



STEPASIDE EDUCATE TOGETHER SECONDARY SCHOOL

Additional Assessment Components (AACs) Parent/Guardian and Student Guide

Understanding the role of students, parents/guardians and teachers

Purpose of this guide

This guide has been prepared for students and parents/guardians at Stepside Educate Together Secondary School. It outlines the key principles that apply to Additional Assessment Components (AACs) and explains how students, teachers and families can support the process. Subject teachers will also provide guidance that is specific to an individual AAC.

1. What is an AAC?

An Additional Assessment Component is an important part of assessment in a number of Leaving Certificate subjects. It allows students to demonstrate skills that may include independent thinking, research, investigation, planning, organisation, analysis and reflection.

AAC work is developed over an extended period and is connected to normal teaching and learning. A fundamental requirement is that the work submitted must genuinely represent the student's own thinking and efforts.



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2. The central principle: authentic student work

The AAC is designed to assess what each student can independently understand, investigate, explain and produce. It is an extended piece of work completed over a period of time, rather than something that should be produced in a short period or immediately before submission. The AAC should demonstrate the development of the student's work from the initial stages through to the final submission.

The AAC is also an iterative process. Students may develop, refine, reconsider or change their ideas, approaches and decisions as their work progresses. Evidence of this development may be required to demonstrate how the work has evolved over time.

Students are therefore responsible for the ideas, choices, analysis and final work that they submit. They are also responsible for taking ownership of the process, including keeping appropriate records or evidence of their work and its development. This may include working notes, drafts, research records, evidence logs, time-stamped records or other forms of proof that demonstrate the progression of their thinking and work production over time.

- Students should take ownership of their progress and keep track of their work throughout the AAC process.
- Students may be required to maintain evidence logs or other records that document the development and evolution of their ideas and work.
- Students are responsible for ensuring that they complete the required work in a timely manner and meet all AAC deadlines. Students must be aware of the relevant submission dates and manage their time appropriately throughout the process. The responsibility for keeping up to date with deadlines and ensuring that work is completed and submitted on time rests with the student.
- These records are the responsibility of the student to maintain and retain. It is not the responsibility of the teacher to keep a student's logs, drafts or evidence of their developing work.
- Parents/guardians can encourage and support students, but should not write, edit or complete the work on their behalf.
- The final submission must authentically reflect the student's own learning, thinking, decision-making and contribution.
- Ultimately, the AAC should provide evidence not only of the student's final piece of work, but also of how that work has developed from start to finish over an extended period of time.



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3. The teacher's role

During an AAC, the teacher acts as a guide, facilitator, supervisor and professional sounding board. Teachers support students in understanding the task and managing the process, but they do not act as proofreaders, editors or co-authors of the work.

4. How teachers can support students

Teachers may:

- Explain the requirements of the official AAC brief and clarify what students are being asked to do.
- Help students connect the task to relevant learning taking place in class.
- Use open or guiding questions to encourage students to think through their own decisions.
- Support students to organise their work into manageable stages and plan their time effectively.
- Meet or check in with students at appropriate points to monitor progress and support authentication of the work.
- Remind students about appropriate research practices, referencing, academic integrity and any requirements relating to the use of AI.

Teachers may also need to intervene where an activity raises concerns relating to safety, data protection, ethical practice or other applicable regulations.

5. What teachers cannot do

To protect the integrity and authenticity of the assessment, teachers cannot take over the student's work. In particular, teachers will not:

- Proofread, correct or edit drafts for submission.
- Rewrite or reword a student's work.
- Provide a model response for the student to reproduce.
- Direct a student towards a particular conclusion or complete the analysis on their behalf.

Making mistakes can be an important part of learning. A teacher may discuss an issue in a general or developmental way, but the student remains responsible for resolving it.

6. AACs are completed over time

AAC work should develop gradually rather than being left until the final weeks. Students will normally be expected to work through different stages, maintain evidence of their progress and engage with their teacher at scheduled points.

- Complete work in stages and meet interim deadlines.
- Keep notes, records and relevant evidence of AAC progress.



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- Bring questions to the teacher when clarification is needed.
- Reflect on progress and identify areas that require further work.

Regular engagement also helps the school and teacher fulfil authentication requirements and confirm that the work is the student's own.

7. Student responsibilities

- Take ownership of the task and make independent decisions.
- Manage time and complete each stage before the set interim deadlines.
- Maintain appropriate records of research and progress.
- Ask for clarification when unsure about a requirement.
- Understand that feedback may support the process without correcting the work.
- Submit work that truthfully represents their own effort, understanding and thinking.

8. How parents/guardians can help

Parents/guardians play an important supporting role. Helpful support may include encouraging consistent progress, discussing how the student is finding the task and helping them maintain a suitable routine.

Useful questions might include:

- “What stage of the project are you working on now”?
- “What have you discovered or learned so far”?
- “Is there anything you need clarified by your teacher”?
- “What is your next step”?

Parents/guardians should not write, edit or rewrite sections of the work, carry out the student's research or analysis, or complete calculations or other assessed work on the student's behalf. The aim is to support the student without becoming a co-author.

9. Referencing and academic integrity

Students must acknowledge all sources used and follow the Harvard referencing style, as agreed and implemented by the school as part of its whole-school approach to academic referencing. Accurate referencing is an important part of academic integrity and helps students demonstrate where information, ideas, data or other material originated.

Students must also follow the relevant State Examinations Commission requirements concerning the use of artificial intelligence and other digital tools. Where disclosure or acknowledgement of AI use is required, students must follow the applicable rules and guidance.

Please note the State Examinations Commission Coursework Rules & Procedures 2025-2026 ([State Examinations Commission Coursework Rules and Procedures 2025 - 2026](#)). Particular attention should be given to Appendix 2 – Rules for the Use of AI in SEC Examination Coursework.



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10. Non-Compliance with rules and procedures set out by the SEC

Students must ensure that all coursework is their own, authentic and unaided work. This means avoiding plagiarism, copying or submitting another person's work, having someone else complete any part of the work, or using AI and other forms of assistance inappropriately. Students must also complete the coursework in a way that allows their teacher to have adequate oversight and authenticate the work. If a teacher cannot verify that the work is the student's own, they may not be able to authenticate or sign off on the coursework for submission to the SEC. Failure to comply with the Coursework Rules and Procedures may result in the loss of marks for the component, the entire subject, or further penalties following SEC investigation.

11. Important subject-specific requirements

Each AAC may have its own requirements relating to layout, format, font, word count, evidence of process and submission. Students should carefully follow the guidance provided by their subject teacher and the relevant official assessment documentation.

Subject-specific timelines and school deadlines may be set ahead of the official State Examinations Commission submission deadlines so that students have sufficient time to complete the work and so that required authentication procedures can take place.

Submission Deadlines

The official AAC submission deadlines for current 6th year students (class of 2027) are:

- **Biology:** 26 February 2027
- **Chemistry:** 23 April 2027
- **Physics:** 11 December 2026
- **Business:** 12 March 2027

The official submission deadlines for current 5th year students (class of 2028) are:

- **Biology:** Yet to be confirmed
- **Chemistry:** Yet to be confirmed
- **Physics:** Yet to be confirmed
- **Business:** Yet to be confirmed
- **Geography:** Yet to be confirmed
- **Physical Education:** Yet to be confirmed
- **Construction Studies:** Yet to be confirmed

Based on the rollout model used for Tranche 1, the live briefs are expected to be issued during fifth year, with the precise release and submission dates to be determined by the SEC.



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The AAC may constitute a significant proportion of the student's final grade in the relevant Leaving Certificate subject. For Tranche 1 and Tranche 2 subjects that are currently implemented in schools as of the time of writing this guide (August 2026):

Subject	Additional Assessment Component (AAC)	Additional Project Work	Written Examination
Biology	40%	—	60%
Chemistry	40%	—	60%
Physics	40%	—	60%
Business	40%	—	60%
Geography	40%	—	60%
Physical Education	50%	—	50%
Construction Technology	30%	20% Craft Project	50%

As the AAC is a long-term piece of work, teachers will integrate the relevant coursework requirements into normal classroom teaching and learning. Students will be expected to complete stages of the work throughout the process and may be required to meet school deadlines in advance of the official submission date.

In summary

AACs provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate and develop a wide range of skills, including independent learning, research, decision-making, creativity, critical thinking and analytical skills. They allow students to take ownership of their learning, explore ideas, make informed choices and demonstrate how their thinking and understanding develop throughout the assessment process.

Teachers play an important role in guiding and monitoring students as they progress through the AAC, while parents/guardians can provide encouragement and practical support. However, the responsibility for completing the AAC rests with the student. The ideas, research, decisions, analysis and final submission must authentically reflect the student's own work, learning and contribution.



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Acknowledgement

Please sign below to confirm that you have read and understood the expectations outlined in this guide.

Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Stepaside Educate Together Secondary School