SMC&PA Submission 23
Received: 15 April 2013

Name: [redacted]
Subjects completed: Mathematics B, Chemistry, Physics, Biology, English, Study of religion, Japanese

a) whether you believe assessing against defined standards, rather than numerical grades, provided a valid indicator of your achievements and knowledge of maths, chemistry or physics

I believe that numerical grades make more sense to students, especially when dealing with subjects such as mathematics and physics. This way, a clear distinction between the grades are made and for students who are aiming to achieve higher grades can work towards a clear goal, rather than be marked down on vague, opinion based criteria.

b) how well you understood how your grades were assessed (individual assessment tasks and/or overall achievement in the subject), and how helpful your teacher or school were in explaining it to you

After getting our results back from the teacher, we got the chance to go through the assignment and the teacher would clearly explain what we didn't do completely or correctly, however I found that most of the time, it was because students "didn't go into enough detail" for some topics, and "went into too much detail" for other topics. Grades from A-D seem to be based more on the way a teacher 'felt' a student was sitting at, rather than marking from a consistent criteria.

c) whether the assessment process allowed you to prioritise your workload

The assessment process was not how I planned my workload; instead, due dates and amount of research needed was how I prioritised assignments.

d) how adequate the timeframe for completing EEI or ERT tasks was

Time frame for EEI and ERTs were excellent. If a plan of attack was made and followed, EEIs and ERTs would be done with extra time to spare for most people. (However, as I did Chemistry, Physics, Biology and Maths B, sometimes, when EEIs and ERTs double up and are due very close together, I would find that there is insufficient time, however it is something I prepared myself for when I made my subject choices.)

e) whether the recommended word limit for EEIs (1500 words) is reasonable and/or achievable

We found that for Chemistry assignments, the word count was almost impossible to keep under; some teachers marked harshly on assignments that were over the word limit, whereas some teachers were more flexible. If there is a small word count such as 1500 words, it should be clearly stated where these words would be placed. (I.e. strict guidelines)

f) how the assessment workload in senior maths, chemistry and physics compares to other subjects

Again, this does depend on subject choices. Senior Mathematics B was not much of an issue in terms of work load compared to Chemistry, Physics or Biology. SOR always had very heavy workloads but I always found that EEIs and ERTs required more time and effort.

g) ways to improve the maths, chemistry and physics assessment process

Clear marking criteria, consistent standard for grading and more flexible word count.