



CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

SBA
HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS

OCTOBER 2013

CPEA[®]

CVQ[®]

CCSLC[®]

CSEC[®]

CAPE[®]

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Background

The Caribbean Examinations Council's mission is "to provide the region with: syllabuses of the highest quality; valid and reliable examinations and certificates of international repute for students of all ages, abilities and interests; services to educational institutions in the development of syllabuses, examinations and examinations' administration, in the most cost-effective way."

The Council recognizes the significant role of teachers in fulfilling its mission and has, since its establishment in 1972, collaborated with teachers on the development and delivery of the curriculum and, in jointly determining the areas of the curriculum to be reflected in each syllabus.

In this regard, the Council has involved teachers in the evaluation of their students through course-work assessment. This collaborative method of assessment uses the marks assigned by teachers as part of students' final grade. School-Based Assessment (SBA) which refers to assessments administered in schools and marked by the students' own teachers was introduced in some CXC syllabuses for first examinations in 1979. The Council was the first major examining board to have made this element of assessment an integral part of its process.

SBA is now an established component of most syllabuses and charges teachers with responsibility for evaluation of a critical area of student achievement.

The Council has recently made some changes to the administration of the SBA and has designed this Handbook to assist you with preparing your students for the SBA. It provides, *inter alia*, useful guidelines for conducting and marking the SBA, presentation of SBA products as well as procedures for moderation.

What is the SBA?

The SBA is a set of assessment tasks/assignments/projects conducted in the school; carried out by the student following guidelines provided by CXC and assessed by the teacher using criteria provided by CXC. The SBA score contributes to the candidate's overall examination grade.

Why the SBA?

The SBA is an integral part of the assessment process. It is intended to assist students in acquiring certain knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are associated with the subject. The activities for the SBA are linked to the syllabus and should form part of the learning activities to enable the student to achieve the objectives of the syllabus.

The SBA serves a number of important functions. The SBA:

1. provides opportunities to gather data on student performance over time. Obtaining assessments based on student performance over an extended period of time and developed by those who know the students best - their subject teachers - provides a more reliable assessment of each student;
2. serves to motivate students by engaging them in meaningful activities that are relevant to them; and for teachers, it can reinforce curriculum aims and good teaching practices;
3. aligns assessment with curriculum and instruction;
4. provides students with multiple opportunities to demonstrate their competence;
5. allows students to be active participants in the assessment process;
6. gives credence and recognition to the teachers' informed judgments about students' performance; and
7. allows teachers to be critical leaders in the assessment process.

NOTE:

The SBA is designed to:

1. test skills and abilities that cannot be adequately tested by external assessment;
2. provide opportunities for teachers and students to individualize aspects of the syllabus;
3. provide students with formative feedback as it is conducted over the course of several months. This formative feedback should improve student learning as they work through aspects of the SBA task; and
4. allow the students to improve on initial attempts to develop the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes require to acquire the best possible score on the activity.

The SBA should focus on:

- (i) the application of knowledge, skills and attitudes (for Science these will include observation, investigation and experimentation);
- (ii) opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship (for TVET subjects these include design and development); and
- (iii) civic responsibility (for History these include researching and documenting).

Advantages of the SBA

The SBA:

1. provides an opportunity to individualise a part of the curriculum to meet the needs of students;

2. facilitates feedback to the student at various stages of the experience. This helps to build the self-confidence of students as they proceed with their studies;
3. facilitates the development of the critical skills and abilities emphasised by the subject and enhances the validity of the examination on which candidate performance is reported;
4. makes a significant and unique contribution to both the development of relevant skills and the testing and rewarding of students for the development of those skills;
5. caters to multiple intelligences as various teaching and learning strategies are utilised;
6. provides students with skills needed to function in everyday life; and
7. provides multiple opportunities and multiple ways to develop and demonstrate knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Changes to the SBA (The SBA Policy)

In 2011, the Council made some changes to the administration of the SBA and developed a policy that outlines the way forward for the conduct of SBAs. The following are the key components of the Policy that impact the implementation of the SBA.

- (i) Group/ Team work at SBA should be encouraged and utilized where appropriate.
- (ii) Students doing more than one subject in a cognate group (for example, the Sciences) should submit one SBA per cognate group.
- (iii) Each SBA across levels should be of consistent size. Word count should not exceed 1000 for CSEC and 1500 for CAPE subjects.
- (iv) The term School-Based Assessment should replace other terms used at various levels for internal assessment.
- (v) The use of portfolios, observations, learning journals, presentations, observations, peer evaluations and research assignments in the SBA should be endorsed and implemented.

- (vi) Students should be allowed to submit SBA electronically.
- (vii) Mathematics and English would have SBAs from the next revision of the syllabus.
- (viii) A thematic approach should be employed in the development of SBAs.

Guidelines for Administering the SBA

During the course of study for the subject, students obtain marks for the competence they develop and demonstrate in undertaking their SBA assignments. These marks contribute to the final marks and grades that are awarded to students for their performance in the examination.

The guidelines provided in the syllabuses for selecting appropriate tasks are intended to assist teachers and students in selecting assignments that are valid for the purpose of SBA. The guidelines provided for the assessment of these assignments are intended to assist teachers in awarding marks that are reliable estimates of the achievement of students in the School-Based Assessment component of the course.

The Council seeks to ensure that the School-Based Assessment scores are valid and reliable estimates of accomplishment. The guidelines provided in this syllabus are intended to assist in doing so.

In order to ensure that the scores awarded by teachers are in line with the Caribbean Examinations Council's standards, the Council undertakes the moderation of a sample of the School-Based Assessment assignments marked by each teacher. We will discuss Moderation in detail later in this Handbook.

Recommended Approaches to the SBA

1. It is not intended that the tasks/assignments/projects/exercises used for the SBA should be artificial and meaningless.
 - a. The SBA should therefore be something that is relevant to the students' own experiences and drawn from things that are meaningful to them.
 - b. Teachers should work with their students to set, conduct and mark a series of assignments in keeping with the guidelines provided by CXC.

2. The SBA **should not be implemented as a one shot assessment activity**.
 - a. Encourage students to work on the SBA assignment in stages. Feedback should be provided as necessary at every stage of the activity.
 - b. Allow students multiple opportunities to redo the SBA tasks and to submit different drafts of the SBA for review.
 - c. On each draft, provide the student with feedback that will allow him/her to improve on other drafts.
 - d. The final SBA product should be the students' best work.

3. Where possible, schedule in class time for students to work on their SBA. The SBA should not be seen as a totally out of classroom activity.

NOTE:

The SBA provides an excellent opportunity for students to get feedback, conduct self-assessment, apply their knowledge and skills and improve their learning and achievement.

Role of the Teacher in SBA

Teachers are critical leaders in the SBA process and perform a number of key roles.

- Ensure the task selected for the SBA activity is related to given syllabus objectives. This task should fit in the normal work being done in the class.
- Analyse the task selected and develop a **detailed** criteria for assessing the selected task using the example given in the syllabus as a guide.
- Examine the mark scheme given in the syllabus and if this is different (for example, in the sciences); construct a mark scheme which can be used accurately and consistently.
- Provide a list of resources that students will need to complete the SBA.
- Mark all practical work according to SBA standards.
- Give students access to the criteria and mark scheme that will be used to assess the task.
- Give students adequate opportunities to practice similar tasks.
- Provide feedback to the students on their work and allow them to revise their SBA based on feedback provided.
 - Good feedback contains information the students can use to improve their learning.

To successfully administer the SBA and to maximise the potential of the SBA to the learning process, it is important that teachers:

- a. manage the SBA as part and parcel of the internal work of the school;
- b. understand what SBA tasks are to be done and how they are to be done;
- c. be aware of the criteria being used in assessment; and
- d. assess assignments competently.

Useful Tips:

In conducting the Task Analysis and Criteria Development for the SBA, here are some useful steps to follow.

1. List in the correct sequence of all the steps the students must carry out to perform the specific the task.
 2. Select from the list, steps which are appropriate for assessing student performance on a particular task.
 3. Assign marks to each criterion according to the difficulty or complexity of the task.
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NOTE:

- The SBA **should not be done under examination conditions** as this defeats the purpose of SBA (Do not use Paper 02 examination questions, for example in History).
- The criteria and mark scheme must be accessible to CXC.
- Marks should be submitted to CXC based on the guidelines in the syllabus.

Presentation of SBA Products

The SBA products may be presented in a number of formats. The following presentation formats are typically used and should be encouraged:

- Portfolio Assessment
- Learning journals
- Dramatic presentations
- Research assignments
- Multimedia presentations
- Community projects/ Laboratory activities including investigations
- Site Visit/ Field trip
- Orals

- Case Studies
- Field activities
- Sporting activities and event planning
- Designing/Composing (TVET subjects)

Portfolio Assessment

Portfolios are important tools for assessing students' work over time. Given the nature and purpose of the SBA, portfolios provide you and your students with the opportunity to track their progress over time and provide students with multiple opportunities to re-do given tasks.

The portfolio is a student-centred approach to assessment that can serve as a continuous evaluation tool. **The portfolio places a strong emphasis on continuous feedback and evaluation to facilitate improvement in teaching and learning.** The portfolio is a collaborative activity between you and your students.

Portfolios:

- encourage independent, self-directed learning;
- offer opportunities for creating the intersection between teaching and assessment; and
- provide opportunities for students to be assessed formatively.

Characteristics of the portfolio assessment

Portfolio Assessment is multi-dimensional in nature and has the following characteristics:

1. it is continuous and monitors the students' progress while they work toward the achievement of the learning outcomes;
2. uses a wide variety of tangible evidences reflecting various aspects of the delivery and learning processes;
3. is reflective providing students with an opportunity to analyse their performance and track the development of their knowledge and skills and;
4. assessment results are used to improve the delivery and learning processes.

Advantages of the Portfolio

1. Promotes self-evaluation, goal setting and reflection among students
2. Promotes the development of critical thinking skills as students engage in authentic tasks
3. Enables shared goal setting between teachers and students
4. Facilitates student centered learning as students input in the learning process is increased

5. Provides opportunities for teachers to use formative tasks to improve learning.

Pieces included in the portfolio must be “purposefully” selected to demonstrate achievement of specific learning outcomes.

The following may be included in the portfolio:

- Journal entries
- Reflective pieces
- Data on student performance
- Products of activities
- Teachers’ comments.

The role of the teacher in portfolio assessment

1. Work with the student to clarify the contents of the portfolio to include samples of the student work, teacher observations, student reflections and records from conferences held with the student
2. Develop guidelines for selecting the content for the portfolio
3. Develop assessment rubric-criteria for judging the quality of the portfolio (in keeping with the guidelines provided in the syllabuses).
4. Hold formal and informal conferences with the student to review work and discuss progress
5. Encourage reflection on the process.

NOTE:

1. Portfolios must be longitudinal in nature to measure student achievement over time.
2. Student work should be created in response to specific learning outcomes that have been communicated to them.
3. Portfolios must focus on authentic activities that are meaningful to the students.

Please refer to specific syllabuses for details of the requirements for that syllabus.

Learning Journals

Learning Journals/Reflective Journals

A learning journal is a collection of thoughts, observations, notes and other materials over time. These are related to a specific area of study and with selected learning outcomes. Learning journals support student learning as they engage in the process of writing and thinking about their learning experiences.

The use of learning journals as an assessment tool promotes reflection on the learning process. Through journal writing, students are provided with opportunities to reflect on their learning styles, preferences and experiences and use these as a way to improve their learning.

Learning journals are excellent tools for continuous assessment.

Advantages of Learning Journals

- Facilitate self-monitoring and self-assessment.
- Support reviewing, re-reading of written pieces and reflection on experiences.
- Encourage active engagement in their own learning.
- Facilitate self-directed learning.
- Promote critical reflection.
- Encourage awareness of how they learn.

The role of the teacher

The teacher should:

- a. clarify the role and purpose of the learning journals;
- b. work with your students to identify learning events/products that can be recorded in their journal;
- c. develop guidelines for creating their learning journals; and
- d. work with students to identify the different features of their learning journals.

Research Assignments

The Role of the Teacher in Managing the Research Assignment

Since the School-Based Assessment is an integral part of the evaluation scheme of the syllabus, teachers are expected to guide and monitor students' progress and score the finished product in accordance with the criteria set out in the mark scheme.

In addition, teachers should:

- a. advise students on the areas suitable for research;
- b. assist in the refinement of the research question;
- c. approve students' research question and plans;
- d. advise students about the deadlines for completing and submitting the interim drafts and the final report;
- e. advise students of the nature of the task and the scope and depth of research required;
- f. advise students on the availability of resource materials;
- g. monitor students' progress by advising them on the quality of their work in progress and suggesting ways to improve quality;
- h. employ appropriate techniques to establish authenticity of their work. These techniques may include oral questioning and review of students' progress reports and preliminary drafts;
- i. mark the research reports submitted by students;
- j. keep a record of students' marks and submit it together with samples of work as requested by CXC; and
- k. attach the research proposal/strategy sheet to each sample script submitted.

Site Visits/Field Trips

Site visits and field trips can provide students with excellent learning opportunities and do not need not be complex and costly. However, careful preparation is essential if students are to benefit from these activities. Site visits or field trips can provide students with access to new opportunities for learning and experimenting that they would not otherwise be introduced to. The larger the numbers involved, the more critical coordination becomes. Planning is the key to hosting a successful site visit or field trip. An appropriate plan should provide students with experiences which expand and reinforce their understanding.

There are four phases to a site visit or field trip:

1. student preparation
2. administration
3. on-site activities
4. follow-up

Site visits and field trips must focus on objectives included in the syllabus. Students must be prepared and they should be involved in the planning process.

The role of the teacher

Trip Selection

1. Identify the rationale, objectives and plan of evaluation for the site visit/field trip.
2. Select the site to be visited. Contact the relevant authorities for the site and arrange the date and time. Record addresses, directions, contact persons, phone numbers and email addresses
3. Conduct a pre-visit to familiarize yourself with the major features of the site.

Logistics Planning

1. Obtain approval from administration
2. Organise transportation
3. Make arrangements for meals if needed
4. Develop a schedule for the day
5. Arrange for special equipment -supplies, digital camera
6. Seek parent/guardian permission
7. Collect money for admission fees and transportation cost if necessary
8. Provide alternative arrangements for pupils who will not be going on the trip.
9. Create a list of all student names and names and numbers of emergency contacts.
10. Contact the other persons who will accompany you on the trip.

Preparing Students Before the Trip

1. Discuss the purpose of the site visit/field trip and how it relates to the current unit of study.
2. Discuss specific tasks to be carried out.
3. Explore the Website(Google Earth) of the location to be visited.
4. Discuss the standards of conduct for the trip, lunch plans, appropriate clothing to wear for the trip and so on.
5. Discuss with students how to ask good questions and brainstorm a list of open-ended observation questions to gather information during the visit.
6. Discuss the site visit/field trip schedule.

Final Planning

- Check all permission slips the day before the field trip.

Conducting the Trip

On the day of the trip:

1. Divide class into small groups and assign chaperones to groups
2. Assign each student a partner
3. Place a class list and student emergency forms in a folder
4. Secure a cell phone

5. Take along an emergency kit
6. Take inventory of specific equipment (e.g., recording devices – digital camera, audio recorder; measuring devices etc.), and other supplies pertinent to the particular field trip

Post-Site Visit/Field Trip Activities

Just as quality pre-planning is essential to the success of a site visit/field trip, planning for appropriate follow-up activities will facilitate student learning and multiply the value of hands-on experiences outside the classroom. The following activities provide a general guide when planning for post-field trip classroom experiences.

1. Provide time for students to share general observations and reactions to field trip experiences
2. Share specific assignments students completed while on the field trip.
3. Link field trip activities to curricular areas.
4. Share and evaluate student assignments/activities.

Evaluating the Site Visit/Field Trip

The answers to the questions below will provide a good reference for future site visits/field trips.

- What was of unique educational value in this site visit/field trip?
- Did the students meet the objectives/expectations?
- Was there adequate time?
- Was there adequate staff and adult supervision?
- What might be done differently to make this an even better experience in the future?
- What special points should be emphasized next time?
- What special problems should be addressed in the future?
- What would improve a visit to this site in the future?

Practical work and Experimental skills (Science)

Practical activities are an integral part of any science. Students doing the sciences are expected to master certain practical skills laid out in the syllabuses. Each must be assessed on a regular basis for submission to the CXC. Students must be given practice in acquiring these skills before they are formally assessed. Setting up, monitoring and marking of practicals take time and effort. However, the actual practical sessions can be very exciting for both the teacher and the student.

Role of the teacher

The teacher should facilitate students' learning of accurate and unbiased information that will contribute to a more scientifically literate society that is capable of making educated and ethical decisions regarding the world we live in.

Safety and general procedures

Before the lab

1. Check equipment to ensure that they are not damaged or leaking.
2. Have a first aid kit handy and a fire extinguisher.
3. Familiarise students with emergency procedures.

During the lab

1. Remind students to use small quantities of reagents and materials to avoid spillage.
2. Always warn students to be careful when using chemicals which are corrosive or flammable.
3. Remind students to point the mouth of the test tube at an angle away from others when heating and adding reacting substances.
4. Ensure that the gas is not turned on before lighting matches and that flammable liquids are kept well away from lighted burners.
5. Remind students to pour reagent on the side of the reagent bottle away from the label so that drainage does not damage the label.
6. Warn students not to contaminate reagent chemicals by pouring back unused chemical into original bottle.
7. Cover bottles immediately after use with the correct stopper.
8. Warn students not to pour chemicals down the drains of sinks.
9. Keep moving around the lab.

After the lab session

1. Make sure the water taps and gas taps are turned off.
2. Place reagent bottles back in their correct places.
3. Leave the lab as you would like to find it.

Successful Practicals

The practical lessons will be successful if you are well prepared and students know what is expected of them.

1. The aim of the practical activity and procedures should be clearly understood by all students.
2. Check the availability and accessibility of the required materials and apparatus.
3. Encourage group work.
4. Students should be encouraged to write results directly into their lab books and should be recorded faithfully.

5. Students should be encouraged to refer to the aim in writing the discussion.
6. Lab books should be corrected regularly and marked as soon as possible. Feedback should be written in the lab books.

An effective way of verifying authenticity is to insist on check points for students to show how their work is progressing. Teachers may also use brief oral questions to verify that candidates did indeed engage in the research activities. Some teachers may require candidates to submit preliminary drafts along with the final version, although only the final version will be assessed.

NOTE:

Please refer to specific syllabuses for detailed descriptions of the SBA for that syllabus.

Understanding Moderation Techniques

Moderation

CXC moderates the SBA in order to ensure that the assessment of the work of different schools carried out by different teachers using sometimes different tasks is aligned to the standard of assessment defined by CXC.

The Council undertakes different types of moderation for its suite of offerings.

Visiting Moderation

Moderators or trained CXC assessors, visit the schools or centres and mark tasks on site. The assessment may involve observing process skills, or evaluating the product or both. In some instances, all the tasks are assessed; in other instances, only samples of tasks are assessed.

Moderation by Remarking

Trained examiners remark samples of assignments, practical work or projects during the Marking Exercise. These samples are carefully chosen so as to analyse the quality of the marking and the consistency with which the teachers apply the Marking Scheme.

Besides providing a moderation procedure, the remarking of the assignments has another critical purpose. It is intended to assess whether teachers have understood Council's procedures. Council provides moderation feedback reports to teachers with comments designed to help teachers to improve their professional expertise in assessment. This diagnostic concept is a critical feature in the development of the teachers of the region.

Oral Examination

Approved examiners conduct oral examinations at a school or a centre using a set of tasks or examination questions prescribed by CXC.

Centre moderation

CXC conducts centre moderation for all subject offerings. Each Centre registering candidates for the examination is required to submit ONE sample consisting of the work of a maximum of five candidates per subject. Teachers of a specific subject, at a given centre are therefore required to collaborate on ALL aspects of the School Based Assessment requirements.

Please Note:

Check individual syllabuses for the type of moderation that is done for that subject.

Compilation and Submission of SBA scores

Online SBA

- All centres are required to submit SBA marks, the Estimated Grade and Order of Merit electronically. The SBA Data Capture Module of the Online Registration System (ORS) must be used for the submission of ALL SBA marks.

The SBA marks may be submitted using the import/export menu. **The programme will not permit the submission of marks unless SBA marks, Order of Merit and Estimated Grades, have been entered for all candidates for all subjects.**

The relevant documentation is available online for download from the Council's website (www.cxc.org) and all enquiries concerning the programme may be directed to the Local Registrar's Office.

Please note:

1. Great care should be exercised in the recording and totalling of all SBA marks submitted. SBA marks must be whole numbers.
2. The teacher(s) preparing candidates MUST submit the SBA mark, Estimated Grade and Order of Merit **for each candidate** in the centre who is registered for the SBA component of the subject.
3. Teachers must ensure that the Order of Merit and the Estimated Grade submitted are based on the candidate's **overall performance** in the subject and not the SBA component only.
4. Principals and teachers should ensure that all candidates registered for subjects with SBA components, either
 - (i) have scores for the current year;
 - (ii) are Resit Candidates from the PREVIOUS year, or
 - (iii) are private candidates, offering the alternative to the SBA – Biology, Caribbean History, Chemistry, Economics, Electronic Document Preparation and Management, Geography, Integrated Science, Office Administration, Physics, Principles of Accounts, Principles of Business and Social Studies only. This applies only to the May-June Sitting only.
5. Candidates who did no work for the current year and have no SBA scores from the previous year **must be indicated** by selecting the "No SBA" checkbox on the SBA Data Capture Screen. Zero scores must not be recorded for these candidates.
6. SBA marks must be submitted to the Local Registrar, **by the date prescribed by the Local Registrar.**
7. The school must obtain from the Local Registrar, confirmation that the SBA marks submitted online were received.

Guidelines for Submitting SBA Samples

1. Submit, to the Local Registrar, the SBA work of a sample of candidates in accordance with the guidelines set by CXC.
2. After the SBA marks have been entered online, a list of the candidates whose work should comprise the sample for the centre must be generated using the SBA programme.
3. Submit the work of each selected candidate together with the completed SBA Moderation Form. Remember to include **the printed list indicating the sample selected by the SBA programme.**
4. Also remember, **DO NOT** use the SBA Moderation Form as a SBA record sheet. **The moderation form should be used to record the registration numbers, candidate names and scores for the candidates whose work is being submitted as part of the sample and must be submitted with the SBA sample ONLY.**
5. If a teacher is unable to submit the work of particular candidates or samples of the candidates' work, a full explanation of the school's non-compliance with the Council's regulations **must** be submitted by the Principal to the Registrar by June 15.
6. Each item of the selected samples of work must be clearly identified with **bold** inscriptions of:
 - I. the candidate's name;
 - II. the candidate's complete registration number as assigned by the Council; and
 - III. the subject/Unit and the Proficiency;
7. All samples of work in a particular subject must be secured together in ONE package or

envelope.

8. The package or envelope must be clearly marked with the:

- I. centre code;
- II. name of the subject and the proficiency; and
- III. name of the teacher(s) who marked the sample of work.

Please note:

Labels will be provided by the Council for this purpose

The Principal must obtain from the Local Registrar, receipts detailing the centre, number of samples, and the name(s) of the teacher(s) for ALL samples of work submitted.

NOTE:

- **The deadlines for submission that are listed for each subject indicate when the data/documents should reach CXC and in some cases supersede deadline dates provided in the syllabus.** Failure to submit SBA data/documents by the deadline dates will result in candidates receiving a status of “ungraded”.
- In order to meet CXC’s deadlines, Local Registrars will set their own deadline dates for submission of records and samples from schools.

Retention of Assignments

- The work of the candidates should be retained at the school for at least 3 months following the publication of results.

Examination Work – Copyright

- All assignments, projects and assessment sheets are part of the examination records and will be considered the property of CXC.

Resit Candidates

- For CSEC[®] candidates, SBA marks can be carried forward only **ONCE** and only for the year immediately following the first sitting. Candidates are only eligible to register as “Resit Candidates” if the moderated SBA mark (SBA mark awarded after review by CXC) obtained is at least 50% of the total SBA marks obtainable for the subject.
- CAPE candidates may reuse any moderated SBA scores obtained within a two year period. However, to assist candidates in making decisions about whether or not to reuse a moderated SBA score, the Council will continue to indicate on the preliminary results if a candidate’s moderated score is less than 50% in a particular Unit. Candidates re- using SBA scores in this way should have been registered as “Re-sit candidates” and should have provided the previous candidate number when registering.
- Candidates wishing to register as Resit Candidates must ensure that their registration information is identical to that submitted for the previous June’s examination.

All SBA documents are available on the CXC website. (www.cxc.org)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Question 1:

What procedures teachers must follow if they suspect students have copied, bought or in any way been caught in fraudulent activities with respect to the completion of their school-based assessment task, especially since you enter only the score online and there is no guarantee that the SBA will be requested as one of the sample pieces for moderation?

Answer:

The SBA is a continuous exercise and fraud should be detected during the process and not at the end. If fraud is discovered only when the SBA is submitted, then it suggests that the teacher dealt with the SBA as a summative assignment, not formative. In other words, the teacher was not vigilant. If plagiarism is discovered early, the teacher should consult the Head of Department and Principal so the student can be warned and the work redone.

In recent times teachers who are presented with completed work from candidates for submission have interviewed the candidates about the work and then referred the matter to CXC along with the findings from the interview. The Awarding Committees will make the determination whether or not to accept the work.

Question 2:

What action does CXC take if students are caught committing fraudulent activities in their school-based assessment tasks?

Answer:

Once the matter is brought to CXC's attention, the FAC will review the case based on the statements submitted by the teacher and the candidate. The penalty for fraud is cancellation of the result.

This is in accordance with ***Regulation 6.2: If the Council is satisfied that the examination in any subject at any centre has not been conducted in accordance with its Regulations or that there has been any irregularity whatever connected with the examination which could materially affect the candidates' results at any centre, the Council may, at its discretion disqualify any or all of the candidates at that centre.*** (Regulations for the Conduct of the Council's Examinations, Definitions, Regulations and Procedures, 2008)

Question 3:

Is there an objective method to calculate the scores of the students in your class which you will then use to predict what Grade they will most likely get in the exam?

Answer:

The teacher's professional judgement based on his experience of the candidate's accumulated class performance is as good as any other objective method. In any case, in some subjects students' class assessment will include tests and quizzes which by themselves are objective instruments, despite the fact that they are teacher- made.

Question 4:

Using the principle of formative feedback, much challenged students can do relatively decent school-based assessment tasks but perform dismally in Papers 01 and 02, what is CXC's view of this? Does this reflect badly on the teacher?

Answer:

CXC is aware that the SBA is done under circumstances quite different from controlled examination conditions. SBA is formative. Papers 01 and 02 are 'one-shot', external and summative. However, the teacher must try to be as honest and truthful in assessing the SBA. Studies have shown that there is a very high correlation between students' SBA performance and external performance.

Question 5:

How much feedback is too much feedback? Can there be too much feedback?

Answer:

CXC Feedback to teachers

- No. The questions on the Feedback form are specific and the answers will be specific as well. That is what all exam boards do. What is important is the extent to which the students and teachers are able to benefit from the feedback provided.

Teacher's Feedback to student

- Yes. Teachers are expected to supervise the SBA, providing guidance as the candidates refine the work. The work presented must be that of the candidates; not work which is ultimately that of the teacher. Teachers' feedback should not equate to dictating the SBA.

Question 6:

Should teachers mark work where there is evidence of plagiarism?

Answer:

Answered under Question 1: Student must re-do.

Question 7:

What action does CXC take if students are found plagiarising?

Answer:

Plagiarism is a universal intellectual offence and is taken very seriously. The penalty for plagiarism is cancellation of results. (See 2)

Question 8:

What recourse do teachers have if students refuse to do SBA tasks?

Answer:

This is an internal matter to be dealt with by the school. The SBA is a component of the examination, so if candidates do not submit SBA, CXC's regulations are clear, they will be reported *Ungraded – No SBA submitted*.

Regulations for the Conduct of the Council's Examinations, Definitions, Regulations and Procedures, 2008:

Regulation 2.1.10: Candidates presented by recognised Educational Institutions must submit within the year of the examination, their SBA assignments as required by the syllabus.

Procedure 13.4.3: Candidates will be reported “UNGRADED: NO SBA RECORDS/SAMPLES RECEIVED” if the required SBA was not submitted by the presenting institution on their behalf or if, the Council having requested samples of the work done by the class, none was submitted by the presenting institution.

Question 9:

If a teacher knows that a student has done the SBA assignment, the teacher has seen the several drafts in process, the teacher has marked it but when the teacher is about to enter the summative mark the student has lost the SBA, can the teacher still enter the grade without having the physical evidence of the assignment?

Answer:

Good record-keeping by the teacher would avoid this occurrence. The Teacher should have an SBA file to serve as portfolio of SBA work. This file should be kept secure and access restricted.

Question 10:

What are Assessed Grades and under what conditions are students entitled to Assessed Grades?

An Assessed Grade is like an ‘aegrotat’ degree awarded in universities where due to some special extenuating circumstances (approved by the Board and stated in advance) the candidate is unable to write a component paper of a subject; when all other conditions are satisfied, a special predicted score is calculated for the missing mark; then this mark is added to determine the final grade (paper, profile and/ or composite).

Question 11:

Are Assessed Grades given in all subjects?

Answer:

Yes, but the conditions may vary from subject to subject. For example, in some subjects if a candidate missed Paper 2 (the major paper) they may be considered for an Assessed Grade. However, in others the rules are different. When the submission is made and the supporting documentation submitted, the Council will inform the Local Registrar whether or not the candidate will be considered for an Assessed Grade.

Question 12:

If a teacher wants to find out in detail more information about his/her implementation of the SBA, namely the suitability of the type of tasks assigned to students, the reliability of the marking, what procedures must be followed to ascertain this information? Are there costs attached and if so how much?

Answer:

Ideally, this information should be available as part of the teacher's in-house training/professional development and/or at CXC workshops for free.

Question 13:

Some teachers have never received **Moderation Feedback** forms and have never seen the **Comment Forms** which ask them to comment on the exam.

Answer:

Teachers should check with their Principals or Heads of Department since the feedback form, which is the report on the moderation of the samples received from centres, are sent to schools immediately after the results have been issued.

The Comment Forms will be available on the CXC website from 2013. CXC encourages all teachers to use these forms.

Question 14:

Can the Moderation Feedback forms provide more guidance to teachers on how to improve their administration of the SBA?

Answer:

The feedback report will provide information on the particular sample in terms of students' strengths and weaknesses (for the particular year). The year-by-year accumulated information should help the teacher improve his/her overall SBA administration. In the case of those subjects that have moderators who visit the schools to conduct moderation (on-site moderation), the moderator is well placed to provide guidance directly to the teachers.

CXC is also reviewing the Moderation Feedback Forms to determine if any improvements can be made to ensure that information critical to the teachers is captured and disseminated.

Question 15:

With Centre Moderation some teachers believe that the student that comes out top, middle and last might not necessarily be a true reflection of the particular student's ability/ranking.

Answer:

Selection of samples from top, medium and below is a proven statistical sampling procedure called stratified sampling. Teachers should not be concerned so long as the relevant collaboration has occurred among the teachers of the specific subject at that centre; and the SBA and its scoring have been done to the best professional ability and integrity of the teacher. It is the fairest proven system that can be employed, short of assessing each candidate's work.