HSC assessment tasks and practical and performance exams

A guide to completing assessment tasks and practical and performance exams honestly and with confidence
Throughout your HSC, you will complete school-based assessments, which together contribute 50% of your final HSC mark for a course (except VET courses).

**HSC assessment tasks**

Assessment tasks allow you to show what you know, understand and can do in ways that may not be possible in a written examination. Tasks may include tests, written assignments, practical activities, fieldwork and projects.

When you begin your HSC course, your school will provide you with details of your assessment tasks, including weighting and due dates. Expect to complete between three and five tasks of various types for a course.

All work presented in an assessment task must be your own. Malpractice, including plagiarism, could lead to you receiving zero marks. ‘Honesty in HSC Assessment – the Standard’ (p 4) sets out the requirements for completing your HSC assessment tasks.

**Your HSC assessment marks**

When you have completed all your assessment tasks, your school will submit an assessment mark to the Board of Studies NSW for each of your courses.

The Board will moderate your assessment marks after your exams. Moderation takes account of how your assessment marks compare with marks given to students doing the same courses in a different school. For more information, visit ‘The HSC’ section of Students Online studentsonline.bos.nsw.edu.au.

Your school is not allowed to tell you your final assessment marks. However, it should tell you where you are placed in each course (your ‘rank’). You will also be able to check your assessment ranks in your Students Online account on the day of the last HSC written exam. You must tell your school immediately if you think there is something wrong.

**HSC practical and performance exams**

Some HSC courses include a practical or performance exam along with a written exam, which together make up some or all of your HSC examination mark. A practical or performance exam may require you to dance, act, sing, play a musical instrument, speak in another language, or submit a project or major work.

If you study a course with a practical or performance exam, all work presented must be your own or properly acknowledged. Malpractice, including plagiarism, could lead to you receiving zero marks.

You will also have to certify (by signing a declaration) that the work you submit to the Board for marking is your own, and acknowledge any assistance you received. Your teacher and principal will also have to say whether they believe the work is authentically yours.
Honesty in the HSC

It is important to have support from teachers, parents and friends when you are working on your assessment tasks and practical and performance exams, but you must not let them do the work for you. Cheating is absolutely unacceptable. Refer to ‘Honesty in HSC Assessment – the Standard’ (p 4).

When you begin your HSC study, you will receive a copy of the HSC Rules and Procedures guide, which you must read. You will also sign an HSC Confirmation of Entry form. By signing the form, you are telling the Board of Studies that you have read, understood and agreed to follow the rules in the guide.

You will also be required to satisfactorily complete the HSC: All My Own Work program amow.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au, or its equivalent. This program helps you to follow good principles and practices in assessments and exams.

Acknowledging your work

Your teachers can tell you exactly how they would like you to acknowledge sources. For written works, this usually will be in a bibliography or reference list. You will need to check how this should be presented for each of your assessment tasks. For some practical exams, you must keep a folio, in which you can show your influences and any practical help you received. Practical help must also be acknowledged on your certification form.

Cheating and plagiarism

Cheating, or malpractice, is dishonest behaviour by a student that gives them an unfair advantage over others. Plagiarism is when you pretend that you have written, created or developed a piece of work that someone else originated.

Some examples of cheating and plagiarism include:

- copying, buying, stealing or borrowing part or all of someone else’s work, and presenting it as your own
- using material directly from books, journals, CDs or the internet without acknowledging the source
- submitting work that contains a large and unacknowledged contribution from another person, such as a parent, coach, tutor or author
- paying someone to write or prepare material that is associated with a task, such as drafts, process diaries, logs and folios.
Honesty in HSC Assessment – the Standard

The honesty of students in completing assessment tasks, examinations and submitted works, and of teachers and others in guiding students, underpins 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 rights and responsibilities

You have the following rights in HSC assessment and exams:

- to be informed of the policies of your school and the Board of Studies
- to receive clear guidelines relating to the requirements of each task and exam
- to be told in advance of the due date for each task and exam
- to query the mark for an individual assessment task at the time it is returned to you
- to request a review of the calculation of the final school assessment mark if you believe your assessment rank is incorrect.

You have the following responsibilities in HSC assessment and exams:

- to become familiar with and follow the requirements set by your school and the rules in the HSC Rules and Procedures guide
- to complete all set tasks and exams on time, or talk to your teacher about what is required if you can’t meet a deadline
- not to engage in behaviour that could be considered cheating or malpractice, including plagiarism.

If you are unsure about anything you have read in this guide, ask a teacher, your year adviser or your careers adviser for help. Visit the Board of Studies website for a range of helpful resources and more information about the HSC.