Making achievement decisions

Shauna Bouel:
Senior Education Officer
Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority

Teachers make level of achievement decisions by looking at the on-balance decisions they have made for each of the dimensions or objectives, and then they will look at the syllabus to see whether the student responses match to a particular level of achievement. The level of achievements — VLA to VHA — are decided. And the minimum requirements for awarding a level of achievement are that a student will, for example, for an HA, have to receive two Bs, or a B in two different dimensions, and then no less than a C in the third dimension. So that gives advice to the teacher about how to make their level of achievement decision.

Jo Genders:
Senior Education Officer
Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority

Well, I guess if we start firstly with the big decision about which level of achievement this particular folio matches with. And, as you said, you’ve identified there is an A in Criterion 1, a B in Criterion 2 and an A in Criterion 3. And if we go to the syllabus, the minimum requirements for an exit level, clearly meets VHA requirements …

Kevin McAlinden:
State Review Panel Chair
Modern History

Absolutely.

Jo Genders:
Senior Education Officer
Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority

… two standard As; one standard B. So we’ve got a VHA.

Kevin McAlinden:
State Review Panel Chair
Modern History

We’ve got a VHA, and so the question really is that the relative placement within that particular band and whether we are dealing with a low VHA.
Shauna Bouel: 
Senior Education Officer 
Queensland Curriculum and 
Assessment Authority

Sure.

Teachers will make relative decisions by looking at the on-balance judgments they have made in each of the dimensions.

David Madden: 
District Review Panel Chair 
Physics

The first decision is to determine the level of achievement. So, for example, I’ve determined that it is at a B standard, and then I will be looking, I guess for, if I’m looking at a Form R6, it is not based on a single piece of assessment, it is based on a folio of work. And so, if I was looking at a student to be placed high within that band, I would expect to be seeing some evidence of some work at an A standard. So, I would be looking through the folio for, within the different pieces of assessment, for examples of work that met some of the A standard requirements. Similarly, if it was low within that, B or HA band, then I would be looking that perhaps there might be some deficiencies, some areas where it, it meant the work was more characteristic of a C standard.

What we would like to do is use the standards to try to differentiate between these two students to see if we can differentiate between their positions within a HA band, using the standards and the work that we find in their folio. I think, probably, we should start with the EEI because that assesses all three general objectives and so would probably give us … be a good starting point.

So, if we look at the student there, we can see there is a fair bit of work there that indicates that it’s at a B standard and some there that’s at the A. So if we look there, say in KCU, the sorts of things we are looking for is ‘complex and challenging’, Knowledge and conceptual understanding. And I think we can see some evidence in here, because there is work that clearly goes beyond what they have done in class and there is some multi-step processing of that.

So from there, if we compare that to the … this EEI, which also indicates a B standard, but the student has got some work that is more at a C standard. When we look at the explanation of Knowledge and conceptual understanding here, you see it’s much more superficial. Would you agree?

David Austin: 
State Review Panel Chair 
Physics

Yes, the quality of work that is presented in this particular student compared to that one … I think that the descriptors from the A standards of complex and challenging as well as linking of algorithms and finding solutions, we can clearly identify them in this work. Whereas in that particular piece of work, it’s more tenuous. In other words, I think that there are some circumstances where we can find some complexity. There is a little bit of work that has gone a little beyond perhaps the classroom information, but I wouldn’t describe this as complex and challenging.
David Madden: District Review Panel Chair Physics

So then if we looked at across a number of tasks, then perhaps we’d hope to see that reflected in the standards that have been demonstrated across a variety of tasks. And so again we see here, again, while the majority of the work seems to be at a B standard, there’s certainly some … a considerable amount of evidence that that’s at an A standard. Whereas, on the other hand, we look at this work again, the majority of the work is at, at the B standard. There’s quite good evidence that the Knowledge and conceptual understanding, and the IP are, are at the B standard. But, there’s also, certainly, a certain amount where they’ve only demonstrated the C standard. They’ve met the minimum requirements for the HA standard, but because of that C we, we’d indicate it being at the low end of the range.

David Austin: State Review Panel Chair Physics

Yes.

David Madden: District Review Panel Chair Physics

The work in this folio seems to be primarily, again … the bulk of evidence is at the B standard. Where, but there’s a number of occasions where the student has achieved the A standard, which would suggest that they would be at the higher end of the, of the HA range.

Peter Antrobus: State Review Panel Chair Mathematics B

Well, I’ve got a slightly better student. And this one has certainly got the same sort of area, but you can see that in Knowledge and procedures there’s some As, Bs, A, B and Bs. You, you could argue somewhere between an A and a B, but I’d probably say it’s closer to a B than an A. So in the Knowledge and procedures I’d be really looking at a B. However, as we go up into the knowledge … to the Modelling and problem solving, you can see that the student’s work has shown more consistently an A standard. There’s a few times where they’re actually a B. Ah … B here. But an A. Three of the instruments here have actually shown an A sort of a standard, so I’d be happy for an A, A minus, in that particular area.

In Communication and justification, almost … entirely the B standards come through. So if I look at this particular one, we’re talking about a B in Knowledge and procedures, an A in Modelling and problem solving, and a B in Communication and justification. If that was the case, I’d be looking at a high B. Perhaps not right on the 10. Perhaps eight or nine, to deal with that.

Bevan Penrose: State Review Panel Chair Mathematics C

Yeah, I think that’s reasonable based on those criteria sheets, yes, Peter.

Jo Genders: Senior Education Officer Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority

So what do we do in terms of placing Criterion 2 … the whole folio with reference to evidence in Criterion 2? We know it cannot be a mid-range VHA, don’t we?
Kevin McAlinden: State Review Panel Chair Modern History

It’s not mid-range but it’s not absolutely threshold either.

Jo Genders: Senior Education Officer Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority

No. Okay.

Kevin McAlinden: State Review Panel Chair Modern History

Because I think there is sufficient evidence in Criterion 2 — which is the contentious one — to show the student isn’t really just hanging in there, on the edge, the very, very bare minimum.

Jo Genders: Senior Education Officer Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority

Well there are some A qualities in that particular dimension and criterion aren’t there? So, so we need to recognise that, with reference to the placement.

Kevin McAlinden: State Review Panel Chair Modern History

So, I would be thinking it is somewhere around about VH2, is my sense of what the evidence, the evidence is telling me.

Jo Genders: Senior Education Officer Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority

Certainly, yes, I could support that. And I could certainly see it’s not threshold, it is lower than typical, and it’s certainly somewhere in that range. So I think that’s a good decision.

Kevin McAlinden: State Review Panel Chair Modern History

Yeah.

Shauna Bouel: Senior Education Officer Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority

It is important that teacher judgments are consistent. Consistency requires teachers to have professional conversations with other teachers so that they develop shared understandings, they use student responses and talk about the match to the standards.

Jo Genders: Senior Education Officer Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority

The professional conversations that teachers have in reaching agreement about student achievement ensure that judgments are reliable, consistent, transparent and fair.