, *HSC: All My Own Work* and details of courses, past examinations and much more useful information about the HSC.

The Department of Education and Training website www.det.nsw.edu.au contains useful information about NSW schools and education policy.

There are many internet sources of advice on how to avoid plagiarism and how students can manage their studies. University websites often have good general advice that can also apply to the HSC. Another good source is the *HSC Online* website www.hsc.csu.edu.au which has special advice and links on study skills and plagiarism.