



# **Assessment and Reporting in Society and Culture Stage 6**

<b>Effective from</b>	<b>2010 (Preliminary and HSC courses)</b>
<b>Date published</b>	<b>October 2009</b>

This document contains the Board of Studies' requirements for assessing and reporting achievement in the Preliminary and HSC courses in Society and Culture for the Higher School Certificate, and provides details of the HSC examination in this course. From time to time changes are made to HSC assessment and examination requirements. Such changes will be made available through updates to this document. Please note that the version on the Board of Studies website is always the current version.

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Published by Board of Studies NSW  
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## Assessment in Stage 6

Assessment is the process of gathering information and making judgements about student achievement for a variety of purposes. In the Preliminary and HSC courses those purposes include:

- assisting student learning
- evaluating and improving teaching and learning programs
- providing evidence of satisfactory achievement and completion in the Preliminary course
- providing the Higher School Certificate results.

*Assessment for Learning* provides a useful approach for the delivery of the Society and Culture Preliminary and HSC courses. It provides opportunities in the context of everyday class activities for students to demonstrate their learning.

The approach is most effective when students:

- are involved in setting learning goals
- know and understand standards and expectations about what is expected and the standards of work
- receive feedback that helps them understand the next steps in their learning and plan how to undertake the next steps.

## Reporting achievement at the HSC

The Higher School Certificate credentials received by students are used by the Board to report both the internal and external measures of achievement. Higher School Certificate results in Society and Culture comprise:

- **an assessment mark** derived from the mark submitted by the school and produced in accordance with the Board's requirements for the internal assessment program
- **an examination mark** derived from the HSC external examination
- **an HSC mark**, which is the average of the assessment mark and the examination mark
- **a performance band**, determined by the HSC mark.

Student performance in an HSC course is reported against standards on a course report. The course report contains a performance scale for the course describing levels (bands) of achievement, an HSC mark located on the performance scale, an assessment mark and an

examination mark. The course report also shows, graphically, the statewide distribution of HSC marks of all students in the course.

The distribution of marks is determined by students' performances against the standards and not scaled to a predetermined pattern of marks.

The use of both internal assessment and external examinations of student achievement allows measurements and observations to be made at several points and in different ways throughout the HSC course. Taken together, the external examination and internal assessment provide a valid and reliable assessment of the achievement of the knowledge, understanding and skills described for each course.

The Board of Studies uses a standards-referenced approach to reporting student achievement in the Higher School Certificate. The standards in the HSC are:

- the knowledge, skills and understanding expected to be learnt by students – the syllabus standards
- the levels of achievement of the knowledge, skills and understanding – the performance standards.

Both the syllabus standards and the performance standards are based on the aims, objectives, outcomes and content of the course. Together they specify what is to be learnt and how well it is to be achieved. Teacher understanding of the standards comes from the aims, objectives, outcomes and content in the syllabus together with:

- the performance descriptions that summarise the different levels of performance
- HSC examination papers and marking guidelines
- samples of students' achievement, collected in the standards packages and published on the Board's Assessment Resource Centre website.

## **Internal assessment**

This section should be read in conjunction with advice on internal assessment in the Board's [Assessment Certification and Examination \(ACE\) Manual](#).

### **Preliminary course**

The suggested components and weightings are designed to give guidance for the school's assessment of student achievement in the Preliminary course. They may be varied to suit school needs.

### **HSC course**

The Board requires schools to submit an assessment mark for each HSC candidate in Society and Culture. The internal assessment mark submitted by the school provides a summation of each student's achievements measured at several points throughout the course. The marks submitted for each course group at a school should reflect the rank order of students, and must be on a scale sufficiently wide to reflect adequately the relative differences in student performances.

Internal assessment provides a measure of a student's achievement based on a wider range of syllabus content and outcomes than may be covered by the external examination alone. The assessment components and weightings to be applied ensure a common focus for internal assessment in the course across schools, while allowing for flexibility in the design of tasks.

A variety of types of task should be used to give students the opportunity to demonstrate outcomes in different ways and to improve the validity and reliability of the assessment.

The standards-referenced approach to assessment for the HSC involves schools ensuring that:

- assessment tasks reflect the weightings and components specified in this document
- tasks are designed to focus on objectives and outcomes
- the types of assessment task are appropriate for the outcomes being assessed
- students are given the opportunity to demonstrate their level of achievement of the outcomes in a range of different task types
- the assessment criteria for each task are such that higher marks are gained by demonstration of better achievement in relation to the syllabus outcomes
- students know the assessment criteria before they begin a task
- marks earned on individual tasks are expressed on a scale sufficiently wide to reflect the relative differences in student performances.

Students should receive meaningful feedback about what they are able to do, and what they need to do in order to improve their level of performance.

## **The HSC examination**

The external HSC examination provides a measure of student achievement in a range of syllabus outcomes that can be reliably measured in an examination setting. The external examination and its marking relate to syllabus standards by:

- providing clear links to syllabus outcomes
- enabling students to demonstrate the levels of achievement outlined in the course performance scale
- applying marking guidelines based on criteria that relate to the quality of the response
- aligning performance in the examination each year to the standards established for the course.

## **Board requirements for the HSC internal assessment mark**

The Board requires that the assessment tasks used to determine the HSC internal assessment mark must comply with the components and weightings specified. The collection of information for the HSC internal assessment mark must not begin before the completion of the Preliminary course.

Schools are required to develop an HSC internal assessment program that:

- specifies the various assessment tasks and the weightings allocated to each task
- provides a schedule of the tasks designed for the whole course.

Note that school-based assessment marks submitted to the Board must NOT include:

- measures of objectives and outcomes that address values and attitudes. (However, as these objectives are important elements of any course, schools may decide to report on them separately to students and parents, perhaps using some form of descriptive statements.)
- measures that reflect student conduct.

See the Board's [ACE Manual](#) for further information.

## Assessment components and weightings

### Preliminary course

The suggested components and weightings for the Preliminary course are set out below.

Component	Weighting
Knowledge and understanding of course content	50
Application and evaluation of social and cultural research methodologies	30
Communication of information, ideas and issues in appropriate forms	20
	<b>100</b>

### HSC course

The mandatory components and weightings for the HSC course are set out below. The internal assessment mark submitted to the Board of Studies is to be based on the HSC course only.

Component	Weighting
Knowledge and understanding of course content	50
Application and evaluation of social and cultural research methodologies	30
Communication of information, ideas and issues in appropriate forms	20
	<b>100</b>

Note: Since the final project will be assessed externally, no part of the product is to be assessed as part of the school assessment program. The personal interest project process, however, may be assessed. Students may report in written or oral form on the progress they are making. They may outline their choice of methodologies, justify these and report on their application to the research topic. The student's personal interest project diary may provide a basis for assessment.

Teachers may use their discretion in determining the manner in which they allocate tasks within the course content. The Board considers that 3 to 5 assessment tasks is sufficient.

## **Society and Culture HSC examination specifications**

The examination will consist of a written paper worth 60 marks and a Personal Interest Project worth 40 marks.

Time allowed: 2 hours plus 5 minutes reading time.

The written paper will consist of three sections.

### **Section I – Core – Social and Cultural Continuity and Change (20 marks)**

- There will be objective response questions to the value of 8 marks.
- There will be short-answer questions to the value of 12 marks.

### **Section II – Depth Studies (20 marks)**

- There will be questions worth 20 marks in total for each of the four depth studies.
- Candidates will be required to answer questions on one depth study they have undertaken.
- The questions attempted in Section II must be on a different depth study from that attempted in Section III.
- The expected length of response will be around six pages (approximately 800 words) in total.

### **Section III – Depth Studies (20 marks)**

- There will be four extended response questions, one for each depth study.
- Candidates will be required to answer one question on a depth study they have undertaken.
- The question attempted must be on a different depth study from that attempted in Section II.
- The expected length of response will be around six pages (approximately 800 words).

The Personal Interest Project requires students to apply appropriate social and cultural research methodologies to investigate a topic related to the course. The completed project will be a substantial piece of research containing a number of components, including a log that outlines the development of the project and the procedures undertaken in researching the topic.

*See Requirements for the Personal Interest Project, below.*

## Summary of external and internal HSC assessment

External examination	Mark	Internal assessment	Weighting
<b>Written examination</b>		Knowledge and understanding of course content	50
<i>Section I – Core</i>		Application and evaluation of social and cultural research methodologies	30
Objective response questions	8	Communication of information, ideas and issues in appropriate forms	20
Short-answer questions	12		
<i>Section II</i>			<b>100</b>
Candidates answer question on one Depth Study	20		
<i>Section III</i>			
Candidates answer one extended response question on a different Depth Study to that chosen in Section II	20		
<b>Personal Interest Project</b>	40		
	<b>100</b>		

## Resources and advice

Further guidance and advice related to assessment and the HSC examination in Society and Culture can be found on the Board's website at [www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus\\_hsc](http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_hsc).

## Requirements for the Personal Interest Project

Society and Culture students must each undertake, on an individual basis, a Personal Interest Project worth 40% of the HSC examination mark. The Personal Interest Project requires students to select a suitable topic related to the course, develop and apply appropriate methodologies and submit a completed project containing the required components.

Development of the Personal Interest Project may commence from the beginning of the HSC course.

Schools must have procedures in place to ensure the effective supervision of the development of students' Personal Interest Projects. This is particularly the case where work is done away from school. Schools must be confident that effective supervision and sufficient documentation of this work is possible before giving consent for students to begin work on their Personal Interest Project.

Each student is to report their progress at three points during the development of the Personal Interest Project. Both the student and the teacher are to sign these reports. A proforma for the reports is included with this document.

In addition, a brief written record of each student's progress throughout the project must be kept by the teacher. Teachers may refer to students' Personal Interest Project diary and progress reports as well as observations and discussions to maintain the record of student

progress. This should not be submitted with the project, but may be requested in exceptional circumstances where the examiners require further information. This record should be retained in the school together with assessment records. A Practical Project: Record of Student's Progress pro-forma is available to download from Schools Online.

Students will be required to certify that the Personal Interest Project is their own original work, and that any material drawn from other sources and any outside assistance is acknowledged. Group projects are not permitted.

Teachers must certify that the work has been completed under their supervision, and that the rules and procedures described here and in the Board's [\*ACE Manual\*](#) have been followed.

Principals must be able to endorse the teacher's declaration that the work:

- has been done under the teacher's supervision
- is the student's own work consistent with earlier drafts or any changes as negotiated with the teacher and other examples of the student's work
- was completed by the due date.

The Personal Interest Project enables students to demonstrate the development of their interests, research skills and personal experiences concerning the interactions between persons, societies, cultures and environments across time. In particular students will be able to demonstrate the development and application of social and cultural research methodologies in completing their Personal Interest Project.

The Personal Interest Project must:

- be a topic of the student's own choice
- be related to the course
- develop appropriate methodologies
- include a cross-cultural perspective
- address continuity and/or change.

The Personal Interest Project will have a substantial amount of subject matter brought together by the individual student on the basis of their reading, research and personal experience. While the Personal Interest Project will be the student's own work, published material should be consulted to provide background material and/or comparative data.

The student should submit a research proposal outlining the topic and its relationship to the course as a whole. Accompanying this research proposal should be an outline of how the topic will be approached, including the methodologies to be employed. This outline should be submitted to the teacher before detailed work is begun, so that the teacher may advise on subject matter and methodologies. As a result of this feedback from the teacher, the student may need to rethink the topic and/or the approach. A proforma for the proposal is included with this document.

If a student is considering a Personal Interest Project topic or method of research that might be controversial or possibly unethical, the student should discuss the topic selection with the teacher or the school's principal.

The student should use a range of methodologies that are suited to the topic being studied. These methodologies may be those studied during the Preliminary course or

those introduced to the student during the HSC core study. Appropriate methodologies and instruments may be:

- survey
- case study
- participant observation
- content analysis
- focus group
- action research
- questionnaire
- interview
- observation
- statistical analysis
- ethnographic study
- personal reflection
- secondary research

The student should keep a Personal Interest Project diary that will later form the basis of the log. In this diary, the student should record the progress of the Personal Interest Project, showing a sequential record of the research and details of the processes followed, problems encountered and how these were overcome. This Personal Interest Project diary will not be submitted with the final Personal Interest Project, but may be submitted as part of the school-based assessment program.

### **Presentation of the Personal Interest Project**

The Personal Interest Project should be carefully prepared for submission. It must be word-processed, with the body text in 12 point Times New Roman or Arial, with 1.5 line spacing, and on one side of the paper only (ie not double-sided). Students must not submit their projects in hard-covered folders or with pages in plastic sleeves. The Personal Interest Project cover supplied by the Board of Studies should be attached to the front of the Personal Interest Project. It must be securely bound and every page must be numbered. The student's certification documents should be submitted with the Personal Interest Project.

Word limits are indicated for each component of the Personal Interest Project. The word count is based on all words written, as shown by a computer word count or manual count of each word.

The presented project must contain the following components:

#### **Introduction**

The introduction requires a brief description (no more than 500 words) of what the topic is about, why this topic was chosen and in what ways it contributes to a better understanding of Society and Culture. The choice of methodologies should be explained and justified.

#### **Log**

The log should be based on the student's Personal Interest Project diary and will be a summary (no more than 500 words) of the development of the final product, outlining the procedures undertaken in researching the topic.

#### **Central material of the Personal Interest Project**

The central material will be in written form and may be accompanied by photographs, tables, graphs and/or diagrams that should be labelled and incorporated into the text

through discussion. The central material should be between 2500 and 4000 words. The central material must contain a cross-cultural perspective and address continuity and/or change. The cross-cultural perspective and continuity and/or change should be integrated in the central material of the Personal Interest Project.

### **Conclusion**

The conclusion requires a statement (no more than 500 words) of what the student learnt from the Personal Interest Project.

### **Resource list**

The resource list should include annotated references used in the Personal Interest Project and/or a list of other kinds of resources, for example films, internet sites or electronic resources referred to during the preparation of the project, and resource persons (eg people interviewed). The references should be accurate and include publication/production details. For each internet site, the URL and the most recent date the site was visited should be included, along with a short annotation on its usefulness to the Personal Interest Project.

## **Personal Interest Project examination criteria**

The following criteria will be used to mark the Personal Interest Project:

- Evidence of achievement of the course outcomes related to the Personal Interest Project.
- The clarity of the topic, purposes and procedures of the Personal Interest Project.
- A demonstrated understanding and application of the concepts of the course.
- The appropriate use of methodologies essential to the course.
- The accuracy and relevance of the subject matter for the purposes of the Personal Interest Project.
- A demonstrated knowledge and understanding of viewpoints different from the immediate culture of the student.
- A demonstration of how continuity and/or change have been addressed.
- An integration in a coherent structure of various aspects of the course.
- Conclusions that proceed from the stated introduction and arguments presented in the PIP.
- Evidence that personal experience is related to public knowledge.
- Effective communication of the student's ideas to a wider audience.
- Evidence of originality of design, analysis and execution.
- Evidence of social and cultural literacy.

Students should consider the following in the preparation of their Personal Interest Project:

### **Clarity**

Is the topic clearly stated? Are the purposes and procedures of the Personal Interest Project clear?

### **Conceptual content**

Does the Personal Interest Project reflect the concepts of the course?

### **Methodological content**

Does the Personal Interest Project demonstrate some of the methodologies essential to the Society and Culture course plus any other distinctive procedures? Are the methodologies appropriate for the topic? Is there evidence of a systematic approach to the study of the topic? Is there an awareness of both the limitations and the values of the methodologies used?

Students should consider the ethical implications of both their topic and the methodologies they employ to research that topic.

**Subject matter content**

Is the subject matter accurate, relevant to the topic and adequately explained for the purposes of the project?

**Cross-cultural content**

Does the topic reflect some knowledge and understanding of viewpoints different from that of the immediate culture of the student in terms of, for example, socioeconomic group, gender, ethnicity or location?

**Continuity and change**

Does the topic reflect some knowledge and understanding of continuity and/or change, for example viewpoints of different generations, links between the past, the present and the future?

**Integrative skills**

Has the Personal Interest Project integrated various aspects of Society and Culture? Does the Personal Interest Project achieve a coherent structure? Do the conclusions proceed from the statements in the introduction and the arguments presented in the central material? Is personal experience related to public knowledge?

**Communication skills**

Is there evidence of social and cultural literacy? Has the student effectively communicated her or his ideas to the external audience?

**Originality**

Does the Personal Interest Project give evidence of originality in design, analysis and execution?

**Personal Interest Project Research Proposal**

**Student name:** .....

*To be completed and signed by student and teacher.*

*Original to be kept by teacher as part of Personal Interest Project certification records. Students should receive a copy of the completed form.*

	<b>Student proposal:</b>	<b>Teacher comments:</b>
<b>General areas of interest</b>		
<b>Specific topic statement or question</b>		
<b>Statement of the specific aims of the research and the overall goals of your Personal Interest Project</b>		
<b>Statement of how the topic relates to the Society and Culture syllabus, including identifying specific concepts</b>		
<b>Statement of which methodologies will be used in researching the topic, and why they are appropriate</b>		
<b>Outline of resources that can be accessed to research the topic</b>		

Student signature: ..... Date: / / .....

Teacher signature: ..... Date: / /

**Personal Interest Project Progress Report**

**Student name:** .....

*To be completed and signed by student and teacher at three appropriate points during the research and writing process.  
Original to be kept by teacher as part of Personal Interest Project certification records. Students should receive a copy of the completed form.*

*Student comments:*

<b>Are there any changes to your topic statement or question?</b>																					
<b>Comment on the progress of your diary.</b>																					
<b>Comment on the progress of your research.</b>																					
<b>Comment on the progress of your writing and editing.</b>																					
Outline your <b>next steps</b> towards completing your Personal Interest Project.																					
<b>Questions or other comments.</b>																					
<b>Self-evaluation:</b> locate your current position on the scale 1–10.	<table style="width:100%; border:none;"> <tr> <td style="text-align:center;">1</td> <td style="text-align:center;">2</td> <td style="text-align:center;">3</td> <td style="text-align:center;">4</td> <td style="text-align:center;">5</td> <td style="text-align:center;">6</td> <td style="text-align:center;">7</td> <td style="text-align:center;">8</td> <td style="text-align:center;">9</td> <td style="text-align:center;">10</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="5" style="text-align:center;"><i>Starting your Personal Interest Project</i></td> <td colspan="5" style="text-align:center;"><i>The finished Personal Interest Project</i></td> </tr> </table>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	<i>Starting your Personal Interest Project</i>					<i>The finished Personal Interest Project</i>				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10												
<i>Starting your Personal Interest Project</i>					<i>The finished Personal Interest Project</i>																

*Teacher comments:*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use and application of concepts</li> <li>• application of methodologies</li> <li>• cross-cultural comparison</li> <li>• continuity and/or change</li> <li>• communication skills</li> <li>• appropriateness of resources</li> <li>• integration skills</li> <li>• achievement of outcomes: H1, H6, H7, H8, H9, H10, H11.</li> </ul>	
<b>Overview</b> of work in progress and suggestions for further development.	

Student signature: ..... Date: / /      Teacher signature: ..... Date: / /