



Our Ref: CS/0267; CS/0392

To the Principal

Principals and English teachers have advised me of continuing levels of anxiety and uncertainty among Year 12 English teachers in relation to the assessment of their students in 2007.

The major issues seem to be:

- weighting of outcomes
- implications of using different assessment methods
- submission of numerical assessments and
- detail about the examination.

The following clarification is provided. Please discuss these points with your English teachers and contact me directly if further information is required.

Weighting of outcomes

To help ensure comparability of assessments, the course outcomes must have equal weighting. This has been emphasised in the English professional development and should be widely understood by English teachers. Please confirm with your English teachers that this is the case in your school. Schools using the composite assessment method need to ensure that their assessment tasks and the combination of results from them satisfy this requirement.

Implications of using different assessment methods

As in the past, schools need to ensure the correct rank order and relative separation in the school assessment marks submitted for all students who sit the examination. The Curriculum Council will ensure comparability of these marks through the statistical moderation procedure that has been applied since the TEE was introduced. This procedure brings all school assessment marks onto a common scale irrespective of the assessment methods used. Within a school, or group of schools in a small group moderation partnership, it is essential that students' results are placed on the same scale. In the past, teachers have achieved this through common mid-year and end-of-year exams, some common assessments and/or common marking activities. I expect that these practices will continue.

The General Achievement Test (GAT) analysis will support schools in making assessments using levels and bands in 2007. GAT results will be in schools early in September and will help schools make judgements about their students' achievement levels relative to others state-wide. It will also give schools information about the spread of marks they may expect from their students based on this test.

Differences in the interpretation of the course standards are dealt with by consensus moderation.

Submission of level and band numerical assessments

A level and band must be submitted for all Year 12 students in 2007.

In addition, a mark out of 100 is required for each unit for all students completing stage 2 and 3 units in Year 12. These marks must be on a common scale.

For schools using the direct and indirect assessment methods the 25 point scale will allow the generation of these marks

(see http://newwace.curriculum.wa.edu.au/pages/info_to_schools_archive.asp)

It is important that common marking, common tasks and/or common examinations are used to help establish internal comparability, irrespective of the assessment method used.

School assessment marks are not required for students studying stage 1 units unless they are intending to sit the examination. In this case, they must also be on the common scale used for the other students at the school who are studying stage 2 and 3 units. It is anticipated that there will be very few students studying stage 1 units who intend to sit the examination. A level and band is required for students in stage 1 units.

If schools do not feel confident in being able to assess students from stage 1 units on the same scale as those from stage 2 and 3 units then they may request that these students sit the WACE examinations as private candidates.

Examinations

The examination structure for 2007 will be the same as the last sample examination paper. Council will advise schools of any further clarification about the 2007 examination in week 1 of term 2 after a meeting with the newly formed exam panel in the next week. Additional sample examination questions will be available from early term 2 on the Curriculum Council website.

Conclusion

I am very aware that English, Media Production and Analysis, Engineering and Aviation teachers feel they are bearing the brunt of policy changes, particularly with assessment. Could you please indicate how sorry I am for this and reinforce that the changes that were made during last year were to provide greater flexibility for teachers and were made in collaboration with all school systems. Similarly, the decision to require reporting of levels and bands in Year 12 in 2007 was made so that teachers who had planned their 2007 programs and assessments for the year would not need to change.

I regret that teachers are in this position, but the changes are ones that have been called for during last year from teachers (including English teachers), the wider community and experts in the field of educational measurement. I believe these changes were absolutely necessary to maintain community confidence in our system.

Please feel free to email me using d.wood@curriculum.wa.edu.au. I would be pleased to discuss any ongoing issues with you personally or to come and talk to your English staff about their concerns.



**DAVID WOOD
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

28 March 2007