

**Education and Innovation Committee**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, 13 May 2013 1:09 PM  
**To:** Education and Innovation Committee  
**Subject:** Submission regarding senior sciences  
**Attachments:** [REDACTED]

**Categories:** Blue Category

Dear Committee Members,

I have been teaching Senior Chemistry for 10 years. I feel concerned by the current forms of assessment used in the 2007 syllabus. The workload is horrendous for both teacher and student. I find it incredibly difficult to meet assessment deadlines as individual student pieces can take multiple hours to mark. I teach one year 11 and two year 12 classes and a total of 65 students. During the first semester I needed to read and mark 50 year 12 EEI reports. Each report took me an hour and half, therefore 75 hours. The effect of this is that my preparation and student contact time is limited, and my stress levels are dangerously high. In fact, I am seriously considering changing careers to improve my work-life balance.

Perhaps more important, is the damaging effect this assessment is having on the students. They have too many long written assignments, are staying up till very late and have no time for regular revision. My biggest concern is for students who study more than one science or maths subject. My own daughter and second son have experienced extremely levels of stress related to completing EEI's , ERT's and Maths assignments. The joy my students used to show during experimental work has been replaced by anxiety and concerns about time constraints and difficulties with concepts not formally taught.

Assessing mathematics/physics/chemistry through long written assignments is not valid for many reasons:

- (1) There is the issue of who actually does the assignments,
- (2) Students do not learn as much maths/physics/chemistry by doing them,
- (3) these assignments use up much time, which could be used in learning fundamental maths/physics/chemistry.
- (4) the awesome benefits of experimental inquiry are destroyed by the excessive time spent writing the reports.

The criteria paragraphs which QSA call standards, are difficult to apply, are full of ambiguous terms and very subjective. I have experienced challenges when trying to compare marking amongst teachers as there seems to be a disagreement on what is 'analysis (B)' and 'systematic analysis (A)' in the Chemistry criteria. The stress related to these assessment criteria has had a negative impact on my relationships with colleagues.

I also have issues with using criteria to place students into an order as is required for their final exit SAI levels. How do you differentiate between A- and A- ? It is very difficult to determine which student is slightly better. This causes myself and other teachers extreme anxiety as we try to do the best for our students. I have had many sleepless nights hoping I made the right decision. The old syllabus with the use of marks and clear cut-offs in conjunction with standards was so much easier to apply and I felt much more confident in the decisions made.

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the sender's name and signature.

Please keep my identity masked.