STAGE 4 & STAGE 5 HOMEWORK AND ASSESSMENT POLICIES

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The amount of time that students are expected to spend on homework will depend upon the age, ability, home environment and extracurricular activities of students, including family and cultural obligations. It is important that students of all ages have opportunities for free time, leisure and physical activities outside of school.

1. **Introduction**

The amount of time that students are expected to spend on homework will depend upon the age, ability, home environment and extracurricular activities of students, including family and cultural obligations. It is important that students of all ages have opportunities for free time, leisure and physical activities outside of school.

Hurlstone considers homework to be an integral part of the learning process and should be reflected in faculty policies across all curriculum areas.

Further, at Hurlstone:

- Homework should be stimulating and challenging.
- Students should expect homework most lessons in their major subjects and understand the reasons for it.
- All homework should be followed up in class.
- All students should maintain a homework diary.
- It is the responsibility of all teachers to foster in their students an association of academic success with systematic planned study.
- Early in Year 7, the school’s homework policies and practices should be introduced to parents and students at joint meetings with school executive.

**The three main types of homework are:**

- Practice exercises
- Preparatory homework
- Extension assignments

2. **Practice exercises**

Faculties need to ensure that some form of ongoing homework forms a part of their teaching and learning practices and in turn provide students with the opportunities to apply new knowledge, or review, revise and reinforce newly acquired skills, including:

- consolidation exercises e.g. maths (revising formulae)
- practising for mastery e.g. spelling words
- revising information about a current topic
- practising words or phrases learnt in a language other than English
- reading for pleasure
- essay writing

It is expected that students will have some form of homework on a regular basis and that this homework forms part of their regular routine. It is not expected that students should spend an excessive amount of time completing homework on a continual basis. If students are experiencing difficulty, they should consult their class teacher to seek assistance.

**Revising for class tests**

Class tests provide the students and the teacher with an opportunity to gauge student learning, gain practice in tests as well as refine the review and revision strategies. To ensure that these tests remain meaningful, it is important that they take place where the students have the opportunity to award appropriate time and effort to their preparation.

Teachers should consult the Assessments calendar prior to setting class tests to ensure that students are not overburdened with too many tasks at any one time. At this point teachers should include the item on the calendar.

3. **Preparatory homework**

Faculties should investigate incorporating teaching and learning strategies that provide opportunities for students to gain background information on a unit of study so that they are better prepared for future lessons. Such opportunities could include:

- background reading
- reading e.g. English text for class discussion
- researching topics for a class unit of work
- collecting items e.g. geometric shapes.

4. **Extension assignments**

Larger investigative assignments are a recognised and recommended assessment instrument by the Board of Studies and do encourage students to pursue knowledge individually and imaginatively, including:

- writing e.g. a book review
- making or designing something e.g. an art work
- investigations e.g. science, social science
- researching e.g. history, local news
- information and retrieval skills eg. Internet websites, blogs, Wikis etc
- monitoring e.g. advertising in particular newspapers.
Assignment guidelines

Larger investigative assignments are those tasks which are required to be presented in a formal way and take substantially more time to complete than practice exercises and preparatory homework. Such assignments should be included within the student assessment schedule issued through each faculty.

Larger investigative assignments will be included within the students’ assessment schedule, displayed in a central junior assessments calendar.

The following guidelines should be referred to when setting assignments and preparing junior assessment schedules.

- Students should be given adequate time to complete an assignment.
- Students will be given clear guidelines on an assignment instruction sheet.
- Students are to be actively encouraged to keep a diary and record information.
- The Assessments calendar should be referred to for the assignments and assessment tasks as outlined for the year.

Assignment instruction sheet

To ensure that assignments are meaningful learning experiences and as assessments they are fair and equitable, the following headings should be used as a guide as to what information is communicated to students as instructions.

- Assignment title.
- Date the assignment was issued.
- Date the assignment is due.
- Date by which the assignment will be returned.
- The purpose of the assignment or an outcomes statement.
- A clear description of the tasks.
- The length of the assignment and where appropriate, an indication of anticipated time to be spent on the assignment.
- How the assignment will be assessed.
- What value the assignment will have in the student’s final assessment mark or result.
- An indication of resources students could access (optional).

5. Homework organisational issues

- Homework should be recorded in the student’s diary. This diary should be checked each evening and during class time.
- It is important that students arrange their activities in priority order. This list should include activities and commitments not related to schoolwork, since these must also be taken into account when planning the program for a week.
- The library at Hurlstone has extended hours. Students are able to use it before school from 8:00am till 8:40am and after school until 5:15 pm from Monday to Thursday, and Fridays until 4:00pm. It is also open on Sunday afternoons from 1 to 5 p.m.
- Wherever possible homework should recognise the place of technology in today’s world and the benefits of using technology such as home computers, E-mail and the Internet for organising and accessing information. Schools, however, should have regard for equity issues when setting homework that relies upon the use of technology. Students who do not have access to such technology at home should not be disadvantaged.

6. Parents’ role in their child’s homework

- ensuring that their children have their school diary in which they record homework and check this diary on a regular basis.
- encouraging their children to discipline themselves to sitting down for study each night, extending the time as their child progresses through High School.
- providing a study place which can be used regularly, provides ample space, is quiet, is well lit, is comfortably ventilated and temperature controlled.
- taking an active interest in their children’s study. This does not necessarily mean helping them do the study but rather talking to them about what they are doing, encouraging them when they become discouraged and directing them to seek help from their teacher when they are struggling.
- ensuring that their children have a healthy balance between work and recreation.
- helping their children to become well organised in their approach to study so that they gain the optimum benefit from any study period.
- encouraging their children to plan their homework tasks. As students progress through the school a study timetable is essential if they are to give every subject due attention.
- ensuring that their children have regular breaks in long study sessions.
- ensuring that their children use a term planner to help them systematically work through major assignments, breaking these up into stages.
- ensuring that their children have access to reference material such as a dictionary and thesaurus.

7. Scheduling assessment tasks

To ensure that students are not overburdened with a large number of extension assignments and assessment tasks, the following guidelines are suggested. A course that meets with students:

Four or more times a timetable cycle should not include more than 6 items (assignments, examinations etc) as part of the annual assessment.

Three or less times a timetable cycle should not include more than 4 items (assignments, examinations etc) as part of the annual assessment.

This does not include quizzes, topic tests and other short tasks that would contribute to preparatory homework.
The following policy details the requirements and procedures students and the school should follow in ensuring all students have a fair access to the assessment system from year 7 through to year 10.

1. General procedures

1.1 Student is absent from an assessment task due to sickness

a. Students must attend school on the date of a task, or on the day the task is due.

b. If a student is sick and cannot attend on the day of the task or date a task is due, an illness/misadventure form should be completed with an attached doctor’s certificate and presented to the head teacher on the first day of return to school. The doctor’s certificate should state: (Student name) was not fit to attend the assessment task on…

c. If a student fails to complete a task specified in the assessment program due to illness and the head teacher considers the student has a valid reason with a supported doctor’s certificate, an extension of time may be granted or a mark may be awarded based on a substitute task. The student should complete an illness/misadventure form, attach appropriate evidence and forward this to the head teacher.

d. If it is not possible to provide the student with a substitute task or unable to provide an extension, the head teacher will consult with the assessment committee to seek a resolution.

e. Students completing a substitute task may be asked to complete a declaration indicating what they know about the original task. This will be negotiated with the head teacher.

f. The head teacher may refer an appeal directly to the assessment committee for review.

g. Students with prolonged absences should follow the same procedure.

h. Where there is no valid reason for not completing an assessment task, a zero mark must be recorded for that task.

1.2 Student is absent due to a misadventure

a. Misadventure refers to an event beyond the student’s control which allegedly prevented the student from attending the assessment task or school the date a task was due. (eg, a car accident).

b. Following failure to complete an assessment task on time, the student must see the head teacher on the first day of return to school to negotiate alternative arrangements. A misadventure appeal must be submitted with supporting documentation. This may include a statutory declaration from parents or an appropriate adult detailing the specifics of the misadventure. The student should complete an illness/misadventure form, attach appropriate evidence and forward this to the head teacher.

c. The head teacher may provide an extension of time or a mark may be awarded based on a substitute task.

d. Students completing a substitute task may be asked to complete a declaration indicating what they know about the original task.

e. The head teacher may refer an appeal directly to the assessment committee for review.

f. Where there is no valid reason for not completing an assessment task, a zero mark will be recorded for that task.

1.3 Students who complete the assessment task and suffer illness/misadventure

a. Students may lodge an illness / misadventure appeal if they believe that circumstances immediately prior or during the assessment task, which were beyond their control, significantly diminished their assessment performance.

b. In such cases, students need to provide documentary evidence such as a doctor’s certificate or a statutory declaration clearly detailing and supporting the illness or misadventure. The provision of such documents does not dictate the outcome of the appeal.

c. Students should submit this appeal to the Head Teacher of that course. This should be done as soon as possible after the student is back in at school (either for lessons or other examinations) but within 7 days of the assessment task date.

1.4 Hand-in tasks

a. Hand-in tasks should be submitted to the teacher / faculty as specified on the notification of the assessment task.

b. A student can seek from the head teacher an extension of time to submit the task. An illness / misadventure appeal must be submitted to the head teacher with appropriate supporting documentation before the extension can be considered.
c. If an assessment task is submitted late, and there is no successful illness / misadventure appeal, students will receive a zero for that task. Students should still submit the task to gain necessary feedback. In this instance, the student and their parents will be advised by the head teacher in writing. Should a student feel that this decision is inappropriate, an appeal can be lodged with the school's Assessment Committee.

d. Students must submit all tasks regardless of how late they are submitted. Feedback provided to students based on their work in the task is a valuable part of the learning process.

1.5 Technology and assessment tasks

a. Technology and / or computer equipment failure may not be a valid excuse for submitting an assessment task late.

b. With assessment tasks, students may lodge an illness / misadventure appeal if technology has failed. In such cases, students must provide adequate physical evidence of that task such as a draft or hard copy of the materials.

c. To assist students in using technology, the following guidelines should be considered:
   - always complete work before the deadline. This enables appropriate measures to be taken in the event of equipment failure.
   - Back-up files regularly.
   - Print out copies of drafts and keep them while the assignment is in progress.

2. Accelerant students

2.1 Accelerant students

a. Students may accelerate into Preliminary and/or HSC courses (except VET Framework courses) in advance of their usual cohort or in less than the Board's stated indicative times. Decisions about the acceleration of Higher School Certificate students will be made by principals in accordance with the principles contained in the Board's Guidelines for Accelerated Progression (revised 2000). Students may accelerate in all courses (grade advancement) or in one or more courses.

b. Accelerants should complete all assessment tasks that are undertaken by students completing requirements in the normal time frame. However, there may need to be flexibility in the order and timing of assessment tasks.

c. Assessment tasks for accelerants, where possible, should be either delivered at the same time or in a manner that prevents students being able to communicate the task to each other or put one group at a significant advantage over the other.

d. For school based half yearly and trial examinations, accelerated students will have available as study leave the day immediately prior to an examination for a morning examination and the morning prior to an examination for an afternoon examination.

e. For the Higher School Certificate examination, the student will have available as study leave the two days immediately prior to an examination and the day of the examination.

3. Special examination provisions

a. The school may provide special provisions for students for their examinations.

b. Special provisions are for students who have a special need which would, in a normal examination situation, prevent him or her from:
   - reading and interpreting the examination questions and/or
   - communicating his/her responses.

c. The school can decide upon and implement special provisions for school-based assessments including tests. OBOS ACE Manual 13.1

d. Regardless of the nature of the special need, the provisions granted will be solely determined by the implications of that need on the student’s functioning in an examination situation. OBOS ACE Manual 13.1

3.1 Special examination provisions at Hurlstone

a. Hurlstone will support students seeking special provisions for their examinations. Where it is appropriate and suitable these provisions will also be offered to the students to complete their internal assessment component.

b. If a student experiences a one-off incident which affects his/her examination performance and requires Special Provisions eg a physical injury, the Principal may elect to grant Special Provisions for an individual task. These provisions will be issued using the Board of Studies general guidelines.

c. Hurlstone will endeavour to provide students with access to Special Provisions to ensure a fair process for all students. The implementation of Special Provisions is however restricted by the resources available. The school will outline the manner and times these provisions may be used.

d. If a student is granted the use of a computer, he/she will only have access to Note/Word Pad. The school will provide the appropriate technology in the most suitable location available. The school cannot be responsible for checking a student's hard drive on laptops and hence all electronic responses will be managed using school computers. This also ensures the printing of student work is as efficient as possible. This decision is in line with the Board of Studies requirements for schools. Laptops can only be used when there is no alternative technology available.

3.2 Applying for special examination provisions

a. A student may access Special Provisions from the beginning of the assessment program by ensuring that application is made at this time.

b. Students who wish to apply for special examination provisions should make an appointment with the School Counsellor. The School Counsellor will organise the completion of the application form.

c. The student will need to supply evidence of the student's special examination need. A guide to the various types of evidence required is provided in the application form and Information Guide.

3.3 Student responsibilities

a. Students who have been awarded special examination provisions are to check with the HT Teaching &
Learning the arrangements for these provisions for upcoming tasks. This should be done when the notification for the task or the examination timetable has been distributed.

4. Malpractice in assessment tasks

4.1 Defining malpractice

a. Malpractice is any activity undertaken by a student that allows him/her to gain an unfair advantage over others or places other students at a disadvantage. It includes, but is not limited to:
   - copying someone else’s work in part or in whole, and presenting it as one’s own.
   - using material directly from books, journals, CDs or the Internet without reference to the source.
   - building on the ideas of another person without reference to the source.
   - buying, stealing or borrowing another person’s work and presenting it as one’s 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 tasks without appropriate acknowledgement.
   - paying someone to write or prepare material.
   - breaching school examination rules.
   - using non-approved aids during an assessment task
   - not making a genuine effort with an assessment task.
   - contriving false explanations to explain work not handed in by the due date.
   - assisting another student to engage in malpractice.

4.2 Managing issues of malpractice

a. Issues of malpractice need to be:
   - Investigated by the head teacher of the respective course.
   - Reported in writing to the school assessment committee with accompanied documentation.

b. The committee will:
   - Advise the student(s) in writing of the lodgement of the issue.
   - Provide the student(s) with an opportunity to address the issue.
   - Deliberate a course of action and communicate this to the student, the student’s parents and the head teacher.

c. If the malpractice is proven, the assessment committee will consider a zero mark for that task. In some circumstances, the assessment committee may decide to invoke a different penalty appropriate to the seriousness of the offence.

d. Students are made aware that sharing / showing their hand-in task to other students prior to it being submitted may lead to issues construed as malpractice and lead to a zero mark for that task. Students are encouraged not to share the substance of a hand-in task with other students. Likewise, students who may receive a substitute task through an appeal outcome are not to make any effort to gain knowledge, wording or content of the original task.

4.3 Strategies to ensure the authenticity of student responses to tasks.

Strategies that teachers can use:
- thoroughly briefing all students in relation to the requirements of each task.
- allocating class time to the planning of a response to a task.
- requiring that students maintain a process diary or journal to show how their response or project or work was developed.
- asking students to submit a task at critical points in its development.
- having students submit their original drafts in addition to their final work.
- incorporating student oral presentations on the progress of their work.
- communicating clearly to students the extent of teacher, or other expert or outside, involvement permitted in the development of the work.

5. Formal examinations

5.1 General examination procedures

a. With the exception of project based courses, courses may include formal examinations as assessment.

b. These examinations will be indicated within individual course assessment schedules.

c. Time allocated to these formal examinations should be organised so as to ensure minimal disruption to teaching and learning.

d. Students may not leave the examination until the designated writing time has elapsed. Students are encouraged to review their work if they finish early.

e. Students are not to take any writing materials, pencil cases, books or other non-approved materials into the examination. Answer paper will be provided for all assessment tasks. Approved equipment taken into the examination room must be carried in as separate items or carried in a clear plastic sleeve and checked by supervising staff.

f. Mobile phones are to be switched off before entering the examination room and handed to the supervisor. These remain at the front of the examination hall, or in students’ bags, for the duration of the examination. Failure to comply with this may result in the cancellation of the student’s paper.

g. Students are not to talk to or interfere with other students or their equipment once they enter the examination room.

5.2 Misconduct in formal examinations and other assessment tasks

a. Misconduct during any task or formal examination may be regarded as malpractice. Zero marks may be awarded to students who are involved in misconduct during an examination or other assessment task. Misconduct refers to any form of behaviour or activity that may fall under the definition of malpractice, is not
consistent with school rules or causes disruption to assessment procedures.
b. All class tasks including formal examinations must be attempted seriously. Non-serious attempts or offensive language in answers will be referred to the assessment committee as an issue of malpractice and may be awarded a zero for that task.
Statutory Declaration
OATHS ACT 1900, NSW, NINTH SCHEDULE

I, ................................................................., of .................................................................

[signature of declarant]  

[address]  

[signature of address]  

I hereby solemnly declare and affirm that .................................................................

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Hurlstone Agricultural High School
Illness / Misadventure Appeal

Closing Date for illness / Misadventure appeals: The first day back at school immediately after the assessment task or due date for an assessment item.

Name:...............................................................Student Signature:.................................................................

Subject/Course: ...........................................................................................................................................................

Head Teacher: ..........................................................................................................................................................

Assessment Title: ...................................................................................................................................................

Date Of Notification: ............................................Due Date:..................................................................................

Details of appeal: Please refer to the Junior Assessment Policy.

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Please add additional pages if necessary

Head Teacher Response:

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Return appeal to the student with a copy kept on faculty file.

Assessment Committee Response
Your success at school can be greatly enhanced by developing your personal study skills.

Complete the checklist below to determine what areas you need to work on at school this year (your focus may need to change each year).

**CLASSROOM SKILLS**

The amount of time you will need to study for tests and exams will depend on how effectively you use your class time. It makes sense to make the most of your time in class!

- Are you on time for school and classes? Yes/No
- Do you bring everything needed for class? Yes/No
- Do you listen to your teacher and not talk when you should be focusing? Yes/No
- Do you work well in class and make the most of class time? Yes/No
- Do you participate and get involved in the lesson? Yes/No
- Do you respect others’ ideas? Yes/No

**ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS**

Managing your papers for school is essential to ensure you can find what you need and that you have everything you will need to study from exam time. Make sure you paste or file any loose sheets straight away. It is also a good idea to have a file or folder at home for each subject so you can keep everything together for that subject.

- Are all of your books clearly labelled? Yes/No
- Do you paste sheets in straight away or else have a folder to keep them in? Yes/No
- Are your notes and papers well organised? Yes/No
- At home do you have a folder for each subject to keep everything together? Yes/No
- Do you file away all past tests and assignments? Yes/No

**HOMEWORK SKILLS**

The main thing to remember about homework is that your teacher sets homework for a reason – to help you understand the work better. If you let yourself fall behind in homework, you’ll soon discover that there are gaps in your understanding. Keep up to date with your homework and see your teacher if you are having any problems.

- Do you complete all the homework that is set by the due date? Yes/No
- Do you try and put effort into your homework and do it properly? Yes/No
- Do you ask your teacher for help if you can’t understand work? Yes/No
- If you are absent, do you chase up what you have missed? Yes/No
- If you don’t finish work, do you reschedule and plan when you will do it? Yes/No

**TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS**

Working effectively at home is a real challenge as there are so many other things you can do at home! To work effectively at home or in the boarding school, separate schoolwork time and personal time, don’t try and combine these. Work in half hour blocks and remove distractions during this time. Each afternoon make a plan of what you want to get done that night and when you are going to do it.

- Do you work in half hour blocks at home and turn off distractions during this time? Yes/No
- Do you make a plan each afternoon of what you want to get done that night? Yes/No
- Do you have set periods of time that you allocate to schoolwork? Yes/No
- Do you have a good system for keeping track of what work you haven’t completed yet? Yes/No

**PLANNING SKILLS**

The best way to manage your workload is to write a plan in your diary for when you will do the necessary work for assignments and tests. Every time you are told about a task, break it down into steps and in your diary write in when you will do each step. Use your plan as a starting point and reschedule steps when necessary.

- Do you complete all assignments in time by the due date? Yes/No
- Do you start assignments early rather than leaving them to the last minute? Yes/No
- Do you break your assignments down into smaller more manageable steps? Yes/No
- Do you have a wall calendar where you can clearly see when things are due? Yes/No
- Do you do a plan in your diary of when you will do the work for assignments and tests? Yes/No

**STUDY NOTES SKILLS**
One of the best ways to prepare for a test or an exam is to make study notes. Ideally, you should do your study notes as you go throughout the year, at the end of a topic or section. This will mean that when you get to your exams you have time to learn the information in your notes and do lots of practice as well.

Do you condense and organise the information from class notes and text books? Yes/No
Do you make study notes on a regular basis so they are ready at exam time? Yes/No
Are your study notes in point form? Yes/No
Are your study notes visual? Yes/No
Do you ask your teacher for feedback on your study notes? Yes/No
If you don’t have much homework, do you use spare time to work on study notes? Yes/No

STUDY SKILLS

Making study notes is not enough. You also have to understand and learn the information so you can remember it in a test or exam, and do lots of questions as practice to ensure you can apply your knowledge.

Do you start studying for tests early? Yes/No
Do you do lots of revision questions, asking for help if needed? Yes/No
Do you test yourself on your study notes? Yes/No
Do you try and use a wide range of study techniques? Yes/No
Do you do some of your practice under examination conditions? Yes/No

Now go back and highlight the top 5 suggestions that you need to focus on for this year.
Visit the freebies on www.enhanced-learning.net for more helpful study skills resources