



## HSC Assessments and Submitted Works

### Advice to Parents

This document is a short guide to assist you in supporting your child during the HSC assessment program. It provides advice on preparing for and managing assessment tasks, students' rights and responsibilities in relation to HSC assessment, and preventing cheating in HSC assessment tasks and examinations.

It covers activities undertaken as part of the school HSC assessment program, as well as any projects or works submitted as part of the HSC examination.

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#### What is assessment?

Assessment is the process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about students' learning.

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#### What is the purpose of assessment in the HSC?

The key purposes of assessment in the HSC are to:

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

A variety of assessment activities may be set for your child that will help determine the mark they receive for the HSC.

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#### How can you help to ensure that your child is adequately prepared for assessment tasks?

The Board of Studies encourages parents to take an active interest in the education of their children. You can support your son or daughter with HSC assessment tasks by encouraging them to:

- keep an up-to-date diary of all assessment activities and other commitments
- start tasks early so that they have time to ask for help if they need it
- break tasks into a series of smaller steps and set deadlines for completing each step

- record the sources of information they use, as they find them, so that acknowledgements do not become a major task at the end
- frequently save and back up any work completed on a computer. The failure of technology is generally not an acceptable excuse for the late submission of work
- keep all their earlier drafts and copies of their resources
- keep a copy of any work they submit for marking.



A wall calendar or small whiteboard in a public space like your kitchen can be useful to note due dates and help your child remember deadlines.

While it is important to support your son or daughter in their assessment work, you must not do their work for them. Remember that doing their own work will benefit their learning and their overall sense of achievement in the HSC.

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## Student rights and responsibilities

In relation to HSC assessment, students have the right to:

- be informed of the assessment policies of the school and Board of Studies
- receive clear guidelines relating to the requirements of each assessment task
- receive meaningful feedback that assists them to review their work
- query the mark for an individual task at the time of its return.

Students have the responsibility to:

- become familiar with and follow the assessment requirements set by the school
- complete all set tasks on time, or talk to teachers about what is required if a deadline can't be met
- avoid behaviour which could be considered cheating, including plagiarism, and ensure that all assessment work is their own or contains acknowledgement of the contribution of others
- follow up any concerns with tasks at the time they are marked and returned.




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## What is cheating in HSC assessment?

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

- copying, buying, stealing or borrowing another person's work, in part or in whole, and presenting it as their own
- using material directly from books, journals, CDs or the internet without acknowledging the source
- submitting work that contains a large contribution from another person, such as a parent, coach or subject expert, that is not acknowledged
- paying someone to write or prepare material that is associated with a task, such as process diaries, logs and journals.

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## Why does honesty matter in the HSC?

The Higher School Certificate is a well-respected and widely recognised educational credential. It is used by many students to help them gain employment and access further education.

Cheating is absolutely unacceptable in relation to the HSC as it undermines the integrity of the qualification. It distorts legitimate measures of a student's achievements, leading to inaccurate reporting and disadvantage to other students.



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## Why do people cheat and what are the consequences?

Some people cheat because they are under pressure. They can be under pressure because they have not organised their time and feel they have to take shortcuts to meet the course requirements. Others are under pressure because they are trying to achieve unrealistic academic goals.

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

Cheating in school assessment tasks is dealt with at school. Particularly in tasks that require work to be done at home, teachers must be satisfied that the work your son or daughter is presenting is their own, and that any help they have received is acknowledged. Schools may use procedures similar to the Board's rules, such as signed declarations of authenticity.

Cheating in school assessment tasks can have serious consequences. Students may

receive zero marks for the task and, depending on the task, they may lose that course from their HSC award. The school may refuse to certify the project as 'authentic work' before sending it to the Board of Studies for external marking. The school may also impose further disciplinary action. Apart from anything else, if a student is caught cheating they are likely to lose the trust and respect of their fellow students.

The Board of Studies treats cheating in written examinations and practical works very seriously and takes measures to deal with students who are caught. Depending on the circumstances of the case, one or more of the following may apply:

- zero marks may be awarded for part or all of the examination
- students may be required to have an interview with a 'malpractice' panel at the Board of Studies
- students may lose the award of the HSC in one or more courses
- students may damage their ability to apply for entry to TAFE or university courses or scholarships.

It is important that students have support from teachers, parents and friends when working on their assessments, but they must not let others do their work. Remember that when a student does their own work it is not only about learning, it adds to their overall sense of achievement in completing the HSC.

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## Preventing malpractice

Schools use a range of strategies to safeguard the authenticity of student responses to take-home tasks, including:

- thoroughly briefing students in relation to the requirements of each task
- allocating class time to the planning of a response to a task
- requiring students to maintain a process diary or journal to show how their response was developed
- requiring students to submit a task for consideration at critical points during its development
- asking students to submit their original drafts in addition to the final copy of their assignment
- having students deliver a short presentation or answer a series of questions about their work
- showing students appropriate ways to acknowledge where they have used the ideas or assistance of other people.





## Further help

The *Rules and Procedures for Higher School Certificate Candidates* booklet is available on the Board of Studies website at <http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/manuals/#hscrules>

The *HSC: All My Own Work* program provides an excellent guide to HSC students on the principles and practices of good scholarship. The program's modules and interactive quizzes reinforce students' knowledge and understanding of issues such as plagiarism, copyright, acknowledging sources, working with others and malpractice. The program is available in online and printable formats at <http://amow.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au>

Another good source is the *HSC Online* website run by Charles Sturt University and the Department of Education and Training. This site has special advice and links on study skills and plagiarism as well as an HSC study planner that can be downloaded from <http://hsc.csu.edu.au/study/index.htm>

For further information about school-based assessment for the HSC, please contact your local school or visit the Board of Studies website: [www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au](http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au)

