

Agriculture and Horticulture

2010 ASSESSMENT REPORT

Society and Environment Learning Area

AGRICULTURE AND HORTICULTURE

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GENERAL COMMENTS

There were fewer students undertaking Agriculture and Horticulture subjects this year compared with 2009.

Teachers are reminded that they need to refer to the Learning Area Manual for all relevant information. The provision of a teacher's file of tasks, with appropriate marking schemes for assessment tasks, enables moderators to confirm results more readily. Including task sheets in both the teacher's and students' folders will also assist moderators.

A recurring problem was that teachers rounded-off weighted marks to whole numbers early in the aggregation process instead of doing this when recording the student's final subject score. It was pleasing to see that all teachers used individual weightings accurately and appropriately for the different assessment components.

A number of packages did not include one or more of the tasks required for moderation. Teachers are encouraged to update their file of student assessment tasks regularly throughout the year to ensure that all required assessment tasks are included in the moderation package.

A common reason for marks being moderated down was the lack of evidence of analysis, decision-making and interpretation in student work. This seems likely to be because insufficient opportunities were provided for students to practise these skills prior to undertaking the tasks and also lack of opportunities within the tasks themselves for students to demonstrate these skills. Teachers must ensure that marks allocation for these skills are included, as this motivates students to practise higher order cognitive skills. This is particularly important for the investigative activity, but it is necessary in all of the assessment components.

Teachers are encouraged to look carefully at required tasks to ensure that there is an appropriate task design in place for all of them.

ASSESSMENT COMPONENT 1: PRACTICAL ACTIVITY

Practical activities included both laboratory and agricultural tasks. The most successful students were given tasks that provided them with an opportunity to demonstrate higher order skills. Teachers are reminded that task design must allow students to demonstrate learning against all of the necessary criteria appropriate for this component.

ASSESSMENT COMPONENT 2: INVESTIGATIVE ACTIVITY

Investigative activities included case studies, written reports, and practical investigations with a report. A wide range of topics was offered, using resources from within the school, and in the local community. Not all teachers ensured that for case

studies the common task form included appropriate marks allocation for *evaluation and reflection*, and *recommendations*.

There is an important balance to be achieved between providing students with sufficient guidance and support to enable them to complete a successful investigation, and the provision of so much structure that it is difficult to distinguish between students and to enable an accurate assessment of their individual learning.

ASSESSMENT COMPONENT 3: COURSE WORK

Teachers provided a balance of tests, examinations, and a range of assignments for this component. Most material gave students an opportunity to demonstrate their understanding and knowledge to an appropriate depth, although a number of the tasks were not suitably demanding for Stage 2 level.

Chief Assessor
Agriculture and Horticulture