

Workplace Practices

2011 Assessment Report



Government
of South Australia

SACE
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WORKPLACE PRACTICES

2011 ASSESSMENT REPORT

OVERVIEW

Assessment reports give an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, the quality of student performance, and any relevant statistical information.

Teachers of Workplace Practices are to be commended for the work done with such a diverse group of students working across a broad range of workplace and VET (vocational education and training) options. The majority of students were enrolled in the 20-credit subject. The 10-credit subject comprised approximately 12% of total enrolments.

The majority of teachers designed their Workplace Practices program with a general focus that enabled students to undertake common tasks and align them to an industry area of interest to the individual student. A small number of teachers designed their Workplace Practices program with a specific industry focus that enabled all students to focus on the same industry area to match a local identified industry need, such as sport and recreation, or information technology.

This assessment report gives an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the 2011 Workplace Practices subject outline.

SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

The school assessment comprised:

- Assessment Type 1: Folio
- Assessment Type 2: Performance
- Assessment Type 3: Reflection.

The school assessment was subject to a moderation process. Much of the work submitted to moderators was confirmed. The most common reasons for adjustment are outlined in this report against the assessment types.

For some assessment groups, moderators noted variances to the submission requirements for Workplace Practices in the following ways:

- submission of formative as well as summative work for students. Only work for tasks listed on the approved Learning and Assessment Plan should be submitted for moderation
- an excessive number of lengthy tasks, disproportionate to the weighting and/or the guidelines for the task in the subject outline
- lack of evidence of the assessment task, as designed by the teacher to guide students' work
- omission of the approved learning and assessment plan

- student work missing without inclusion of the Variations in Materials for the Sample for Final Moderation form to assist moderators in their work.

Assessment Type 1: Folio

The majority of teachers designed folio tasks according to the prescribed topics numbered 1 to 4 in the subject outline. A small number of teachers used the flexibility of Topic 5: Negotiated Topics to design specific topics that linked to an individual student interest and/or a local identified industry need.

The more successful examples of work undertaken in the folio tasks showed evidence of students accessing primary sources. The use of primary sources helped students to make realistic links between themselves and the area/topic which they were investigating. This supported students to demonstrate reflection and evaluation (one of the assessment design criteria) at the higher levels; that is *thorough* and *insightful*, and *detailed* and *considered* reflection or evaluation.

Where task design allowed for the scope for using primary sources, and also flexibility for students to investigate workplace and industry topics/issues with relevance to them, there was increased opportunity for students to demonstrate at the higher levels of the performance standards.

Knowledge and understanding was observed to be an element of the folio tasks that could be met to the higher grade bands; that is, demonstrating *comprehensive and perceptive*, *well-informed and clear*, and a depth of knowledge while undertaking practical, as well as literacy-rich, tasks. Students were observed to perform at higher investigation and analysis performance standards when they were able to access multiple sources of information and articulate the relevance of the various ideas presented.

Assessment Type 2: Performance

The performance relates specifically to the workplace-related activities undertaken by students, with student evidence of learning in these activities assessed with reference to the assessment design criteria of knowledge and understanding, and application.

Students can undertake their workplace-related activities as either vocational learning or VET, or a combination of both. Few students undertook their performance activities as a combination, with the majority of students undertaking either:

- vocational learning in a workplace, using work experience, structured work placement, or part-time work
- VET units of competency.

A variety of folio, reflective and/or report-genre tasks were utilised to support the students in showing evidence of knowledge and understanding, and application, including journals, photo stories, and pro formas to prompt student recordings. These pro formas led to observations about the workplace or training environment, tasks they performed, why these tasks were important to this workplace or industry, and so on.

However, in some instances, VET competencies were the only evidence supplied to support students' evidence of learning. In these instances, there was insufficient

evidence of knowledge and understanding, and application at the higher grade band. For example, competency alone does not necessarily demonstrate a student's *comprehensive, perceptive or insightful knowledge and understanding* of the vocation.

Where students were given support to explain and/or expand on their knowledge and/or relevance of their work or VET learning to themselves, others, or their community (local, national and/or global), they were also provided the scope to achieve at the higher grade levels.

The occasional use of pre-2011 forms from the Work and Vocational Studies subjects did not allow evidence of student performance to align well with the assessment requirements of this subject. It is important that teachers use the forms designed to align with Workplace Practices performance standards to report on students' work.

Assessment Type 3: Reflection

For the 20-credit subject, at least two reflections are required. For the 10-credit subject, at least one reflection is required. Moderators noted that in some instances a single reflection was provided for students undertaking a 20-credit subject that also covered a single industry or workplace focus. This disadvantaged some students, as the requirements of the curriculum were not fully met. In these instances, students were not able to demonstrate their depth of knowledge and understanding as *comprehensive*, and their reflection and evaluation as *thorough and insightful*. Also in these instances, investigation and analysis did not reflect the performance standards at the higher grade bands; that is, as *perceptive and well informed*.

The more successful reflections, in both the 10-credit and 20-credit subjects, discussed multiple aspects of practices in the workplace and/or industry. For example, students took a personal approach to their learning about the workplace, thus allowing them to demonstrate reflection and varying levels of evaluation. Others took a more informative approach to an aspect of their vocation or workplace, thereby allowing a demonstration of knowledge and understanding. Students who drew on multiple sources of information as they reflected increased their ability to demonstrate investigation and analysis as *perceptive and well-informed*. Investigation and analysis at the higher levels was noted by moderators as difficult to meet for students who lacked teacher feedback and support throughout their reflections.

It was pleasing to note that many students took the opportunity to take a multimodal approach to one or both of their reflections.

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

The external assessment comprised Assessment Type 4: Investigation.

The external assessment was subject to a double-marking process where the teacher assessed each student's investigation and then submitted all student investigations to the SACE Board for an external marking process.

Assessment Type 4: Investigation

Students can undertake their investigation as either a practical investigation or an issues investigation. This year, across the 10-credit and 20-credit Workplace Practice subjects, approximately 32% of students chose a practical investigation and 68% chose an issues investigation. Of these, less than 10% were presented in a multimodal or oral format, with the majority presented in written format.

Those students that achieved at the higher levels accessed a wide range of sources, often including multiple primary sources. This allowed students to perform to a higher level when analysing the relationships between a range of work-related issues, tasks, or practices. For example, students undertaking practical investigations, such as building a stud wall or servicing a lawnmower, were able to demonstrate *perceptive* and *well-informed* investigation and analysis when they could realistically relate aspects of the task to the people involved, such as employer, trainer, or interviewee. Also, issues investigations that utilised primary sources provided students with the opportunity to meet the performance standards to a high level with scope to be *insightful* and *perceptive* when based on information that was personally relevant.

Markers noted that students demonstrated a *comprehensive* and/or *well-informed* level of knowledge and understanding of concepts, skills, and competencies relating to industry where students were able to link their practical or issues investigation to their chosen industry focus. Markers found that providing this context helped students to meet the performance standards to a higher level. For a small number of students, the link between the issue selected and their personal experiences of work or one of the folio topics undertaken (as per the subject outline requirements) was not clear. Markers ask that teachers support students to ensure that the issue investigated is not only an industry issue, but one where the students can also link the issue to their personal experiences and/or studies about the industry.

Reflection and evaluation was met to varying degrees by students as part of their investigations.

In the practical investigations, where students investigated and undertook to produce a product or replicate a task or service in the workplace, this provided the scope for students to reflect on and evaluate their own work. Students who had teacher feedback and support throughout their practical investigations were more successful at this. It was noted that practical investigations where students *imagined* how they would undertake a task did not provide opportunity for students to address this assessment design criterion beyond some reflective description and/or attempted evaluation. Additionally, students who undertook to produce a product or replicate a task or service, without providing some form of report of their planning, making, delivering, and evaluating, did not demonstrate evidence to achieve at the high or, in some instances, mid levels of the performance standards.

Issues investigations that had industry relevance and that were apparently meaningful to the students provided the best possible opportunity for meaningful reflection and evaluation and thereby allowing students the opportunity for *thorough* and *insightful* reflection and evaluation.

OPERATIONAL ADVICE

For the school assessment, as was noted under Assessment Type 2, it is important that teachers use the current forms to ensure that students have their evidence of performance aligned to the current Workplace Practices performance standards.

For the external assessment, most teachers made an effort to de-identify students' work. Markers understand the difficulty of de-identifying material to be submitted when personally reflective work is part of the subject requirement. Markers ask teachers to be particularly mindful of this with multimodal formats of evidence (for example, voice recordings where the opening statement is the student introducing themselves).

Chief Assessor
Workplace Practices