



**Ministry of Education, Sports & Culture**  
**Government of Sāmoa**

# **SĀMOA NATIONAL SCHOOL ASSESSMENT POLICY FRAMEWORK**

**March 2010**

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The Chief Executive Officer  
Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture  
P.O.Box 1869  
Apia  
SAMOA

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACEO	Assistant Chief Executive Officer
AEU	Assessment and Examination Unit
AMIS	Assessment Management Information System
AO	Assessment Officer
CAT	Classroom Assessment Techniques
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CMAD	Curriculum, Materials and Assessment Division
CMU	Curriculum and Materials Unit
ESPII	Education Sector Project Phase II
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
MESC	Ministry of Education, Sports & Culture
NAC	National Assessment Council
NCPF	National Curriculum Policy Framework
NUS	National University of Sāmoa
PAO	Principal Assessment Officer
PEO	Principal Education Officer
PPRD	Policy Planning and Research Division
PSSC	Pacific Senior Secondary Certificate
SAO	Senior Assessment Officer
SNSAPF	Sāmoa National School Assessment Policy Framework
SOD	School Operations Division
SPBEA	South Pacific Board of Educational Assessment
SPELL	Sāmoa Primary Education Literacy Levels
SPP	Strategic Policies and Plan
SPC	Student Progress Report Card
SRO	School Review Officer
SSC	Sāmoa School Certificate
SWA	School-wide Assessment
SWAC	School-wide Assessment Committee
USP	University of the South Pacific

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### *The ESP II Assessment sub committee*

Doreen Roebeck-Tuala (Chairperson)

Gatoloaifa'aana Tilianamua Afamasaga<sup>1</sup>

Funeali'i Lumā'ava So'oa'emalelagi<sup>2</sup>

Lemalu Lafi Sanerivi

Ainslie Chu Ling-So'o

Salā Manase Reupena

Tepora Afamasaga-Wright

Letuimanu'asina Emma Kruse-Va'ai

Fa'aea Mulitalo-Roache

Papali'i Elena Tuipoloa

Gauna Wong

Fitu Fuimaono

---

<sup>1</sup> Also as Assessment and Examination Framework National Specialist, ESPII

<sup>2</sup> Also as School Assessment National Specialist, ESPII

### ***The ESP II Specialists***

Dr Richard DLC. Gonzales, Assessment & Examination Framework Specialist

Dr Diana Guild, School Assessment Specialist

Dr Al Parkes, Information Systems Specialist

Dr Anthony Austin, former Team Leader/Curriculum Development Specialist

Dr Robert Early, Bilingual Education Specialist

## INTRODUCTION

The Sāmoa National School Assessment Policy Framework (SNSAPF) relates to learners, community members, schools, teachers, school management and governing bodies, Government, and other related agencies. The SNSAPF provides the rationale, principles, values and best practices that guide all assessment and evaluation, testing and measurement and examinations in the school system of Sāmoa.

### VISION

A national assessment framework that is sound in its philosophical and ideological underpinnings and practical in implementation in order to enable all learners in Sāmoan schools to enhance their learning and capabilities to become fully participating members of Sāmoan society economically, socially and culturally.

### MISSION

The Sāmoa National School Assessment Policy Framework (SNSAPF) is committed to:

- Teaching and learning policies, assessment principles and practices, systems and environments that enable all learners to realise their potential while at school, encourage them to extend their learning beyond school and provide pathways to achieve this
- The provision of reliable, evaluative and diagnostic evidence that validates the success of education initiatives at individual, school, system, national and international levels
- The use of reliable and consistent evidence for the purposes of certification and or selection

There are twelve sections in this framework.

## SECTION 1:

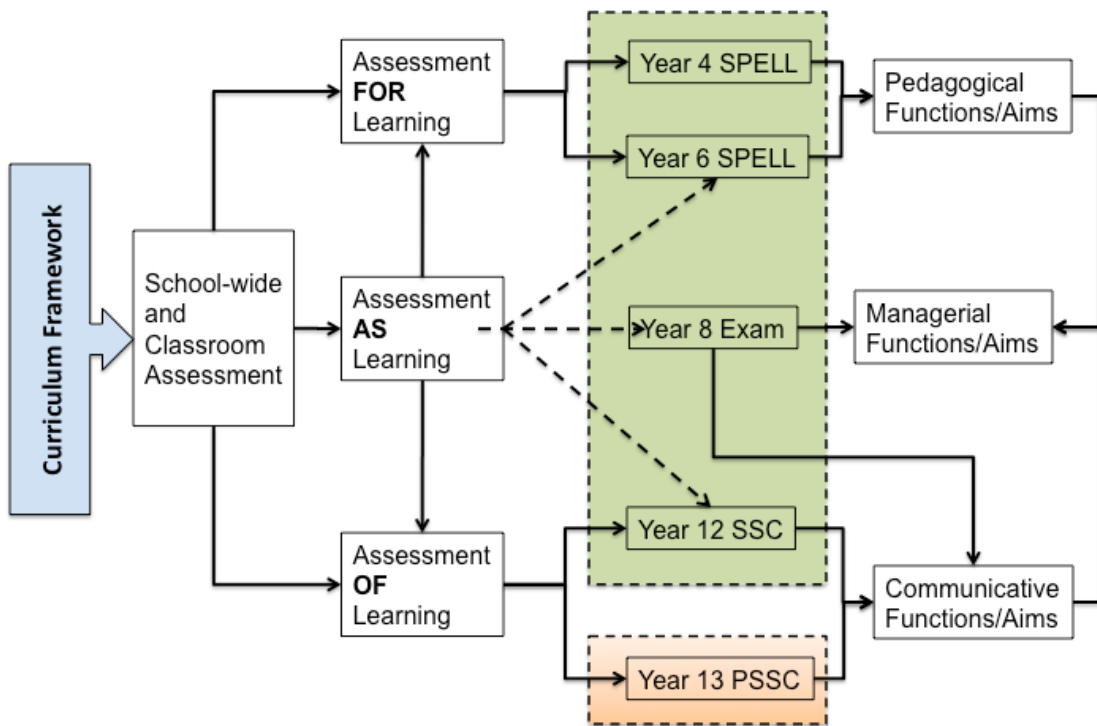
### POLICY OBJECTIVE

- 1.1. The objective of the Sāmoa National School Assessment Policy Framework (SNSAPF) is anchored in the aspiration of assessment school qualifications provided in the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture *Strategic Policies and Plan 2006-2015*. The objective is to provide a framework for the conduct of assessment and an examination system that supports and recognizes achievement described by the curriculum framework and which facilitates recognition of achievement by post-school stakeholders.
- 1.2. The SNSAPF details assessment processes at the school, national, and regional levels. It applies to all preschools, primary schools, secondary schools, colleges and special schools. It prescribes fair and just assessment for all students irrespective of gender, ethnicity, belief, ability, social or cultural background, and geographical location. It covers all years of schooling from Preschool to Year 13.
- 1.3. These policies are subject to review, revision and improvement every five years, or earlier as deemed necessary.

## SECTION 2:

### PURPOSES AND FUNCTIONS OF ASSESSMENT

- 2.1. Assessment in all Sāmoan schools shall be an integral part of promoting student learning. The major purpose of assessment is to gather data and information reflecting students' learning outcomes, student performance, teaching practices, and school accountability and transparency.
- 2.2. The purposes of assessment are:
  - **Assessment for Learning** - promotes further improvement of student learning by performing assessment while the instructional process is going on
  - **Assessment as Learning** - develops and supports how children learn on their own
  - **Assessment of Learning** - provides information about the progress of children's learning as well as a summative view of learning
- 2.3. These purposes are incorporated in the following model:



**Assessment Model**

2.4. The **functions** of assessment shall be classified into three main areas:

- **Pedagogical functions:** Mainly diagnostic and formative assessment to evaluate the success of teaching and instruction.
- **Managerial functions:** Consistent and continuous assessment to hold schools accountable for student progress and selecting students to benefit from limited resources, e.g. scholarship and admission to colleges and university education.
- **Communicative functions:** Mainly summative assessment to provide information to parents, other teachers, education institutions, or employers about students knowledge and skills and for producing a list of top performing schools in a national test to inform parental choice.

## SECTION 3:

### DEFINITION AND PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT

3.1. Assessment is a critical element of the National Curriculum Policy Framework (NCPF). It is the process of collecting and interpreting evidence in order to



determine the learner's progress in learning and to make a judgment about a learner's performance. Evidence can be collected at different times and places, and with the use of various methods, instruments, modes, and media.

3.2. The SNSAPF shall adopt the following broad principles of educational assessment.

In general, assessment will:

- Support and improve learning
- Engage learners and communities
- Be fair
- Be relevant
- Be manageable

3.3. To give effect to these broad principles, the following specific components are agreed and declared to be critical.

**A. In order to support and improve learning, assessment shall:**

- i. Be integrated within meaningful and effective programmes of study. Expectations and learning outcomes will be clearly established in the course of the programme and consistently observed in assessment activities and schedules
- ii. Take a variety of approaches to collecting evidence of learners achievements appropriate to the programme of teaching and type of learning and learning styles and contexts
- iii. Enhance the processes of teaching and learning by contributing useful information that can be readily interpreted by learners, teachers and the community

**B. In order to engage learners and communities, assessment shall:**

- i. Relate to the clearly articulated learning outcomes of the course of study involved
- ii. Encourage and reward learners and promote self and peer assessment and further learning
- iii. Provide timely, ongoing, and meaningful feedback and guidance to learners as to their learning achievements and future needs
- iv. Report achievement of educational outcomes to learners and communities in terms that enhance understanding of progress against learning outcomes and clarify what is required to attain further success

- v. Have regard to the individual needs, circumstances, cultures and aspirations of individual learners
- vi. Take into account the wishes and views of communities at the local, national and regional level

**C. In order to be fair, assessment must be:**

- i. Valid. Assessment shall consider the intended learning outcomes and effectively measure student achievement of them
- ii. Timely undertaken at such times as learners are most likely to expect success in the assessment
- iii. Contextualised. Assessment will take into account the learning environments of learners and the content covered by programs of learning while encouraging a breadth of capability within the discipline concerned
- iv. Accessible. Barriers to participation in assessment arising from cost, isolation, language, gender, age, background, ability, availability of resources and similar factors are minimized
- v. Inclusive. Assessment must not by its nature disadvantage individuals or groups. It will be bias-free. Assessment activities shall recognise the diversity of learners and provide all with meaningful and realistic opportunities
- vi. Reliable. Assessment will be capable of repeatedly measuring achievement of the same intended outcomes accurately

**D. In order to be relevant, assessment shall:**

- i. Gather evidence by a variety of means that take account of the intended outcomes, the aspects of learning involved and the contexts of learners. The collection of evidence may be achieved by one or more of the following, or by other valid and reliable means: tests, examinations, submissions such as project work, fieldwork and portfolios, presentations and demonstrations, teacher/learner interactions and discussions
- ii. Be carried out by suitably qualified, trained and supported individuals and agencies, subject to quality assurance systems and processes that are agreed to, rigorous, and appropriately resourced

**E. In order to be manageable, assessment shall:**

- i. Be justified by providing appropriate, accurate and timely measurement of achievement of learning outcomes

- ii. Be integrated with, and contribute positively to, the teaching/learning process and to institutional programs
- iii. Take place in an environment of support and guidance for teachers and learners
- iv. Value and reinforce the participation of learners and teachers and the partnership between them
- v. Recognize and take into account the pressures on learners, teachers, school managers and other stakeholders

## SECTION 4:

### NATIONAL LEVEL ASSESSMENT

- 4.1. National level assessments shall determine whether a student has met expectations or has achieved learning outcomes for a selected level of schooling. Students shall be asked to apply the skills and concepts they have learned to complete realistic tasks in order for teachers, parents and students to compare student performance with national benchmarks. National assessments provide an independent indication from school assessment of what each student has learned and achieved.
- 4.2. National assessment shall serve a number of purposes including reporting, national examinations, and diagnostic tests.

### Reporting

#### **Individual Reports on Student Achievement**

- 4.3. These reports shall provide a profile of an individual student's performance against established standards and expected outcomes. The information allows individual achievement to be monitored against other students' performance at school, district and national level. It provides information to validate assessments that have occurred locally. Reports shall indicate the success of students in achieving officially recognized national certificate level competencies as well as some regional certificates' learning outcomes.

#### **Classroom Reports**

- 4.4. Principals and teachers shall be provided with reports that provide information on the performance of each class in a national assessment. Such reports shall support the analysis of the effectiveness of teaching methods and approaches. Classroom

reports allow teachers to reflect on the outcomes of their own classroom assessments to see if their judgements are consistent with those provided through national examinations. They also allow them to consider the performance of their class, to reflect on the effectiveness of their teaching and discuss with colleagues ways of improving performance across the school. Furthermore, the reports enable principals to have highly focused discussions with staff and to provide professional development programmes that address areas of concern.

### **School Reports**

4.5. The AEU shall prepare and provide School Report to enable principals to discuss with teachers and their School Committees including concerned parents, areas of success and areas of concern. By comparing performance against district and national levels, informed comparative judgements are able to be made and new performance targets established for schools. The School Report will allow the School Review Officers and AEU Instructional Support Service to note the performance of schools and provide strategic support where needed.

### **National Reports**

4.6. By collating performance across all schools the MESc is able to monitor performance annually and note changes. National reports also allow the Ministry to evaluate the effectiveness of new approaches and materials provided to schools as well as determine the areas of weaknesses that need to be addressed accordingly. In addition, they allow resource allocation decisions to be made that address areas of concern.

### **Regional and International Reports**

4.7. Where students' results are compared regionally and internationally, assessment can be made on the quality of the national education provided and help to celebrate success and identify areas that need further development. Through this process the Ministry can act strategically and efficiently to improve performance.

### **National Examinations**

4.8. National level assessment is usually in the form of examinations and tests. Internal assessment shall be made part of the national assessment. National examinations shall occur at the following year levels:

### **Year 8: National Year 8 Examination**

- 4.9. The purpose of the national Year 8 Examination is to test all final year primary students in all core subjects. The examination is used to report the performance of students at the completion of primary education and to select students for entry to secondary schools and colleges.
- 4.10. As it is considered a “high-stakes” examination, the Year 8 Examination has been identified as a barrier to the goal of equity in the Sāmoa education system<sup>3</sup>, and it is envisaged that this examination will be completely phased out in 2012. The phasing out of this examination would allow social promotion to Year 9 with selection to secondary schools (beginning at Year 9) determined by a combination of school-defined criteria. In lieu of this examination, an alternative certification system will be considered to inform secondary level.

### **Year 12: Sāmoa School Certificate**

- 4.11. The purpose of this examination is to enable recognition of the completion of four years of secondary schooling. It is used as entry criteria into vocational/technical training and for selecting students for Year 13 as well as for some forms of employment.

### **Year 13: Pacific Senior Secondary Certificate (PSSC)**

- 4.12. The PSSC, conducted through the South Pacific Board of Educational Assessment (SPBEA), is a regional test conducted at the conclusion of five years of secondary education. The phased-in nationalisation process of this examination started in 2010 and expected to be fully nationalised in 2012 while local capacity is developed for full local management. The PSSC is used for selection into Form 7 or university foundation year at NUS or USP, or other tertiary courses and for employment.

### **Foundation Certificate of Attainment**

- 4.13. The Foundation Certificate of Attainment is awarded at the completion of the foundation year at the National University of Sāmoa (NUS). This qualification guarantees student entry into diploma and degree courses at university nationally and overseas and into some employment. In the event that the Government of Sāmoa through the MESC makes the decision to join the South Pacific Form Seven Certification (SPFSC) examination administered by SPBEA, the Foundation Certificate of Attainment is to be discontinued at NUS.

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<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Education Strategic Policies and Plan 2006-2015, p 41

## Diagnostic Tests

4.14. Diagnostic tests shall be conducted at the following times:

### **Year 1: Year 1 Entrance Assessment Test**

4.14.1 The Assessment Test at Year 1 shall focus on gathering information on the new entrants at the beginning of their first year of primary schooling. The test shall focus mainly on the new students' language as well as their physical and health status. The information collected from this test shall be the initial details in the Student Profile Card (SPC) and shall be used by the teacher for planning his or her teaching programme.

### **Year 4: Sāmoa Primary Education Literacy Level (SPELL 1) and Year 6: Sāmoa Primary Education Literacy Level (SPELL 2)**

4.14.2. The SPELL tests measure the competency of all students in Years 4 and 6 in the core areas of literacy (in both Sāmoan and English) and numeracy. The tests which are being conducted at the end of the year levels, provide diagnostic information to help principals and teachers design and develop intervention strategies to address concerns about the potential aspects of risk in the literacy and numeracy development of young learners.

## SECTION 5:

### SCHOOL-WIDE ASSESSMENT

- 5.1. The primary purpose in developing an effective school-wide assessment program is to improve student learning. A secondary purpose is to help monitor school effectiveness and ensure school accountability. To achieve these purposes, it is important to have valid and reliable information about the ongoing performance of students.
- 5.2. The information from school-wide assessment shall be used to compare schools in relation to the teaching of literacy and numeracy or specific subjects so as to enable school-wide improvement, professional development for teachers and allocation of resources.
- 5.3. All schools shall be required to prepare a School Assessment Plan based on the national curriculum. The assessment plan shall describe the school's assessment practice at school level, classroom level and subject level.

- 5.4. Each school shall organize a School-wide Assessment Committee (SWAC) composed of representative teachers from each subject area and/or year level and chaired by the school principal. A member of the School Committee may be invited as an *ex officio* member of the Committee.
- 5.5. The School Assessment Plan (SAP) shall detail the activities, schedules, recording, storing and reporting system, means of interpreting and utilizing results, and the roles of people responsible for carrying out assessment and reporting. The CMAD in collaboration with the School Operations Division (SOD) will design how the School Assessment Plan will be integrated in the School Annual Plan.
- 5.6. All information about a learner's achievement shall be recorded on a Student Profile Card (SPC) that tracks the learner from entry to school until the time they leave. Furthermore, the SPC shall be made portable to enable tracking as the learner changes school.
- 5.7. The SPC shall be constantly updated to ensure that information is current and accurate.
- 5.8. The Assessment and Examination Unit of the MESC shall develop a standardized SPC to be used by all schools.

## SECTION 6:

### CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT

- 6.1. Classroom assessment shall respond directly to concerns about better learning and teaching that is more effective.
- 6.2. The purpose of classroom assessment shall be to:
  - Identify what individual students and groups of students know and what they still need to know to achieve the stated learning outcomes
  - Inform teachers of areas where additional support is needed
  - Provide a basis for evaluating programme effectiveness and future teaching plans
  - Provide information for parents on the progress of student achievement
  - Enable students to be selected to undertake particular programmes
- 6.3. Through close observation of students in the process of learning, the collection of frequent feedback on students' learning, and the design of modest classroom

experiments, teachers can learn much about how students learn and, more specifically, how students respond to particular teaching approaches.

- 6.4. Classroom assessment shall help individual teachers obtain useful feedback on what, how much, and how well their students are learning. Teachers can then use this information to refocus their teaching to help students make their learning more efficient and more effective.
- 6.5. Classroom assessment shall involve students and teachers in the continuous monitoring of students' learning. It gives students a measure of their progress as learners and it provides teachers with feedback about their effectiveness as teachers.
- 6.6. Most importantly, because classroom assessments are created, administered and analysed by teachers themselves, teachers shall be strongly encouraged to apply the results of the assessment to improve their students' learning and to enhance their own teaching.

## **Characteristics of Classroom Assessment**

- 6.7. Classroom assessment has the following characteristics:

### **Learner-centred**

- 6.7.1. Classroom assessment focuses the primary attention of teachers and students on observing and improving learning, rather than on observing and improving teaching. Classroom assessment shall provide information to guide teachers and students in making adjustments to improve learning.

### **Teacher-directed**

- 6.7.2 Classroom assessment respects the autonomy, academic freedom and professional judgement of teachers. The individual teacher shall decide what to assess, how to assess, and how to respond to the information gained through the assessment. The teacher shall not be obliged to share the results of classroom assessment with anyone outside the classroom without prior consent from the students and their parents.

### **Mutually beneficial**

- 6.7.3. Because it is focused on learning, classroom assessment requires the active participation of students. By cooperating in assessment, students reinforce their grasp of the course content and strengthen their own self-assessment skills. Their



motivation is increased when they realize that teachers are interested and invested in their success as learners. Teachers also sharpen their teaching focus by continually asking themselves three questions:

- "What are the essential skills and knowledge I am trying to teach?"
- "How can I find out whether students are learning them?"
- "How can I help students learn better?"

6.7.4. Teachers work closely with students to answer these questions to improve their teaching skills and gain new insights.

### **Formative**

6.7.5 The purpose of classroom assessment is to improve the quality of student learning and not only to provide evidence for evaluating or grading students.

### **Context-specific**

6.7.6. Classroom assessment responds to the particular needs and characteristics of the teachers, students and disciplines to which they are applied.

### **Continuous**

6.7.7 Classroom assessment is a continuous process, best thought of as the creating and maintenance of a classroom "feedback loop." By using a number of simple classroom assessment techniques (CATs) that are quick and easy to use, teachers get feedback from students on their learning. Teachers then complete the loop by providing students with feedback on the results of the assessment and suggestions for improving learning. To check on the usefulness of their suggestions, teachers use classroom assessment again, continuing the "feedback loop." As the approach becomes integrated into everyday classroom activities, the communications loop connecting teachers and students -- and teaching and learning -- becomes more efficient and more effective.

### **Rooted in good teaching practice**

6.7.8. Classroom assessment attempts to build on existing good practice by making feedback on students' learning more systematic, more flexible and more effective. Classroom assessment provides a way to integrate assessment systematically and seamlessly into the traditional classroom teaching and learning process.

## Implementation

- 6.8. Each classroom teacher shall be required to have an assessment plan for the year as a component of the curriculum plan. The assessment plan shall include objectives, outcomes, success criteria and assessment methods.
- 6.9. Each classroom teacher shall be required to clarify in his/her assessment plan the weight and percentage of the final subject grade for each assessment activity.
- 6.10. In order to undertake assessment effectively, teachers need to know how students learn, the learning outcomes sought and how to make judgments concerning the achievement of those learning outcomes including the learning growth that has occurred.
- 6.11. The provision of 'performance benchmarks' shall be central to this process as they shall indicate how well a student has performed against established expectations.
- 6.12. In forming judgements about student progress, teachers shall use a range of assessment techniques including:
- **Activities**  
Provide for regular opportunities for teachers to observe and note achievements
  - **Observations**  
Allow individual and group performance to be assessed
  - **Discussion**  
Allow teachers to explore conceptual development and values and to assess the development of key areas of the essential skills required of students
  - **Tests**  
Allow for the assessment of student knowledge, ability to solve problems, and think logically as well as student academic, physical and health abilities, especially at the start of Year 1
  - **Projects and portfolios**  
Present evidence of inquiry, of writing reports and of quality of work produced over time
  - **Products**  
Include objects constructed from various materials, food or visual art and models
  - **National examinations and assessment against performance benchmarks**  
Provide evidence of the comparative quality of student achievement at a point in time as well as diagnostic information in key areas

6.13. All classroom teachers shall be required to demonstrate from time to time that they have the requisite knowledge and skills to undertake effective classroom assessment.

## SECTION 7:

### BILINGUAL POLICY IN ASSESSMENT

- 7.1. The vision for language policies in education is an education system that is committed to the advancement and maintenance of Sāmoan language status, and the development of people who are bilingual in Sāmoan and English.
- 7.2. The intent is additive bilingualism which refers to the development and maintenance of both Sāmoan and English languages. The goal is to produce individuals who are fully literate in both Sāmoan and English.
- 7.3. Sāmoan and English languages shall be used to assess all students in all subjects except in Sāmoan and English as subjects.
- 7.4. Sāmoan and English languages shall both have the same value of treatment in assessment so that they are fair, equal, neutral and maintaining its true meaning and translation.
- 7.5. All assessments and examinations for Years 1 to 8 shall be available in both Sāmoan and English with examiners and moderators ensuring the equivalence of the test in two languages.

## SECTION 8:

### ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE NATIONAL ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

#### The National Assessment Council

- 8.1. By virtue of a Cabinet Decision<sup>4</sup> in 2003, the National Assessment Council (NAC) was established as an advisory body to MESC and other stakeholders to ensure that the assessment policies are consistent with developments in the national curriculum,

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 41

regional assessment initiatives, tertiary and vocational education, as well as employment.

8.2 The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of MESc will appoint the chairperson of NAC for a term of three years. The Council serves as the principal clearinghouse for policies, procedures and practices related to the national assessment system.

**8.3 The membership of the NAC shall be composed of the following:**

- ACEO-CMAD
- Principal Assessment Officers<sup>5</sup>
- Representative of School Operations Division
- PEO for Primary
- PEO for Secondary
- Representative of Sāmoa Qualifications Authority
- Chair of the Curriculum Council
- Representative of NUS Faculty of Education
- Representative of Primary School Principals
- Representative of Secondary School/Colleges Principals
- Representative of School Review Officers
- CMAD Language Specialist
- Guests/Stakeholders can be invited, as the need arises

8.4. Other functions of NAC include:

- Approval of assessment prescriptions/Tables of Specifications
- Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the SNSAPF
- Provision of directives and initiatives to Assessment and Examination Unit
- Provision of technical advice to the MESc on the alignment of curriculum and instruction with assessment.

### **The Curriculum, Materials, and Assessment Division**

8.5. The ACEO of the Curriculum, Materials and Assessment Division (CMAD) shall oversee all programs and activities of the Assessment and Examination Unit (AEU).

### **The Assessment and Evaluation Unit**

8.6. The AEU shall be the operational and administrative unit of the national assessment system. It shall have the following **functions**:

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<sup>5</sup> PAO for Assessment and Examinations Services and PAO for AMIS and Instructional Support Services

- Design and administer valid and reliable national examinations and assessment tasks, and report accurately on student performance
  - Design and implement programmes on internal assessment, examinations and evaluation to support instruction, curriculum and school accountability
  - Monitor, evaluate and report on all testing and assessment related activities of schools
  - Assist teachers in utilizing assessment results to design interventions to improve their teaching and student learning
  - Conduct training and workshops on assessment and examinations for teachers, examiners, moderators, markers and administrators
  - Conduct research studies that utilize assessment results to improve teaching and learning processes
- 8.7. All national examinations and school-wide assessment programmes and activities shall be coordinated and implemented by the AEU in consultation with the NAC.

8.8. The AEU shall work closely and collaboratively with the Curriculum and Materials Unit (CMU) in carrying out all assessment activities. The AEU shall provide the secretariat for the NAC.

### **The Curriculum and Materials Unit**

8.9. The Curriculum and Materials Unit (CMU) shall be responsible for developing the curriculum and for designing assessment plans and criteria to enable teachers to assess the curriculum that they teach. It shall work collaboratively with the AEU on national assessment as well as on support programmes in assessment for teachers.

### **School Review Officers**

8.10 The School Review Officers (SROs) shall be expected to be fully conversant with all assessment requirements in order to support principals and teachers, and to assist in the development of School Assessment Plans. They shall also be expected to assist teachers as the need arises.

### **Principals**

8.11. All school principals shall be expected to spearhead the development of School Assessment Plans. They shall monitor the implementation of assessment plans in the school, and the recording and reporting of all assessment information, and ensure the updating of all SPCs. They shall also be expected to provide support for the implementation of all the activities of the SNSAPF. Principals are also

responsible for coordinating all reports on students for parents, the community, and MESC.

### **Subject teachers and classroom teachers**

8.12. All teachers are expected to be fully aware of the requirements of assessment in their subject areas and be able to implement these as stipulated in Section 6. They must be cognizant of their skills needs and take the required steps to acquire these skills in order to implement quality assessment activities in their classrooms. Teachers are responsible for the accurate recording and reporting of all assessment information about their students.

## **SECTION 9:**

### **PROCEDURES AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM INCLUDING MONITORING AND SUPERVISION**

- 9.1. All examinations and assessment processes shall adhere to and comply with the highest standards and requirements that uphold validity, fairness and transparency in educational assessment.
- 9.2. All schools shall ensure that students sitting any examination are provided with all necessary information and documents. No student shall be prevented from taking any examination because of lack of information or poor documentation.
- 9.3. Strict adherence to confidentiality and security shall be observed at all times.
- 9.4. Research studies that deal with the results of tests and examinations may be conducted and shall observe all ethical standards in research and request consent from the examinees, if needed. All research studies done by AEU must be coordinated with the Policy Planning and Research Division (PPRD) of MESC.
- 9.5. Where there is a breach of confidentiality or security, especially in relation to national assessment, MESC shall take the necessary measures to prevent this happening again and decide the penalties for those who breach these policies. MESC is ultimately responsible for maintaining the confidence of the public in any of the national assessments that it administers.
- 9.6. Test materials such as booklets/test scripts, mark sheets and response sheets shall be stored and secured only by authorized personnel of the MESC Assessment and

Examination Unit. They shall be disposed of 5 years after they have been copied/stored in digital formats.

- 9.7. Only trained and fully supervised individuals shall be allowed to become examiner and administer, score, and interpret test results.
- 9.8. Schools shall be allowed to have access to their own past years national examinations scripts.

## **SECTION 10:**

### **ASSESSMENT MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM**

- 10.1 MESC shall put in place a quality Assessment Management Information System (AMIS) in the short term.
- 10.2. The overall function of the AMIS system shall be to support the workflow of the Assessment and Evaluation Unit of MESC in the following areas:

#### **External examinations**

##### **Enrolment of students**

- 10.3. For all national external examinations, there shall be a move towards a system of electronic submission by schools of:
  - Enrolment data
  - Confirmation of enrolment data between schools and the AEU
  - Subject changes and transfers by schools
  - Fees and accompanying documentation

##### **Examination paper progress**

- 10.4. All national examination papers shall be submitted electronically to the AEU, assessed by the AEU and approved.

##### **Allocation of examiners, moderators and markers**

- 10.5. Allocation of examiners, moderators and markers, and maintaining records on each of them, including a pool of prospective personnel, shall all be done electronically.

#### **Assessment data**

- 10.6. There shall be electronic submission of all assessment data, for both internal and external examinations and tests

- 10.7. The development of systems to efficiently send assessment data between the schools and MESC and between AEU and other stakeholders
- 10.8. Analysis of assessment data at different levels of detail and making the analysis available to MESC, the AEU and other stakeholders
- 10.9. Publication of analysis of examination results (national, district, school) on the MESC website as soon as the results are approved
- 10.10. Maintenance of the security and integrity of all assessment data and examinations systems, and ensuring that data can be designated as available only to authorized persons
- 10.11. Linking of examination data with other data, such as school census and teacher information

### **Information and communication technology in assessment**

10.12. The SNSAPF promotes the policies in the MESC-SPP (2006-2015) which stipulate that:

- *The Ministry will encourage the provision of access and training to teachers and students and the integration of ICT into the curriculum resulting in change to learning and teaching pedagogies.*

10.13. Furthermore the Ministry will encourage the provision of access and training to teachers and students for school-based assessment to enable the creation of new materials, a variety of assessment tools, and different types of activities for learners.

- *Provision of professional development for teachers to use ICT in classroom learning will be supported through pre service and in service training.*

10.14. In order for teachers to use the AMIS once it is in place, the Ministry will carry out training needs analysis with a view to promoting the use and practice by teachers of ICT for the analysis of assessment data.

### **Item Bank System**

10.15. An Item Bank System (IBS) shall be established and administered by the AEU with the support from the ICT Unit of MESC as part of the AMIS.

10.16. The IBS is a collection of items for a particular assessment subject, classified by metadata that facilitates searching and automated test creation.

10.17. All items or test questions included in the IBS must have undergone item analysis and their reliability and validity indices must have been determined statistically.



## SECTION 11:

### INTERPRETATION, REPORTING AND UTILISATION OF ASSESSMENT DATA

- 11.1. Assessment data shall be in the form of classroom assessment data, school-wide assessment data and national assessment data. These data relate in turn to school curriculum learning outcomes, national curriculum learning outcomes, national benchmarks, regional benchmarks or international benchmarks.
- 11.2. Schools shall be responsible for reporting on **student progress** to students, parents, other teachers in the school, the school committee, the community, and to MESC.

#### Reporting to students

- 11.3. Teachers shall provide continuous feedback to students to enable them to track their progress and the next steps for improvement and continuous development:
- Monitoring and assessment that is continuous and informative will lead to opportunities for teachers to discuss with students the results of different assessment tasks
  - Students need to understand the purpose of all assessments and have the opportunity of receiving constructive and helpful feedback, including marking criteria and procedures
  - Assessment techniques such as the use of portfolios, projects and performances provide an opportunity for constructive comments including future directions.

#### Reporting to parents

- 11.4. Principals and teachers shall report regularly to parents, both formally and informally, regarding their children's progress in school and to enlist their support in practical ways to help their children to achieve better. Such reporting shall include all areas of development and indicate areas of strength and concern, including spiritual and psychological dimensions.
- Reporting to parents is concerned with teachers sharing their knowledge about what each student has achieved and how that compares with the learning of others
  - Reports should indicate the improvements made and areas that require further development

- Reports need to be clear and regular and may take the form of informal meetings with parents to explain new approaches and programs being adopted by the school, and formal written reports provided at least twice a year
- Reports should outline key activities and show the achievement of key outcomes across all subjects
- Comments should also be made in relation to the student's social development and indicate areas of strength and concern.

### **Reporting to the School Committee and school community**

11.5. Each School Committee shall be part of the process of the development of the School Annual Plan that includes a Curriculum Plan and Assessment Plan. The principal and teachers shall ensure that they report to the School Committee on all these plans including the Assessment Plan.

### **Reporting to other educational institutions and employers**

11.6. Comprehensive school assessment data shall be made available on individual students for the information of secondary schools, tertiary institutions or employers.

- Primary schools need to provide comprehensive reports on each student's achievement to secondary schools so that programmes build on what each student knows and is able to do
- Secondary schools have an obligation to pass on details of each student's achievement to tertiary institutions and employers

### **Reporting to the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture**

11.7. Through the Annual Report, schools shall report to MESC on the achievement against their school Curriculum Plan, Assessment Plan and School Improvement Plan. The CEO shall use the information to monitor and improve the performance of individual schools and the education system as a whole.

## **SECTION 12:**

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES FOR TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS AND SCHOOL REVIEW OFFICERS**

12.1. MESC, through the Assessment and Examination Unit's Instructional Support Services in cooperation with SOD, shall provide all teachers, principals and SROs

with appropriate and ongoing training on school assessment focusing on areas such as:

- Assessment philosophies
- Assessment principles
- Development and monitoring of assessment plans
- Different assessment tools and activities
- Test construction
- Internal assessment components for SSC and PSSC
- Marking, analysis and interpretation of student results
- Reporting
- Utilization of assessment data
- Research and instructional evaluation

12.2. Various modes of training shall be used such as face-to-face (national, district and school levels), distance and flexible learning, e-learning/training (on line), and video conferencing. Certification shall be awarded at the completion of each in-service training course towards an accredited programme.