

# ST VINCENT'S COLLEGE



# ASSESSMENT POLICY

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## ASSESSMENT POLICY

St Vincent's College is a Mary Aikenhead Ministry in the tradition of the Sisters of Charity. We are called to develop in each member of our community a contemporary understanding and application of the charism of Mary Aikenhead and the spirituality of the Sisters of Charity, and the Mary Aikenhead Ministries' mission, vision and values of justice, love compassion and hope. The current strategic vision for St Vincent's College is to be a dynamic learning community which cherishes its Catholic heritage. The College fosters creativity, discernment and leadership in their development of students to be courageous women of action.

### PRINCIPLES OF QUALITY ASSESSMENT AT ST VINCENT'S COLLEGE

This Assessment Policy is based upon the Assessment Guidelines and Requirements of the NESA and is underpinned by the St Vincent's College Learning Framework. The following principles of Assessment are evidence-based and support the *Advice on Assessment from NESA*, as well as, **The College Learning Framework**.



The following principles provide a basis upon which decisions about quality assessment practices for all our students are built.

Assessment at St Vincent's College:

- is relevant, purposeful and engaging
- is valid, reliable and measurable against student outcomes
- aligns with our Learning Framework as it *informs, transforms and empowers* student learning
- is fair and accessible, enabling all students' an opportunity to demonstrate their learning
- incorporates *reasonable adjustments* for our diverse learners to demonstrate their learning
- provides evidence that accurately represents a student's knowledge, understanding and skills
- enables students to demonstrate their learning in a range of different contexts and modes
- enables teachers to provide effective feedback (within two weeks of the activity date, where practicable) in order to empower students to reflect on their work and set goals to assist their learning.

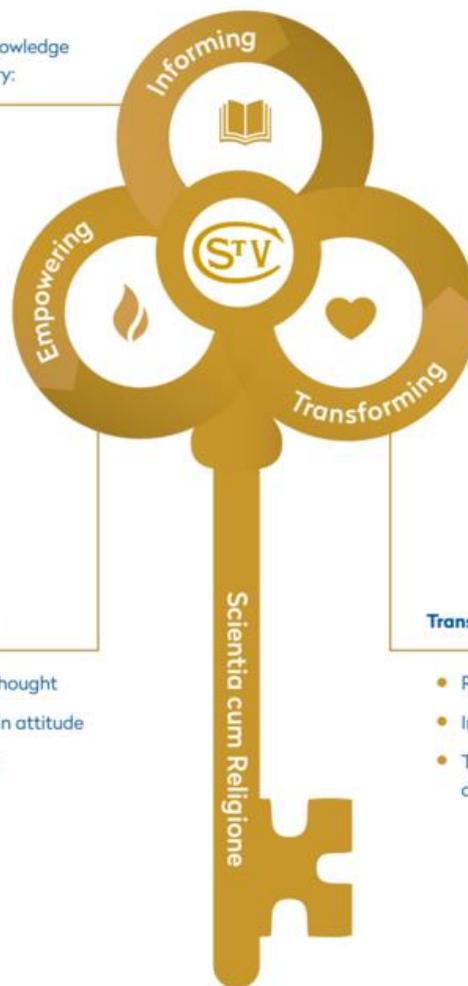


# St Vincent's College Learning Framework

A St Vincent's College graduate is a courageous woman of action empowered to be independent in thought, compassionate in attitude and confident to act.

**Informing** with the essential knowledge and core skills of the 21st century:

- Critical thinking
- Creativity
- Collaboration



**Empowering** to be:

- Independent in thought
- Compassionate in attitude
- Confident to act

**Transforming** by a culture of:

- Right relationships
- Immersion into social justice experiences
- The practices of reflection and discernment

Scientia cum Religione – our College Motto celebrates the strength of education in the Catholic tradition: knowledge combined with religion.

## TYPES OF ASSESSMENT AT ST VINCENT'S COLLEGE

The NSW syllabuses promote an integrated approach to teaching, learning and assessment. 'Assessment for learning', 'assessment as learning' and 'assessment of learning' are approaches that can be used individually or together, formally or informally, to gather evidence about student achievement and to grow student learning.

### (i) Assessment for Learning

*Assessment for learning* involves teachers using evidence about students' knowledge, understanding and skills to inform their teaching. Sometimes referred to as 'formative assessment', it usually occurs throughout the teaching and learning process to clarify student learning and understanding.

*Assessment for learning:*

- reflects a view of learning in which assessment helps students learn better, rather than just achieve a better mark
- involves formal and informal assessment activities as part of learning and to inform the planning of future learning
- includes clear goals for the learning activity
- provides effective feedback that motivates the learner and can lead to improvement
- reflects a belief that all students can improve
- encourages self-assessment and peer assessment as part of the regular classroom routines
- involves teachers, students and parents reflecting on evidence
- is inclusive of all learners.

### (ii) Assessment as Learning

*Assessment as learning* occurs when students are their own assessors. Students monitor their own learning, ask questions and use a range of strategies to decide what they know and can do, and how to use assessment for new learning.

*Assessment as learning:*

- encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning
- requires students to ask questions about their learning
- involves teachers and students creating learning goals to encourage growth and development
- provides ways for students to use formal and informal feedback and self-assessment to help them understand the next steps in learning
- encourages peer assessment, self-assessment and reflection.

### (iii) Assessment of Learning

*Assessment of learning* assists teachers in using evidence of student learning to assess achievement against outcomes and standards. Sometimes referred to as 'summative assessment', it usually occurs at defined key points during a unit of work or at the end of a unit, term or semester, and may be used to rank or grade students. The effectiveness of *assessment of learning* for grading or ranking, depends on the validity and reliability of activities. Its effectiveness as an opportunity for learning depends on the nature and quality of the feedback.

*Assessment of learning:*

- is used to plan future learning goals and pathways for students
- provides evidence of achievement to the wider community, including parents, educators, the students themselves and outside groups
- provides a transparent interpretation across all audiences.

## ADJUSTMENTS FOR STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY

At St Vincent's College, adjustments are made to teaching, learning and assessment practices for students with a disability, so that they are not placed at a disadvantage or treated less favourably for a reason relating to their disability. These adjustments, as required by the Disability Standards for Education, are additional to, or otherwise different from, provisions normally available. To access these special educational provisions, students would have impairment in at least one of the following six areas: 1. Intellectual 2. Mental Health 3. Neurological 4. Physical 5. Sensory 6. Learning Disability including Dyslexia and ADHD (the six broad categories of disability as cited by the Disability Discrimination Act).

The adjustments are measures or actions taken in relation to teaching, learning and assessment that enable a student with specific learning needs to access syllabus outcomes and content on 'the same basis' as their peers. In relation to teaching and learning the adjustment could be providing a scaffold to accompany multi-step or complex instructions. In relation to assessment, 'reasonable adjustments' could be:

- adjustments to the assessment process (otherwise known as Disability Provisions). Some examples include additional time, rest breaks, the use of a reader and/or scribe or specific technology.
- adjustments to assessment activities. Some examples include rephrasing questions, using simplified language or alternative formats for questions.
- alternative formats for responses. Some examples include writing in point form instead of essays, scaffolded structured responses, short objective questions or multimedia presentations.

The types of adjustments made will vary, based on the needs of individual students. Further examples of adjustments to assessment for students with special education needs and information on assessment for students undertaking *Life Skills*, can be found in the appendix.

Adjustments to teaching, learning and assessment practices for students with a disability are made in consultation with the student and their family, are regularly reviewed and can be changed. A formal application to the Learning Support Coordinator, with supporting documentation, is necessary before any adjustment to be considered. This documentation may include but is not limited to medical reports, reports from Allied Health professionals or results obtained from psychometric or other specialised educational testing. The decision about the most appropriate delivery of these special educational provisions is made by the Learning Support Coordinator in consultation with the Director of Teaching and Learning. Once the application has been approved, the Diverse Learning Team requires copies of notifications (adjusted and non-adjusted) at least *one week prior* to distribution of the Assessment Activity Notification (adjusted and non-adjusted) to assist teachers to ensure the activity is reliable and accessible for all students *on a same basis* nature.

## DISABILITY PROVISIONS

Parents/Carers of students with a disability should apply to the Learning Support Coordinator for Disability Provisions at the beginning of the academic year. To apply for Disability Provisions, Parents/Carers need to submit in writing their request for provisions with documented support of their disability. Disability Provisions are only granted in formal examination blocks. Applications are only approved in accordance with NESA regulations and if successful, will take effect from the very next term from when the application is considered. An application for a review of decision is to be in writing and submitted to the Learning Support Coordinator one week after the decision was granted by NESA. Grounds for Disability Provision through NESA include: physical disability, learning disability, mental and physical health complications. The student's application will be assessed by the Learning Support Coordinator and the Director of Teaching and Learning.

## ACCELERATED MATHEMATICS POLICY

Students enrolled in an Accelerated Mathematics course, wherever possible, will be considered carefully in the preparation of College examination timetables so that the scheduling of mandatory examinations for the Accelerated Mathematics course does not put undue pressure on the student's current cohort examination schedule.

Wherever possible, there will be some spacing between these examinations, but in circumstances where this is unavoidable, some compensatory time for supervised study at the College, for a portion of a school day, will be accommodated.

## EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

Teacher feedback about student learning is essential for students to grow their learning and integral to teaching, learning and assessment practice.

### Feedback can clarify for students:

- how their knowledge, understanding and skills are developing in relation to the syllabus outcomes and content being addressed
- how to *inform, transform and empower* their learning. Feedback enables students to recognise their strengths, as well as, their areas for development in order to identify and plan with their teacher the next steps in their learning growth.

### Feedback allows students to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills and:

- is **SMART** - **S**pecific/ **M**easurable/ **A**ttainable/ **R**ealistic and **T**imely
- is constructive and provides meaningful information to students about their learning in a variety of forms
- focuses on the learning outcomes and corrects misunderstandings
- identifies and reinforces students' strengths
- provides information about how students can grow their learning, through clear marking criteria
- facilitates the development of, and provides opportunities for, self-assessment and reflection during the learning process
- informs future teaching and learning opportunities for both the teacher and the student.

## ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

All students will receive access to this Assessment Policy, which outlines their rights and responsibilities. Students will receive a written notification of all upcoming Assessment Activities by email approximately *three-weeks prior* to an Assessment due date. Assessment Handbooks for Years 7-11 will be distributed to students at the beginning of each academic year. Assessment Handbooks for Year 12 will be distributed at the beginning of the HSC course in Term 4 of Year 11, marking the transition from the Year 11 to the Year 12 (HSC) course.

Specific activity details will be distributed to students as determined appropriate by the relevant class teacher/Head of Department/Director of Teaching and Learning. All Assessment Activities are emailed directly to students on the same day, however, students who are absent at the time the Assessment Activity was notified **MUST** see their class teacher immediately on returning to school, to clarify any information/interpretations pertaining to the activity.

## ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS

Students are entitled to:

1. be informed of the policies of the school and NESAs in relation to their Assessment Schedules.
2. adequate written notice of an activity being due or any alteration to the nature or timing of the activity.
  - **All activity notifications are aimed to be issued three weeks prior to the assessment due date.**
3. be informed on the nature and purpose of assessment.
4. receive clear guidelines relating to the requirements of each assessment activity including information regarding the syllabus outcomes targeted by the activity.
5. receive information regarding the criteria by which the activity will be assessed.
6. have work assessed and returned to them in a timely manner.
  - **All marking is aimed to be returned within a two-week turnaround time frame.**

7. receive meaningful feedback that assists students to review their work.
8. expect a consistent interpretation and application of the College's Assessment Policy
9. request a review of the calculation of the final assessment mark to qualify that the final assessment rank is incorrect.
10. students are given detailed feedback on all activities, however, they do have the opportunity to discuss the marking criteria and *confirm their marks immediately after each* assessment activity is returned. **All confirmed student marks per Assessment Activity are available on the Student Portal (Edumate)** immediately after marking is returned to the student.

## SUBMISSION OF ACTIVITIES

- All *hand-in* activities are to be submitted before 8:40am to the teacher-in-charge of the collection **as indicated on the Assessment notification. Handing in an activity AFTER this time (8:40am) will constitute a late penalty (see Penalties for Late Submission of Assessment Activities).**
- Any electronic submission of an activity must comply with the specifications of the activity and must be time stamped in a manner that allows the teacher to establish a submission time and date.
- **Students involved in College activities** (Music rehearsals, excursions, band etc) **ARE NOT** exempt from the activity submission requirements detailed in this section.
- **Students involved in extracurricular activities** (Music/Drama/Debating rehearsals etc) **ARE NOT** exempt from the activity submission requirements detailed in this section. Students should retain an electronic copy of their submission on their personal device.
- **Students attending before school classes ARE NOT** exempt from the activity submission requirements detailed in this section.
- Failure to attend an in-class activity or failure to hand an activity in on the due date without relevant documentation (ie Letter from Parent/Carer - Years 7-9 / Medical Certificate - Years 10-12) may result in a penalty.

## THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

- **Students should always save any work completed at school in their personal storage area on their personal device or on a USB.** Additionally, students have access to 1GTB of cloud storage through their College login. If any student wishes to work on a digital resource at home, it must also be saved to a USB storage device or emailed to the student using the College email address. Note: Email is only capable of transferring files no greater than 25 megabytes.
- It is important that students follow responsible practices in their use of technology to complete assessment activities by:
  1. maintaining reliable, updated back-up copies
  2. retaining printed draft copies
  3. allowing adequate time to troubleshoot potential failures of technology.
- **Failure of ICT equipment will not be accepted as an excuse for non-submission of an Assessment activity** (see College Diary p24).

## LATE SUBMISSION

Students who are absent on the due date **MUST** submit the activity immediately upon their arrival to the College or the *very next day* they attend school to the appropriate Head of Department, even if there is NO scheduled lesson on that day. A signed note from parent/carers (Years 7-9) / Medical Certificate (Years 10-12) must accompany this late submission.

## EXTENSIONS UNDER EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The Director of Teaching and Learning may grant an extension in exceptional circumstances in consultation with the Head of Department. A decision will be made based on the evidence the students can provide with regards to her assessment work to date, for example, it may be deemed necessary for a student in practical subjects to submit all work completed, and the Head of Department in consultation with the Director of Teaching and Learning will assess this partial submission and an estimate based on previous or subsequent work may be provided. Medical Certificates or other documentation from an external medical provider supporting the request may be required.

## ILLNESS/MISADVENTURE

### Unforeseeable Absence from an Assessment Activity

Ensuring the integrity of the assessment process is of paramount importance to all teaching staff at the College to maintain equity and fairness to all of our students. Therefore, a student who is absent from, or unable to, complete a particular activity or submit an activity, is required to carry out the following procedures:

**STEP 1:** Notify Student Services before 8.30am on the morning of the activity or activity due-by date (Tel: 9361 2404 or email: [collegesecretary@stvincents.nsw.edu.au](mailto:collegesecretary@stvincents.nsw.edu.au)). Student Services is to notify Director of Teaching and Learning of the student's absence. For submissions, students should email their work directly to their teacher. For submissions with a practical component, students should email all text-based material to their teacher.

**STEP 2:** Immediately upon return to the College after illness, students must obtain an *Illness/Misadventure Application Form* from Student Services, complete it and attach the relevant documentation, and submit to the Head of Department *on the same day*.

### YEARS 10-12

- A **medical certificate covering the day of the assessment activity** and/or **absence immediately before an assessment activity** must accompany this application for all students in Years 10-12.
- The Head of Department in consultation with the Director of Teaching and Learning may arrange a time for a 'make-up' activity to be completed. Documentation provided must cover all days absent from the College up to and including the activity date OR from the activity date until the day before returning to College.
- Undocumented absence beyond this/these dates may result in a zero determination.
- In some instances, an estimate, determined at each reporting stage may be deemed necessary where an alternate activity is not possible to be offered.

### YEARS 7-9

- A **signed and dated letter from a parent/carer** is to be given to the Head of Department indicating the reason why a student has missed an assessment activity.
- The Head of Department in consultation with the Director of Teaching and Learning may arrange a time for a 'make-up' activity to be completed.
- Documentation provided must cover all days absent from the College up to and including the activity date OR from the activity date until the day before returning to the College.
- Undocumented absence beyond this/these dates may result in a zero determination.

**STEP 3:** The Director of Teaching and Learning in consultation with Head of Department, will consider each application on a case by case basis and organise either a make-up activity or an estimate to be issued at the end of the course, depending on the circumstances of the illness/misadventure application.

### ABSENCE THE DAY BEFORE AN ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

All students are required to submit a **Medical Certificate** to the respective Head of Department, *covering any absence missed on the day of or consecutive days prior to an assessment activity being due*. In the event of a student's unexplained absence (eg unsupported by a medical certificate) from the College on the day or any consecutive days immediately prior to an activity, the student may be deemed to have an unfair advantage in the completion of the assessment activity and a zero result may be awarded. This is particularly important with regard to whole College events such as the College Athletics Carnival or St Vincent's Day. Such days are compulsory College functions and as such, absences from a College event the day prior to an assessment may result in a zero.

### APPROVED CERTIFICATE OF EXTENDED LEAVE/EXEMPTION FROM ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL

Any student who has been granted approved extended leave from the College, must inform the Head of Department for any assessment activity affected by the leave period of absence. Wherever possible,

but only where possible, an alternate activity or alternate date for submission may be arranged for the student in consultation with the Head of Department and the Director of Teaching and Learning.

## HSC STUDENTS

Any Trial HSC Examination Paper missed through absence will require an Illness/Misadventure application and will be followed by an alternate examination being assigned to the student. Final student ranks will be published on the Year 12 Final Reports.

## PENALTIES FOR LATE SUBMISSION OF ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

The following penalties apply in the case of an Assessment Activity not being submitted on time and where there is no acceptable supporting documentation.

### YEARS 7-9

- **ONE day late** = Deduction of 10% of the total mark awarded
- **TWO days late** = Deduction of subsequent 10% of the total mark awarded
- **MORE THAN THREE days late** = A zero may be awarded.

The assessment activity must still be submitted which will be marked and returned to the student with feedback. The mark, however, may not contribute to the aggregated assessment mark in that subject or course if *more than three lessons late*. Failure to submit the activity may lead to an 'N' determination. In this case, parents will be notified in writing by the Director of Teaching and Learning.

### YEARS 10-12

- **ONE DAY LATE** = Deduction of 50% of the total mark awarded
- **TWO or MORE DAYS LATE** = a zero may be awarded.

The assessment activity must still be submitted which will be marked and returned to the student with feedback. The mark, however, may not contribute to the aggregated assessment mark in that subject or course if *more than three lessons late*. Failure to submit the activity may lead to an 'N' determination. In this case, parents will be notified in writing by the Director of Teaching and Learning.

## WHAT IS MALPRACTICE?

**Malpractice is any activity that allows a student to gain an unfair advantage over other students.**

It includes but is not limited to:

- using material directly from books, journals or the internet without reference to the source
- building on the ideas of another person without reference to the source
- buying, borrowing or copying another person's work and presenting it as their own
- submitting work to which another person, such as a parent, coach or subject expert, has contributed substantially
- using words, ideas, designs or the workmanship of others in practical and performance activities without appropriate acknowledgement
- paying someone to write or prepare material
- breaching College examination rules
- using non-approved aids during an assessment activity including any electronic device other than a NESAs approved calculator, which can be used to store information
- contriving false explanations to explain work not handed in by the due date
- false claims or false documentation on Illness/Misadventure applications.
- assisting another student to engage in malpractice.

## PENALTIES FOR NON-AUTHENTIC WORK OR OTHER MALPRACTICE

- All work submitted, whether as part of an assignment or test, must be solely completed by the student.

- All research assignments MUST include a reference list. Criteria for referencing can be found in the College Diary (Page 32). If references are NOT provided, students will be required to provide evidence that the work is their own.

### **MALPRACTICE IN EXAMINATIONS AND EXAMINATION-TYPE ACTIVITIES**

All Assessment Activities are conducted under conditions set by the College, and are based on HSC and Examination Rules and Procedures as specified by NESA. Each instance of a breach of rules is treated separately and penalties may be imposed as a result.

#### **NOTES:**

- If a student is found to have notes, texts or summaries of the subject being examined with her during an examination (whether she uses them or not) it will be assumed that they were for the purpose of using during the examination and she may be awarded a zero for that activity.
- Students who accidentally take notes, texts etc into an examination-type activity must report this to the supervising teacher immediately they become aware of the fact. Students will be provided with reminders about these breaches prior to the commencement of each examination.

### **MOBILE PHONES AND SMARTWATCHES**

- Students are NOT permitted to take mobile phones or smart watches into an examination.
- Students will be asked to place these devices at the front of the College Hall or classroom, prior to commencement of the examination.
- Any student who is found to have taken a mobile phone into an examination will be breaching examination rules and therefore may receive a zero.

### **SATISFACTORY COMPLETION OF A COURSE**

#### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

All students must provide sufficient evidence through their engagement in class and in informal and formal tests that they have:

1. followed the course developed or endorsed by NESA
2. applied themselves with diligence and sustained effort to the set activities and experiences provided in the course by the school and
3. achieved some or all of the course outcomes.

#### **WARNINGS**

If a student is at risk of non-completion of course requirements in any course, the Director of Teaching and Learning in consultation with the Principal, will advise the student and the parents in writing:

1. of the activities and/or actions to be undertaken in time for the problem to be corrected
2. of the request from the student/parent to provide the College with written acknowledgement of the warning
3. to retain copies of the warning notice(s) and other relevant documentation.

#### **'N' DETERMINATIONS**

- Any student who has not complied with the requirements for satisfactory completion of a course when assessment marks are being finalised will be issued with an 'N' determination by the Principal, who will in turn advise NESA.
- The consequences of an 'N' determination in any course are that the course will indicate the 'N' determination on the Record of Student Achievement *ROSA* for the completion of Stages 5 and 6.
- Students may seek a school review of an 'N' determination in a course. If the College declines the review, the student may appeal to NESA directly.