



# St Joseph's College

## Assessment Handbook

| Years 7-9 2021

# ST JOSEPH'S COLLEGE

## ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

### YEARS 7 TO 9 COURSES

#### ☐ RATIONALE

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St Joseph's College is founded on the person of Jesus Christ and our philosophy of assessment is one based on the values which He lived and proclaimed. As a Catholic school, the understanding of the uniqueness of each individual student is reflected in our policies and practices of assessment.

Assessment is intended to recognise individual effort and achievement, and to develop a realistic impression of one's strengths and limitations. Our policy is based on high expectations for all students, encouraging students to develop their power to act independently and take on increasingly difficult tasks, developing the skills of perseverance and resilience. Students will grow to understand the importance of working hard and making a genuine effort for learning, accompanied by inspiring mentoring from teachers.

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#### ☐ PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT

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The purpose of assessment activities at St Joseph's College is to gather valid, reliable and useful information about student learning so as to monitor student achievement in relation to course outcomes. This then guides future teaching and learning opportunities and provides ongoing feedback to students to improve learning.

Students are provided with opportunities to demonstrate their learning through a variety of assessment activities as part of a continual ongoing process. The assessment activities undertaken are used to build a profile of achievement to assist teachers to determine which of *NESA's General Course Performance Descriptors* (see Reporting section below) best reflects the level of achievement of each student at the end of a course. This also assists teachers to modify processes to suitably cater for student ability and therefore improve achievement.

A range of formal and informal, smaller and larger, activities are used to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate the extent of their knowledge and understanding of course content and the skills developed from their learning. These activities are based on syllabus outcomes, a process known as Standards-referenced assessment, and includes criteria to clarify for students what aspects of learning are being assessed. It uses syllabus outcomes as key reference points for decisions about students' progress and achievement.

Most importantly, students have the capacity to grow and improve in an environment that focuses on learning goals, achieving their personal best, and mastery of skills and understandings, rather than comparative performance. We encourage students to be persistent, to feel safe in making mistakes and trying again, and to set their own explicit learning goals in collaboration with their teachers.

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## □ EVIDENCE OF LEARNING

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Teachers may plan for and gather evidence about student achievement in a variety of ways at key points during, and at the end of a unit, a term or a semester. This evidence can assist teachers in making professional judgements about a student's progress and achievement of syllabus outcomes, and provides feedback about how students can improve their learning.

Evidence may include teacher observation, questioning, peer evaluation and self-evaluation, as well as more formalised assessment activities, such as:

- gathering a range of students' work samples at various stages of an activity, including anecdotal records and students' oral, written and multimedia work samples.
  - assessing students' integrated use of knowledge, understanding and skills rather than discrete facts and skills used in isolation.
  - providing students with an opportunity to present to an identified audience either real or simulated.
  - providing students with authentic and contextual learning opportunities.
  - analysing the quality of student responses against criteria, including rubrics.
  - observing students during learning activities and participation in a group activity.
  - evaluating student achievement across time, including student portfolios.
  - facilitating student discussion or conferences.
  - reviewing student reflections about what they have learnt and how to improve.
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## □ THE IMPORTANCE OF FEEDBACK

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At SJC, teachers provide timely, specific and actionable feedback to students about their learning. Feedback is essential for students and integral to teaching, learning and assessment. Feedback enables students to recognise their strengths as well as areas for development, and to identify and plan with their teacher the next steps in their learning. Feedback occurs at any point in the teaching, learning and assessment cycle.

Assessment and feedback have a significant impact on student motivation and self-esteem, and the importance of the active involvement of students in their own learning. Research clearly indicates that the impact on student achievement is higher in circumstances where students receive quality feedback rather than marks or grades. In Years 7 to 9, students do not receive marks or grades to denote their achievement in individual formal or informal assessment activities. An overall assessment grade will be provided to parents twice a year on the College reports (see Reporting section below).

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## □ SELF-ASSESSMENT AND SELF-EVALUATION

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Gathering information about the way students think and reflect on their learning can provide teachers with information to inform future teaching and learning. To strengthen the skills of self-assessment teachers explicitly teach ways for students to interpret feedback.

Self-evaluation encourages the development of metacognitive thinking as students reflect on themselves as learners and identify their learning style and how they learn best. It also encourages students to set learning goals in relation to the outcomes, identify what they have learnt and what they still need to learn, and act on feedback.

Students undertake several opportunities to self-assess, self-monitor and make judgements about their work in relation to standards and are provided with regular opportunities to reflect on their learning.

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## □ REPORTING

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Students and parents will receive regular and scheduled school reports in two different formats.

**SEAAR (Student Engagement and Application Reports)** are provided twice a term via email to parents. Teachers allocate students a score, ranging from 1-5, based on their level of engagement, application, time management, organisational skills and completion of homework. These grades are averaged and placed against one of five performance bands. This will allow students and parents to regularly monitor engagement and application, the keystones to realising academic potential.

**Semester Reports** are provided twice a year at the end of each Semester and are available through the Schoolworx Parent Portal. Semester 1 reports are provided at the end of Term 2 and Semester 2 reports at the end of Term 4.

Grades for all courses will be allocated each Semester. Teachers make a professional on-balance judgement to decide which grade best matches the standards students have achieved, based on informal and formal assessment information they have collected, which will include observations and student performance on specific assessment activities. The Grades A to E will be consistent with the mandated performance criteria and/or outcomes as described in each NESA course syllabus. The report feedback, both formal and informal, will also provide students and parents with meaningful insights into student work habits and skills, achievements and potential.

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The General Performance Descriptors describe performance at each of five grade levels:

**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**.

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## ACADEMIC HONESTY IN YEARS 7 TO 9

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Students are expected to submit work that is their own. Pieces of work that are copied or downloaded, substantially unchanged or unacknowledged, from encyclopedias, the internet or other pieces of work are not acceptable. Also, it is not acceptable for one student to use the work of another student, share work or plagiarise the work of others. In Years 7 to 9, students will be guided by teachers to acknowledge and cite sources of information. If students are in doubt, they need to consult their teachers.

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## EXTENSIONS FOR ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

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Some tasks in a semester may have due dates. Students who require an extension of time to complete such tasks are to make this request via a parent/carer note in the College diary. The course teacher will determine if the extension required is fair and reasonable and confirm the outcome of the request in the College diary. Students must request an extension of time prior to the due date. Extensions will only be granted for valid reasons such as illness and family commitments but not in cases where the student has not applied him/herself to the task at hand.

There is an expectation that all tasks will be completed by students. Students may be expected to attend class at lunch-time, or after school, to finish non-completed work.

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