Discussions about making achievement decisions: Using the standards and pluses and minuses

Transcript of video

This video is available at www.qsa.qld.edu.au/29442.html

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When making a level-of-achievement decision, teachers use all the evidence in a folio of work.

They make a decision, first of all, about the best match to the standards for each dimension. And then they use the information in combination with the syllabus to award a level of achievement.

When teachers are marking student work, they will look at the student responses and they will match it up to the standards descriptors. Each dimension is made up of a number of different objectives. So teachers will work their way through each objective making the match to the standards and deciding whether the best match is to the A, B or C descriptor.

Once they have completed that, they have a number of ticks or annotations on their criteria sheet, and they'll have a clear picture of what the on-balance decision should be when making a judgment.

Teachers may use pluses and minuses to record their fine-grain decision making about their judgments about student achievement. The syllabus descriptors are mid-range descriptors and not all students will perform at a mid-range standard.

Sometimes student work in a particular dimension may have some, for example, C qualities but, on balance, the best match may be to the B descriptor. So a teacher may put a B– on that work to indicate that there are, yes, some C qualities but, on balance, the best match is to the B standard.

Teachers will use a profile to record the decisions that they’re making about the assessment package throughout the course of study. So, once a teacher has completed grading a student’s response, they will then transfer their final decisions about achievement for each dimension onto a profile sheet.

It’s simply a recording device for teachers. It’s not used to make a decision; it simply records decisions that a teacher has made throughout the assessment program.

Syllabuses don’t make reference to pluses and minuses. Syllabus standards are typically mid-range. Teachers may wish to use pluses and minuses if that helps them to express the fine-grain decision making that they’ve completed when they’re making judgments about student responses.

Review panels will look at a profile primarily to see the decision that a school has made within each dimension. Panellists will then look
through the folio of evidence to see if they can see work that matches those standards descriptors.

Schools are required to use the syllabus standards to make judgments about student achievement. Some schools might choose to use pluses and minuses; other schools might not.

Ultimately, the syllabus and the syllabus standards are our common reference point. Teachers, schools, and review panels all use the same syllabus standards to make their decisions.