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Information Processing and Publishing

2016 Chief Assessor’s Report

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## Overview

Chief Assessors’ 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.

## School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Practical Skills

**The more successful practical skills tasks**

* demonstrated good task design that provided opportunities to include sufficient text; this led to students having more opportunities to demonstrate design and layout of text
* addressed the specific feature AE2 (evaluation of text-based products and the design process used) in at least one practical skills task, including both the process and the evaluation of the final products
* were designed around their local area
* demonstrated formatting for business documents according to Australian business practice standards, such as using the correct layout for addresses
* demonstrated the manipulation of graphics, demonstrating highly proficient use of software
* used advanced software features.

**The less successful practical skills tasks**

* were prescriptive tasks, given by the teacher, that locked students into the layout, text, and images to use, thus limiting the student’s ability to demonstrate their development and application of practical skills at the higher levels of DA3 (application of layout and design principles to the production of text-based documents or presentations)
* did not meet the requirements listed in the subject outline of producing a specified number of pages with sufficient text; for a 20‑credit subject, there must be evidence of at least eight A4 pages with sufficient text, and in a 10‑credit subject, five A4 pages with sufficient text
* did not assess specific feature AE2, even though it had been included in the teacher’s learning and assessment plan. It is important to note that assessment of AE2 is not required in every practical skills assessment, but it is recommended that it is assessed in one or two practical skills tasks.
* were often thematic tasks which restricted development and application of DA3. In many cases the same design was used for all practical skills tasks with little additional content being added. Students were often disadvantaged if opportunities for new design were not made available in each new practical skills task.
* used templates, which restricted the development and application of DA3. This was evident in the Electronic Publishing focus area when students used Adobe Muse, a widget-based drag-and-drop application that limited students’ opportunities for demonstrating achievement at the higher levels.
* centre-aligned almost all text.

*Electronic Publishing Focus Area*

**The more successful practical skills tasks**

* were easy to navigate through
* had good file management
* demonstrated the integration of a variety of software
* generated content locally and did not rely on HTML-embedded content which needed an Internet connection.

**The less successful practical skills tasks**

* left files in their native format rather than publishing them, which made it hard for moderators to view files as software was not available
* did not use layout suitable for the Internet, e.g. had text extending from one side of the page to the other, rather than more appropriately using columns
* did not undertake a spelling or grammar check
* had links that were broken
* had websites that were hard to navigate through
* showed no evidence of an index page
* had insufficient text
* contained text that was all or mostly centre-aligned
* did not provide opportunities in the task design to demonstrate DA3, e.g. movie-making, which often led to insufficient text within the product
* used templates, such as Adobe Muse.

**General information**

It is recommended that, in demonstrating achievement against specific feature AE2, students do not undertake a mini product and documentation task, as this puts undue pressure on students.

Many students were disadvantaged by having inadequate text in their products.

In the selection and application of hardware and software, the complexity of practical skills needs to increase for each successive task.

Assessment Type 2: Issues Analysis

**The more successful responses**

* adhered to the prescribed word-limit for each task
* specifically addressed and mentioned social, ethical, and/or legal issues
* included responses that cited Australian legislation and examples
* backed up responses with diagrams and statistics
* in the technical and operational understanding task, compared hardware that was comparable in price and function, which enabled analysis and evaluation of similar hardware
* used tables to list hardware features
* analysed and evaluated each of the hardware features listed in the tables.

**The less successful responses**

* were well under the prescribed word-limit
* included a table of hardware in the technical and operational understanding task, but did not analyse and evaluate data.

**General information**

Poor task design did not provide opportunities for some students to demonstrate analysis and evaluation. Issues and technical operational tasks should relate to the subject of Information Processing and Publishing rather than the general area of technology.

It is important that teachers use the current subject outline and its performance standards, so as to not disadvantage students.

It is important to provide evidence of oral presentations, e.g. a video recording of a student presenting, or a screen capture with voice recording. This helps moderators confirm the grade given by teachers.

## External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Product and Documentation

The overall standard of product and documentation assessments in 2016 was consistent with that of previous years.

**The more successful responses**

* did not use templates
* clearly labelled their documentation folder with dividers using the titles for each stage of the design process: investigating, devising, producing, and evaluating
* adhered to the documentation word-limit
* discussed in the summary of the investigating section how time was to be managed
* provided annotated samples that were from the same genre similar to their final products
* provided specific examples of each of the design principles of contrast, repetition, alignment, and proximity when annotating samples
* included in the producing section of the documentation a product word-count with the word-count listed below it; this helped markers confirm the product word-count was close to the approximate word-count
* evaluated the design process and their own products using the design principles to demonstrate AE2 in the evaluation summary
* discussed changes using the design principles when annotating work in progress
* provided detailed design plans, not thumbnail sketches — one design plan per page of product was sufficient; these plans included placement of elements on the page, such as font colours, sizes, and colour schemes
* discussed hardware and software in each of the three summaries of investigating, devising, and evaluating
* acknowledged sources using a bibliography.

**The less successful responses**

* used templates
* submitted products that were well under the recommended word-limit
* used software that they were unfamiliar with and spent time learning this software rather than focusing on the task; students should be encouraged to apply and use software that they have been taught to use in the practical skills assessment component, rather than learning to use new software in this assessment component
* exported documents in a format not suitable for print, e.g. interactive PDF, which affected the print quality of documents
* included surveys as part of the documentation, but did not refer to them in the evaluation summary when discussing how well their products communicated to the target audience
* discussed in work in progress how graphics were manipulated using software dump screens — this was not necessary as markers focus on why the changes were being made, using the language of the design principles of contrast, repetition, alignment, and proximity.
* used the allocated documentation word-count to reiterate the teacher’s instructions/design brief, rather than relating the context to their own product
* did not clearly label summaries of investigating, devising, and evaluating.

**General information**

All external assignments should have, as the first page of the documentation, the SACE Board external assignment cover sheet clearly indicating product and documentation word-counts, SACE registration number, and SACE school number. To assist markers, a task sheet should be included with the assignment for each student.

It is important to remember that the external markers should not be exposed to any information that would identify a school or a student. In some cases, student folders contained marked performance standards and a grade. These assessment decisions should not packaged and submitted with the materials.

To assist external markers, the product and documentation task should be presented in an A4 soft-covered display folder divided into sections clearly marked with the headings of: ‘Investigating’, ‘Devising’, ‘Producing’, ‘Evaluating’, and ‘Bibliography’. Three-ring folders should not be used as they are bulky and take up a lot of room in the bags. Lever-arch folders and manila folders tend to come undone with work falling out; therefore, it is advised to use A4 display folders and not A3 folders. The binding of documentation should be avoided, as often adequate margins have not been left, thus cutting off text or part of the final product.

Due to the significant amount of handling of external assignments, it is imperative that students place their SACE registration number and SACE school number on every page of the documentation and also on any CDs, DVDs, or USB drives.

In annotating samples, some students used sticky notes that were placed over the samples. This made it hard for markers to see what the student was referring to without peeling off the sticky note. Another way to display annotations is to write them directly under the sample on the same page. Samples being annotated should not be smaller than A5 in size. Thumbnail images of samples are too small for markers to see what the student is referring to.

To help markers determine which is the final product, it is advisable to include a page divider in the ‘Producing’ section of the documentation labelled ‘Final Product’.

Consideration should be given to the appropriateness of images and text used in student work.

## Operational Advice

School assessment tasks are set and marked by teachers. Teachers’ assessment decisions are reviewed by moderators. Teacher grades/marks should be evident on all student school assessment work.

For moderation, teachers should ensure that each student has an individual A4 display folder containing all work that the student completed for the school assessment, with a cover sheet clearly indicating the grade using the performance standards.

Packaging of student materials for final moderation must include all tasks from Assessment Type 1: Practical Skills and Assessment Type 2: Issues Analysis.

If a full set of student materials for moderation is not available, then the teacher should fill out the Variations — Moderation Materials form. Examples of why there may be variations in the materials for the sample for final moderation include:

* special provisions have been granted by the school to a student or students
* a breach of rules in an assessment type or types has been identified in the work of a student
* student materials for the nominated sample are missing after they have been assessed by the teacher.

When submitting the nominated sample, teachers must also include in a teacher folder:

* an approved learning and assessment plan, and an addendum, if applicable
* a complete set of task sheets for Assessment Type 1: Practical Skills and Assessment Type 2: Issues Analysis, according to the approved learning and assessment plan
* a Variations — Moderation Materials form, if applicable.

A labelled CD, DVD, or USB drive of student work containing all electronic products should be included if Electronic Publishing is one of the focus areas.

For each of the issues and technical operational tasks, the word-count must be written on each task.

## General Comments

Courses in which assessments were balanced between the two selected focus areas enabled students to better develop and display their skills in both areas.

Teachers need to be commended in their continuing work in understanding and applying the performance standards. It is important to remember that if the majority of a grade sits in one particular band, with some in another, for example, mostly A with some B, then the result is an A–. As a guide to evidence of calculating grades, the following example is provided:

C+ specific features predominantly in the C grade with evidence of some B

C specific features predominantly in the C grade

C– specific features predominantly in the C grade with evidence of some D.

Actual text needs to be used in products, rather than filler text, such as ‘Lorem ipsum’. The use of filler text does not allow students to achieve in the higher levels of DA3 or provide evidence of specific features DA1 or DA2. It is impossible to check for spelling and grammatical errors when filler text has been used.

Student work from the three print-based focus areas (Desktop Publishing, Business Documents, and Personal Documents) needs to be printed. Submission of products from these areas in an electronic format or as a photograph of the work makes it hard for the marker to mark the work or for the moderator to confirm the grade.

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Chief Assessor