

Students



HSC Assessments and Submitted Works

Advice to Students

Higher School Certificate assessment tasks such as independent research projects and major works are likely to be among the most challenging learning you will undertake during your time at school.

This pamphlet is a short guide to help you complete your assessment tasks honestly and with confidence. 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.

In addition, there is very important information you **must read** in a booklet called *Rules and Procedures for Higher School Certificate Candidates*. The Board of Studies publishes this booklet and your school

will give you a copy. It is also on the Board's website at www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/manuals/#hscrules

When you sign your HSC Confirmation of Entry form, you are also telling the Board of Studies that you have read, understood and agreed to follow the rules in this booklet.

If you are studying a subject with a submitted major project, such as Design and Technology or English Extension 2, you will also have to certify that the work you submit to the Board for marking is your own work, and acknowledge any assistance you received. Your teacher and school principal will also have to certify they believe the work to be authentically yours.

Details of these certification processes are available separately for each subject.

A summary of student rights and responsibilities in HSC assessment

You have the right to:

- be informed of the assessment policies of your school and the Board of Studies
- receive clear guidelines relating to the requirements of each assessment task
- be told in advance of the due date for each assessment task
- query the mark for an individual task at the time it is returned to you.

You have the responsibility to:

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



Why have assessment tasks in the HSC?

HSC assessment tasks:

- help you learn, expand your knowledge and encourage you to challenge yourself
- show how much you have learnt and where you need to improve
- provide evidence that you have satisfactorily completed a course
- contribute to your final HSC mark.

Assessment tasks allow you to show what you know,

understand and can do in ways that can't always be demonstrated in a written examination. School-based assessments also give you the chance to address any weak areas in your knowledge before you sit your external exams.

What steps can you take to manage your assessment tasks?

- Be aware of due dates. Keep an up-to-date diary of all assessment activities and other commitments.
- Use a wall calendar or small whiteboard in a public space like your kitchen to note due dates if you want others in your household to help you remember deadlines.
- Start tasks early so that you can ask for help if you need it.
- Break tasks into a series of smaller steps and set deadlines for completing each step.
- Record the sources of information you use as you 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 your earlier drafts and copies of your resources.
- Keep a copy of any work you submit for marking.

What is cheating in HSC assessment?

Cheating, or malpractice, is dishonest behaviour by a student that gives them an unfair advantage over others. Most students understand what cheating in an examination means, but there are other types of behaviour that are also considered cheating.

Here are some examples of behaviour considered to be cheating:

- copying, buying, stealing or borrowing someone else's work in part or in whole, 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 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.

The examples above are generally referred to as plagiarism.





What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is when you pretend that **you** have written or created a piece of work that someone else originated. It is cheating, it is dishonest, and it will jeopardise your HSC exam results. The following are common questions about plagiarism.

Q Is it plagiarism if I copy someone else's work exactly and claim it is my own work?

A Definitely yes!

Q Is it plagiarism if I change some of the words or the order of sentences in the passage I am copying?

A Yes. You are using someone else's thoughts and words without acknowledgement.

Q Is it plagiarism if someone else proofreads my written work and changes my final draft?

A It is not plagiarism to have someone correct your spelling and grammar. However, if a parent or tutor or anyone else makes major changes to the wording of your draft, the final version is no longer your own work.

Q Is it plagiarism if I get ideas from my reading and research and use them to support and develop my own ideas, but acknowledge the original source in the work I hand in?

A No, this is not plagiarism. You have acknowledged where your ideas came from. It is legitimate to build on ideas from others provided you don't claim they are your own.

Q Is it plagiarism if I quote from a source and indicate this using quotation marks, footnotes or in other ways, and then acknowledge the source in my text and/or in my reference list or bibliography?

A This is not plagiarism. You have taken steps to show you are presenting another's words or ideas.

How do I acknowledge sources?

Your teachers can tell you exactly how they would like to see you acknowledge sources. For written works this usually will be in a reference list or bibliography. You will need to check how these should be presented for each of your projects. For some projects, such as practical works for Design and Technology, a journal must be kept to show your influences and any practical help you received (eg a professional welder to join two pieces of your work together) as well as a reference list or bibliography.

Remember that acknowledging your sources is also a good way to show your teacher the extent of the reading and research you have done.

Acknowledgements prove that you have engaged with other people's ideas in order to develop your own view.

Why does honesty matter in the HSC?

First of all, honesty is very important in all aspects of life and is an essential part of academic research. 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. The Board of Studies investigates allegations of cheating and penalises students caught cheating in exams and externally marked assessment tasks.

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. It is important to speak to your parents and teachers if you feel this kind of pressure.

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. Your teachers must be satisfied that the work you are presenting is your own, particularly in tasks that require work to be done at home, and that any help you have received has been 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. You may receive zero marks for the task and,

depending on the task, you may lose that course from your HSC award. The school may refuse to certify your 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 you are caught cheating you are likely to lose the trust and respect of your 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

- you may be required to have an interview with a 'malpractice' panel at the Board of Studies
- you may lose the award of the HSC in one or more courses
- you may damage your ability to apply for entry to TAFE or university courses or scholarships.

It is important to have support from teachers, parents and friends when you are working on your assessments, but you must not let them do your work for you. Remember that doing your own work is not only about learning, it adds to your overall sense of achievement in completing the HSC.



Further help

If you are not sure about anything you have read in this guide ask a teacher or your Year adviser for help.

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>

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

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>