



Forest Lake SHS

Year 10, 11 and 12 – Learning to Assessment Policy

Frequently Asked Questions That Relate to All Subjects

Q – Why is it called a “Learning to Assessment” policy?

A – In the past, there has been a “blurring” of the role of assessment tasks which has resulted in completing a task sometimes being the focus of the learning process. The QCE system (Years 11 and 12) has only four assessment tasks used to generate a final result in each subject. These tasks will be the culmination of an extensive body of learning and will require deep understanding of the subject material. This policy explains this clearly to ensure students and their families understand that successful task completion can only happen after effective learning has occurred. Doing an assignment, the night before or cramming for an exam will not cut it.

Q – Why is Year 10 included in the QCE policy at Forest Lake?

A – While Year 10 students do not directly study QCE subjects, it is important they develop the learning capabilities required to be successful in Year 11. This means “learning how to learn” at the senior level in the initial “low stakes” environment of Year 10 to improve the chances of academic success from the start of Year 11. We know that students who develop effective learning routines not only learn more effectively but do it with reduced stress and anxiety. Through implementing this policy in Year 10, students will develop a clear understanding of how they move from effective learning to showing what they know and can do in assessment tasks. By Year 12, students will have developed solid routines that will support them to reach their true potential across all subjects.

Q – What is meant by students having to complete tasks to a level to reach their potential?

A – For some students, “passing” a subject is the goal and if that is achieved through solid study habits and hard work then one might consider that student has reached their potential. For other students, “passing” a subject can be done in “cruise mode”. In other words, the subject is passed with minimal learning effort and the “C” result potentially should be a “B” or an “A”. At Forest Lake SHS, we believe that accepting Year 11 and 12 students working in “cruise mode” is doing them a disservice and not preparing them for the challenges they will face. Students will be supported to reach their potential, regardless of their chosen pathway, to ensure options after leaving school will be as numerous as possible.

Another factor in the QCE is the developmental nature of the subjects. Students in “cruise mode” may “pass” their subjects in Units 1 and 2 but not be prepared for the increased difficulty in Units 3 and 4. In the QCE, Units 3 and 4 are a package. A student must get at least a C overall across both units to get the two credit points. In a worst case scenario, a student in “cruise mode” on six (6) C’s after Unit 2 might suddenly find themselves at the end of Unit 4 with three (3) C’s and three (3) D’s because they have slipped. It means that not only are the three credit points from Unit 3 lost but so are the three credit points from Unit 4, meaning six (6) in total. That situation could result in the student needing to transition out of high school to an alternate plan such as TAFE with the QCE to be obtained in later years.

“Cruise mode” will not be accepted because the cost of slipping is simply too high a price to pay.

Q – What is the significance of “home study”?

A – Home study is a critical part of the “learning” component in this policy and it is based on current brain science research. For learning to occur, key content and concepts need to be re-visited multiple times to move them to the long term storage area of the brain. The first part of “home study” is to review the four subjects done that day as part of the re-visiting process to “concrete” in the new learning.

This should involve students re-writing concepts in their own words, checking they understand what was covered and organising their notes. The next step is to identify anything they don't understand and deciding on how to work it out. This could involve asking the teacher the next day or even going on “YouTube” to find out! Home study also includes set homework and work needed on assignments to ensure they aren't done the night before.

Q – Why can students only submit one draft of an assignment to their teacher?

A – The QCE system is focussed on equitable opportunities for all students and also requires schools to ensure student work is authentic and their own work. To this end, teachers will only provide feedback on one “formal” draft submission. It is expected that this “formal” draft will be very close to the final version. In the lead up to this, however, teachers will also be providing a number of “checkpoints” along the way to provide feedback to students on their progress.

These checkpoints will also allow teachers to confirm the student is completing the task themselves and provide evidence in case there is a mishap prior to submission. It is important to note that teachers will also be using checkpoints in the learning process before the task is issued to check for student understanding and learning progress.

Q – Why is the length of a task being so strictly enforced?

A – The QCE system requires tasks for subjects in Units 3 and 4 to be “endorsed” before they can be used. This is to ensure that the tasks are of a good enough quality to allow all students to achieve to the highest level. This includes ensuring the task can be addressed to the highest level within the set response length. After these tasks are completed, the QCAA will nominate a number of samples from each subject to be submitted for a process called “confirmation”.

In this process, the QCAA cross checks the marks awarded by the school and if they agree the results are confirmed. However, if a sample significantly exceeds the response length, the excess part of the response will not be used which may result in the result being downgraded or causing the need for more samples to be sent in. Students will be regularly reminded about being within response lengths to ensure they get full credit for their learning.

Q – What happens when there is a problem meeting an assessment deadline?

A – Full details are in the policy but the essential thing to remember is early intervention and regular communication. When there is a problem students and families are advised to complete an Access Arrangement and Reasonable Adjustment (AARA) application and submit it as soon as possible. The form is a writable PDF form on the school website and contains options for how to submit the application.

This application will be assessed by a Deputy Principal based on the evidence provided.

If the application is approved it will be passed on to the relevant Head of Department who will work with the class teacher and the student to decide what the adjustment will be. It is important to note that adjustments will be made ensuring fairness for all. This means that a student who has not met regular checkpoints and is well behind when they apply for a variation will only be given extra time based on where they should have been up to. If a student is behind due to other reasons then the application should have been made earlier. Again, early intervention and good communication are the keys.

Q – Why is the process so formal?

A – The process is formal to ensure it is transparent and fair. At Forest Lake, we have streamlined the process as much as possible while still ensuring we get the information needed to support students later in the course of study if they require assistance. Without a strong formal process in place, students could find themselves in the position of requiring a QCAA approved Access Arrangement or Reasonable Adjustment (AARA) and it not being approved because of a lack of evidence in previous AARA's. Following this process will help us to help you.

Q – What sort of reasons are not acceptable to miss an assessment deadline?

A – The following is directly from the QCAA Handbook and is not exhaustive:

- All assessment tasks must be completed at the set time on the set day.
- Family holidays and non-urgent appointments such as a routine dental check-up or driving licence test are not considered acceptable reasons for missing an assessment date.
- Technical issues are not acceptable for late or non-completion of an assessment task.
- Being off-campus for a scheduled event eg TAFE is not an acceptable reason for missing an assessment date.

Q – What sort of evidence is required to support an AARA application?

A – In most cases, issues around assessment dates will be health related.

For short term, one off issues, a medical certificate is required. The medical certificate must:

- State what the illness or injury actually is.
- Provide a time frame of the start of the illness and injury and likely recovery time.

For longer term and ongoing issues the school may request a medical statement. A template for the statement will be on the school website. A health professional may wish to write their own statement. If this is the case, it must include:

- Diagnosis
- Date of diagnosis
- Date of occurrence/onset
- Brief history of the student's disability, impairment and/or medical condition including symptoms.
- Is the student currently receiving treatment?
- Comment on the probable effect of this disability, impairment and/or medical condition on this student's capacity to complete timed assessment.
- Comment on how the disability, impairment and/or medical condition would affect this student's daily functioning in the classroom.
- Professional recommendations for assessment adjustments.

Evidence for long term and ongoing conditions cannot be more than six (6) months old. This will be very relevant for issues around mental health. Families are advised to work closely with a Guidance Officer if there is a long term history of issues such as anxiety and depression.

All other issues like bereavement or the impact of a natural disaster must go through a Guidance Officer.

Q – Year 12 External Assessment Program

A – Every General subject concludes with an external assessment task that will be the same for all students in the state studying that subject and done at the same time. This will occur in November during a three and a half week exam block.

Students doing an Applied subject/s or VET course/s will not be required to do an external task at this time but may be called in to complete their course requirements.

After previous External Assessment programs, we know it is in the best interest of students, unless completely medically unfit, to sit external assessment if possible. If a student feels a medical/other condition affected their performance on an external task, they have seven days to apply for an AARA. The QCAA will then compile a mark for the subject based on both having the external task in the result and not having it in the result. The student will be awarded the best result of the two options meaning sitting all external tasks is always the best option.

Q – What if we have any further questions?

A – As stated earlier, the key to the QCE system is timely, open and honest communication. Subject specific questions should initially go through the subject teacher with possible support from a Head of Department. Broader questions may be directed to the relevant year level Deputy Principal and Guidance Officer.