



Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

National Policy for Curriculum Assessment and Reporting

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1.0 POLICY OBJECTIVE

This policy provides the overall authority and guidance for curriculum assessment and reporting policies and practices developed and performed at the classroom¹, school and system level.

2.0 POLICY

The system, schools² and teachers must:

- 2.1 develop valid and reliable assessments
- 2.2 use a comprehensive range of assessments over time to make informed judgments about student achievement and progress
- 2.3 support teacher engagement in moderation to enhance confidence in and consistency of teacher judgments of student³ achievement and progress
- 2.4 design assessments that are equitable and relevant for all students and appropriate for their phase of development
- 2.5 make criteria for assessments explicit to those being assessed
- 2.6 report regular and relevant information to parents or guardians⁴ on student progress and achievement
- 2.7 use information from student achievement assessments to guide decision-making
- 2.8 use assessment methods from Preschool to Class 2 to support learning and development and not for the selection and ranking of students.

3.0 BACKGROUND

Curriculum Assessment and Reporting is a complex mix of procedures and strategies at the system, school and classroom level designed to satisfy a number of purposes. The *Fiji Islands National Curriculum Framework* states that the purposes for assessing children and students' achievements and competencies are to:

1. inform and to improve students' learning and development

¹ In this policy a Classroom is inclusive of preschool centres and all other places where structured learning and development takes place.

² In this policy a school is inclusive of all premises where teaching is conducted including preschools.

³ In this policy the term student also applies to children attending preschool centres.

⁴ In this policy the term guardian refers to an adult with designated responsibility for the welfare of the student outside of school.

2. inform decision making in order to improve teaching and learning methods
3. select and rank students at the Primary and Secondary level of schooling when necessary
4. provide certification as a consequence of external examinations.

Currently, the emphasis has been on the purposes 3 and 4 and appropriate extant policies have been written to guide schools about strategies designed to achieve equitable outcomes for all students who sit for external examinations at Classes 6 and 8 and at Forms 4, 6 and 7. There is a need for a more balanced approach to assessment with a related emphasis on school based assessment of students. Such assessment provides more immediate feedback to students and can provide information to teachers as they teach. They can then better design learning programs that will lead to improvements in students' learning.

All assessment of students' achievements should be guided by a coherent set of policy statements. At the present time there is no overall policy that incorporates and guides all forms of assessment and reporting at the systems, school and classroom level.

There is a danger that assessment and reporting policies could proliferate that are not consistent with each other. A proliferation of policies about assessment and reporting can cause confusion. There is a need for a policy that is coherent and consistent in its philosophy and directions.

The National Curriculum Framework recognises that all forms of assessment and reporting have their place in the education of our students and contribute to supporting teaching and learning in different but important ways. However, there is a need for one overarching policy that pulls together extant policies to provide a coherent framework for all future policy development and changes to extant policy.

4.0 RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND OTHER LINKS

- Examinations Act, Cap 2624
- Education Act 1978
- Health & Safety at Work Act 1996.
- Health & Safety at Work (Amendment) Act 2003.
- Health & Safety at Work (Administration) Regulations 1997.
- Health & Safety at Work (Training) Regulations 1997.
- Public Service Act, 1999 Part 2, Section 6 (1) – (14) Public Service Code of Conduct Legislative programmes in education and training
- Public Service General Regulations 1999
- Fiji School Leaving Certificate Examination Regulations 1991
- Fiji Seventh Form Certificate Examination Regulations 1991

Relevant Policies

- Ministry of Education. (2006). *Policy on External Examinations and Assessment*
- Ministry of Education. (2007). *Policy on Fiji Junior Certificate Assessment*
- Ministry of Education. (2006). *Early Childhood Care, Development and Education Policy*
- Ministry of Education. (2006). *Standards Monitoring in Schools*
- Ministry of Education. (2006). *Policy In Occupational Health And Safety In Schools*
- Ministry of Education. (2006). *Policy In Information – Privacy And Security*
- Ministry of Education. (2006). *Policy In Schools Information Management System*
- Ministry of Education. *General Instructions for Chief Supervisors of Secondary Public Examinations*
- Ministry of Education. *General Instructions for Chief Supervisors of Primary Public Examinations*
- Ministry of Education. *General Instructions for Assistant Supervisors of Secondary Public Examinations*
- Ministry of Education. *General Instructions for Assistant Supervisors of Primary Public Examinations*
- Ministry of Education. (1990). *FSLCE Regulations*
- Ministry of Education. (2007). *FSFE Regulations*
- Ministry of Education. *Fiji Intermediate Examination Rules*
- Ministry of Education. *Fiji Eighth Year Examination Rules*
- Ministry of Education. (2007). *The Fiji Islands National Curriculum Framework (NCF)*.
- Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. (2007). *Draft 2 Fiji Islands Pre-school Curriculum Guidelines*

5.0 PROCEDURES

5.1 Policy Statement 1: *Develop valid and reliable assessments*

The system and schools will develop assessments that will:

- 5.1a. provide valid information on the actual ideas, processes, products and values expected of students
- 5.1b. produce reliable information about student achievement and progress in relation to the outcomes being assessed.

5.2 Policy Statement 2: *Use a comprehensive range of assessments to make informed judgments about student achievement and progress over time.*

The system, schools and teachers will

- 5.2a. use many kinds of formal and informal assessments and sources of evidence
- 5.2b. conduct a range of assessments over a period of time so that judgments can be made about student achievement and progress that are supported by the information collected.

5.3 Policy Statement 3: *Engage in moderation to enhance confidence in and consistency of teacher judgments of student achievement and progress over time*

The system, schools and teachers will

- 5.3a. engage in moderation to enhance the confidence and consistency of teacher judgments of student achievement and progress over time
- 5.3b. ensure that there are ongoing moderation processes (within and between schools) to support all teachers in making valid and reliable judgements, acknowledging individual staff differences and readiness
- 5.3c. engage in moderation to compare judgements of student achievement within a student cohort in order to establish an agreed and shared understanding of what student achievement of outcomes looks like over time and across a range of contexts.

5.4 Policy Statement 4: *Assessments will be designed to be equitable and relevant for all students and appropriate for their phase of development.*

The system, schools and teachers will design assessments that:

- 5.4a. provide all students with equal opportunities to demonstrate their achievement of outcomes regardless of geographic location, gender, race, or socio-economic status and are mindful of those with special needs
- 5.4b. take into account that students learn in different ways and at different rates
- 5.4c. are suitable and appropriate for students' phase of development.

5.5 Policy Statement 5: *Criteria for assessments are explicit for those being assessed*

The system, schools and teachers will

- 5.5a. make the assessment criteria explicit
- 5.5b. ensure that the assessment criteria are used as the basis for judgments
- 5.5c. ensure that the assessment criteria are clear and public.

5.6 Policy Statement 6: *Report regular and relevant information to parents or guardians on student progress and achievement.*

The system will

- 5.6a. issue a formal report as and when necessary for each examination candidate
- 5.6b. issue a report of aggregated data from external examinations and tests with an analysis of these data.

The schools and teachers will

- 5.6c. issue a formal report for each Primary and Secondary school student at the end of each term
- 5.6d. maintain accurate records of students' achievements
- 5.6e. report on student achievement and developmental progress in all of the Foundation Areas of Learning and Development or in relation to all of the key learning area subject outcomes from the appropriate syllabuses
- 5.6f. report student achievement using a system of grades from A-E for each Primary and Secondary student only
- 5.6g. ensure that all grades are accompanied by descriptive statements that emphasise what students have demonstrated they can do
- 5.6h. include information about students' social, physical and emotional development, attitudes and behaviours
- 5.6i. ensure that informal reports about students' progress are made to parents or guardians
- 5.6j. ensure regular meetings with parents and Guardians at the discretion of the school but at least twice a year.

5.7 Policy Statement 7: *Use information from assessments to guide decision-making.*

The system and schools will

- 5.7a. use aggregated data gathered from teacher judgments and system tests such as FILNA to plan for improvements to student learning and teacher support

Teachers will:

- 5.7b. use information gathered from formal and informal classroom based assessment to evaluate and improve teaching and learning practices
- 5.7c. inform decision making about the progress of students within and between Classes and Forms and school assessment and reporting practices.

5.8 Policy Statement 8: *Use assessment methods from Preschool to Class 2 to support learning and development and not for the selection and ranking of students.*

5.8a. assessment methods should only be used to improve student learning and development from Preschool to Class 2

5.8b. assessment data must not be used for selecting and ranking students from Preschool to Class 2 and only in other Classes and Forms when there is no better alternative.

6.0 GUIDELINES

6.1 Policy Statement 1: *Develop valid and reliable assessments*

The system, schools and teachers will develop assessments that are valid and reliable.

Assessment will provide valid information on the actual ideas, processes, products and values expected of students.

The community, students and teachers tend to value and focus their efforts on those things that are assessed. All outcomes are significant and should be valued. Hence assessment processes must address with integrity the full extent and range of the outcomes.

Summative judgments about students' achievement on an outcome should be based on assessment information about the outcome in its fullest sense, rather than only on some parts of it, a proxy for it or a rote manifestation of it. This does not mean that every assessment task must encompass the full

outcome or even provide direct information on students' achievement of the outcome.

Assessing students' knowledge of particular facts, concepts or skills that underpin an outcome can be important in enabling teachers to anticipate whether students can achieve an outcome or what additional experiences are needed, or to diagnose why a student is having difficulty in achieving an outcome. These assessments should not be used as a replacement for assessing the actual achievement of an outcome.

Teacher judgments should be based on information that fully encompasses the outcome and include situations that authentically represent the ways in which the outcome will need to be used in the future.

External assessments should use valid and reliable instruments and measures should be taken to ensure that test items are valid and reliable before being used.

Student achievement data from examinations should be analysed to determine the validity and reliability of examination items and measures taken to ensure that this information is used to ensure these factors are enhanced in subsequent examinations.

Statistical procedures used to improve the reliability of students' data such as scaling of scores should be available for public scrutiny and communicated in ways that enhance their credibility and public understanding and acceptance. Where such measures have the affect of undermining the credibility and question the validity of assessments, consideration should be given to using alternative methods.

6.2 Policy Statement 2: *Use a comprehensive range of assessments to make informed judgments about student achievement and progress over time.*

Judgements on student progress will be based on many kinds and sources of evidence. However, formal assessment practices such as examinations and tests should not be used by pre-school teachers.

Information collected for assessment should provide valid and reliable indications of whether students can do the things described in the outcomes consistently over a range of circumstances. If judgments of student achievement are consistent and fair, they need to be based on the integration of many kinds and sources of evidence collected in various situations over a period of time.

Sometimes various tasks and sources of evidence are necessary in order to provide complementary information about different aspects of the same outcome. At other times, they will provide different perspectives about the same aspect of an outcome. Thus, information about the achievement of an

outcome should be collected over time and based on a variety of kinds of assessment activities. This can include a combination of closed and open tasks, short and extended tasks, written and oral reports, models, displays, performances, teacher interviews, and the observation of students' work.

Teacher judgments should also draw on different sources of information, such as teachers' anecdotal records, work samples, portfolios, student self-evaluations, students' written or visual journals, peer assessment, checklists, teacher-made tests, standardised tests, audiotapes, videotapes, interviews and testimonials from members of the community.

The syllabuses and guidelines and teacher support materials assist teachers in making judgements. They provide information about a range of contexts appropriate for the demonstration of progress and achievement of outcomes.

When designing assessments there is a need to consider students with particular needs; for example, students with diverse learning needs including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in their early stages of second language/second dialect acquisition or with intellectual and or physical disabilities.

Schools are required to ensure that students with disabilities or other identified learning needs are provided with learning experiences that respond to the student's individual learning characteristics and enable them to demonstrate their knowledge, skills or competencies. For some students it may be more appropriate to monitor their progress and achievements using individual education plans and other tools.

In summary, teachers' judgements should be based on:

- comprehensive information collected from a range of assessments, including observations, written work, self/peer assessments and test results
- a range of contexts, frequency, consistency and degree of independence shown by students in demonstrating the outcomes.

6.3 Policy Statement 3: *Engage in moderation to enhance the confidence and consistency of teacher judgments of student achievement and progress over time.*

Teachers will engage in moderation activities to enhance the consistency and comparability of their judgments.

Moderation is a process where two or more teachers discuss, and contrast the evidence gathered about students' achievements in order to confirm or modify their decisions about their students' achievement of the outcomes. Moderation of student learning and development allows teachers to compare judgements of student achievement and development within a cohort in order to establish an agreed and shared understanding of what student achievement of

outcomes looks like over time and across a range of contexts. Moderation enhances the reliability of teacher judgements and provides opportunities for teachers to consider the validity of their judgements.

Strategies that will lead to consistency include:

- Collaboration between teachers, within and across schools, to plan, assess and evaluate student progress and achievement using the above elements.
- Access to a range of other support materials.
- Sharing of understandings about the learning outcomes. Teachers may discuss the meaning of learning outcomes and what students have to know and do to demonstrate these outcomes.
- Collaborative planning. Teachers may work together to plan for learning and assessment and to reach shared understandings about what is required for demonstrations of learning outcomes.
- Agreed assessment tasks and processes. Teachers may cooperatively plan and/or moderate assessment tasks focusing on identified learning outcomes.
- Assessment guides or criteria sheets. Teachers may identify the properties, components or dimensions by which students' demonstrations of learning outcomes will be judged.

Moderation processes provide opportunities (formal and informal) within schools to improve internal consistency. They also provide a focus for professional learning within schools and between schools to ensure system wide comparability of judgements about student achievement. Teachers may discuss and compare judgments made about students' work and associated demonstrations of learning outcomes using clearly defined processes/ protocols with support sometimes from external expert moderators and facilitators.

6.4 Policy Statement 4: *Assessments will be designed to be equitable for all students and appropriate for their phase of development.*

Assessments will be designed taking into account that students learn in different ways and at different rates. Assessments should be inclusive.

Assessment should be demonstrably fair to all students and not discriminate on grounds that are irrelevant to the achievement of the outcome. Personal bias must be averted.

Fairness to students means that they should have equal opportunities to demonstrate their achievement of outcomes and the achievement of an outcome might be shown in quite varied ways by different students. Fair assessment often means assessing the one outcome in different ways related to the characteristics and circumstances of the students. These may include their gender, ethnicity, language, race, socioeconomic circumstances or geographic location, and their individual personalities, talents and disabilities.

What are familiar or helpful contexts for some students will be unfamiliar or unhelpful to others.

Assessment should be sensitive and responsive to differences among students, so that they are not placed in a better or worse position than other students to demonstrate achievement of an outcome. This does not mean diluting or modifying the outcomes themselves. There is nothing inclusive about appearing to succeed but not learning much. While fair assessment may mean that some students are assessed differently, judgements about their learning and achievements should clearly reflect the same outcomes and require the same standard of achievement.

6.5 Policy Statement 5: *Criteria for assessments are explicit for those being assessed*

Teachers will make the assessment criteria explicit so that the basis for judgments is clear and public.

Students and families have the need and the right to know the assessment criteria by which they are being assessed. This is a matter of fairness and is a powerful means of enhancing their learning and development. Explicit criteria contribute to students' learning by making clear the outcomes or goals they are striving for, providing them with useful feedback on their progress, encouraging them to reflect on their learning and suggesting directions for future learning. They know how they will be judged. This applies to all forms of internal and external assessment.

Clear and public criteria also support the enhancement of professional judgments about student learning. Decisions made are open to scrutiny and challenge and are more likely to be consistent from teacher to teacher and situation to situation. Explicit assessment criteria also enable clear statements about individual students' progress to be made to students, parents or guardians, other schools, post-school institutions and employers. In addition, they allow clear evidence referenced to the criteria to be provided to the community about the outcomes of schooling.

6.6 Policy Statement 6: *Report regular and relevant information to parents or guardians on student progress and achievement.*

Parents or Guardians have the right to receive information about the progress of students for which they have responsibility. This information should be valid and reliable and reflect accurately the data collected about students' performance.

The information should be provided on a regular basis. Formal reporting of students' progress at the Primary and Secondary level of schooling should be reported to Parents or Guardians at the end of each term. This information should include a Grade that indicates the achievements of the student with respect to the outcomes for a particular Class or Form to which the student is assigned. This is a professional judgement made by the teacher using all the

information gathered using a range of assessments. The Grade awarded is not a comparative measure but reflects what that student has achieved and is determined without comparison with other students. In other words, the primary purpose of determining a Grade is not to rank the student within a Class or Form, although this may be appropriate for some internal school purposes after it has been assigned. A Grade has little meaning unless accompanied by a description of what the student has done to warrant a particular Grade. The description should identify areas where the student can improve and what he or she needs to do in order to improve.

Schools are encouraged to provide more frequent informal reports to Parents or Guardians so that they are kept informed of progress as it is made. For example, this may take the form of encouraging students to have their work signed off by Parents or Guardians and students should be encouraged to show them their work and ask for appropriate written comments to be made.

Regular meetings with Parents or Guardians should be arranged at the discretion of the school but at least twice a year. More frequent meetings should be encouraged with Parents or Guardians for those students who are of concern to teachers and where their support is required or where the teacher feels the student would benefit from such attention.

Records of student achievement are essential to ensure that there is evidence of the information on which reports are based. Student achievement records also enable valuable information to be transferred from teacher to teacher so that there is continuity in the learning programs and teacher interventions from one Class to the next or one Form to the next. Achievement records enable teachers to plan on the basis of evidence gained from assessments of outcomes. All schools should ensure that student achievement records are maintained accurately and made available to Students, Parents or Guardians and other interested teachers.

6.7 Policy Statement 7: *Use information from assessments to guide decision-making.*

Student achievement data is a rich source of information that should be used to inform decision making. Student achievement data can be used to identify trends that can reveal areas where improvement is necessary and resources can then be better focussed on these areas to address concerns. For instance, longitudinal data from FILNA about Literacy and Numeracy levels will indicate to the system the level of Literacy and Numeracy in particular cohorts of students. Improvements over time or lack of improvement can be monitored. The effectiveness of intervention strategies can be monitored and other actions can be determined and applied.

Assessment data from external and internal assessments are useful at the system and school level when the system, schools and teachers analyse students' data and make decisions about how to improve students' achievements.

External examination data are analysed and available to the system and participating schools. These data provide many useful insights about the relative performance of students from year to year in particular subjects. It provides opportunities for teachers and students to reflect on areas of the syllabuses that have been found to be problematic and where decisions need to be made and more attention needs to be paid to ensure improvement. Comparisons can also be made within schools with system-wide data to determine if the school cohort is performing above or below the mean for the cohort.

Data from all internal assessments made by teachers are also a valuable source of information about students' achievements and development that should be used to make improvements. If schools ensure that these data are valid and reliable using the strategies described above teachers will have a rich source of information about the quality of learning and development by students in their classrooms. Teachers should use aggregated students' data to reflect on the effectiveness of their teaching and students' learning.

6.8 Policy Statement 8: *Use assessment methods from Preschool to Class 2 to support learning and development and not for the selection and ranking of students.*

The confidence and self esteem of Preschool to Class 2 students can be seriously affected by inappropriate assessment methods particularly examinations and tests and intrusive interviews to the extent that they can impair students' developmental progress. The design and development of tests for students at this stage of development and their administration requires specialist knowledge and expertise. Tests are generally used only in exceptional circumstances for diagnostic purposes by other professionals such as paediatricians and educational psychologists.

Selecting students on the basis of ill-conceived or poorly administered tests by teachers is not supported as it can badly affect students at this phase and arrest their development and learning progress. Ranking is used to assist the selection of students. It follows that if assessment methods are not to be used for selection then ranking students at this phase of development is also not appropriate.

Assessment methods at this phase of development are descriptive and informal. Methods such as observation, the collection of anecdotal evidence and journals of students' development and learning progress are recommended to provide information that can be used to support development and learning.

Selection and ranking students can be valid and reliable when national external examination data is used to determine if a student has reached an agreed level of attainment suitable for entry into employment, further training or tertiary education.

7.0 EFFECTIVE DATE

January 2008

8.0 REVIEW DATE

January 2009

9.0 KEY SEARCH WORDS

Aggregated data, Assessment, Assessment Criteria, Assessment for learning, Assessment of learning, Authentic Assessment, Classroom-based assessment, Criterion referenced assessment, Evidence based decision making, Examinations, External and Internal assessment, Inclusive practices, Longitudinal data or study, Moderation, Monitoring, Outcomes, Reliability Scaling, School based assessment, Special Needs, Student achievements, Student achievement evidence, Student achievement records, Student performance, Teacher Judgements, Reliability, Reporting, Validity.

10.0. APPROVED BY PS

SIGNATURE

DATE