

# Information for HSC presiding officer nominees

## 2021 Higher School Certificate

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# 1 Introduction to the presiding officer role

The NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) works with schools and presiding officers to ensure the successful conduct of the Higher School Certificate (HSC) exams.

The presiding officer is responsible for managing the preparation, conduct and supervision of the HSC exams. The presiding officer is supported by supervision staff.

The principal is responsible for the appointing of supervisors; however, the principal can delegate any part or all of the recruitment process to the presiding officer. The recruitment and management of supervisors is explained in the Presiding Officer Handbook (distributed to appointed presiding officers by mail in August).

## 2 Capabilities for the presiding officer role

### 2.1 Essential requirements

The presiding officer must:

- have a current Working With Children's Check (WWCC) clearance for employment
- have an email address and mobile number
- use a vehicle with comprehensive motor vehicle insurance policy
- is available for the ENTIRE exam period
- have intermediate working knowledge of common computer programs and tasks, such as Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, emails, downloading documents etc\*
- be well-organised
- have good attention to detail
- be able to effectively manage students and a team of supervisors.

\*Presiding officers must use [Presiding Officers Online](#). NESA is making continual enhancements to the information available online and also regularly sends important updates to presiding officers via email and SMS.

**Note:** the role of the presiding officer does have a physical requirement. The presiding officer is required to lift and handle exam materials and may also be standing for most of the day.

## 2.2 Restrictions on the eligibility for employment as presiding officer

A person **CANNOT** be nominated for the position of presiding officer if:

- they have a child or near relative (including siblings, grandchildren, nieces, nephews or first cousins) sitting the HSC exams this year at any school
- they are/were recently employed by the school (paid or volunteer) and may be perceived as a conflict of interest. This may include, but not limited to, clerical staff, casual, relief, part-time or permanent teachers.

### **Please note:**

- if a person was employed by the school for other exam supervision work **only** (for example, HSC trial exams), they are eligible to be an HSC presiding officer
- if you require clarification on your eligibility, please email [presidingofficers@nesa.nsw.edu.au](mailto:presidingofficers@nesa.nsw.edu.au).
- they tutor students sitting the HSC exams this year.

## 3 Roles and responsibilities

The presiding officer works closely with the principal (or their delegate) and their supervisors. They each have distinct responsibilities within the HSC exam operation.

### 3.1 Principals

Principals are permitted to delegate any or all their responsibilities relating to the operation of the HSC exams to a suitable member of staff. If a delegate has been appointed, please ensure they have a copy of all the information guides available on Schools Online and are aware of their responsibilities.

#### **Principals are responsible for:**

- recruiting and nominating a presiding officer
- appointing supervisors in liaison with the presiding officer
- ensuring all students understand the exam process, appropriate behaviour and NESA's HSC rules and procedures, including:
- ensuring students are aware that electronic devices, including mobile phones, smart watches and programmable watches are not permitted in the exam room. The school must provide options for secure storage of devices
- providing suitable accommodation for the HSC exams in accordance with the [Assessment Certification Examination \(ACE\)](#) requirements. In addition:
  - schools must accommodate all students, including provision for extra students and additional rooms required for exams with a listening component and students granted disability provisions
  - the principal must appoint school staff to assist with set up of exam rooms in advance of each exam, as guided by the presiding officer

- all areas surrounding the exam room(s) are kept as quiet as possible.
- providing sufficient equipment, eg whiteboard (including markers and erasers), microphone, working clocks in all rooms, exam furniture
- nominating school staff to remain onsite until all exams conclude each day, including exam sessions that conclude after normal school hours
- establishing a process with the presiding officer regarding students who are absent from exam
- allocating readers and writers, and ensuring additional equipment(s) required by students granted with disability provisions are provided (eg a computer or padded chair)
- rostering teachers to check calculators before relevant exams
- nominating an authorised representative to download audio files for listening components of written exams (this representative **cannot** be the course teacher)
- appointing an exam IT coordinator to assist with online exams
- submitting illness/misadventure applications to NESAs as required
- providing a secure area for all remaining exam materials to be stored until March the following year.

## 3.2 Presiding officers

Presiding officers are responsible directly to NESAs for the effective conduct of the exams.

### **Presiding officers are responsible for:**

- managing supervisors:
  - work as directed with the principal or delegate to select and appoint supervisors
  - prepare a supervisor roster and manage a team of supervisors during the exam period, including briefing and training supervisors in their role
  - oversee the conduct of supervisors during course of their duties
  - ensure all supervisors have a valid Working With Children Check (WWCC) for employment
  - collect and submit supervisors' paperwork as per NESAs' administrative procedures.
- maintaining confidentiality of all exam conduct:
  - do not discuss or disclose information about exam conduct with any other student, teacher, school staff and parents/guardians
  - a student's privacy and the integrity of the HSC exams may be at risk if there is a breach in confidentiality
  - ensure that supervisors maintain the same level of confidentiality.
- coordinating set up of exam areas, ensuring that:
  - adequate space, rooms and equipment required to conduct all exams is provided by the school
  - all exam rooms are set up in advance of each exam (including provision for extra

students, additional rooms/required equipment for exams with a listening component or an online exam and students granted disability provisions) and that the school has provided all equipment required and it is in working order, and exam times correctly indicated on boards..

- following all security and administrative procedures:
  - check and sort exam materials and papers delivered to the school or security centre, ensuring that sufficient materials and papers have been provided for each exam
  - arrange the non-confidential materials delivered to schools in exam date order in the security cabinet for ease of access on exam days
  - arrange the exam papers in exam date order in the security cabinet for ease of access on exam days
  - collect the exam papers from the security centre on each exam day
  - maintain security of the exam papers and materials
  - establish a process with the principal or delegate regarding students who are absent from exam
  - supervise students undertaking their exams
  - return all completed exam papers to the security centre in a timely manner, and use the NESA provided courier
  - follow NESA’s policies and procedures regarding disability provisions
  - complete the presiding officer report for illness/misadventure applications as required by the principal
- observing all COVID-19 information and guidelines provided by NESA and their school
- following all child protection, emergency evacuation and workplace health and safety procedures and policies; and ensure all supervisors adhere to these policies.

### 3.3 Supervisors

#### Supervisors must:

- follow the directions of the presiding officer
- listen carefully to all instructions given by the presiding officer to the students
- switch off or mute mobile phones
- stand in strategic positions to ensure that students are in full view at all times. **Effective supervision is not possible if supervisors are seated**
- ensure that only students and those officially connected with the exam are allowed to enter the exam room
- avoid unnecessary conversations and other activities that may disrupt students
- wear comfortable shoes with soft soles to facilitate quiet movement
- immediately alert the presiding officer of any breaches in exam conduct.

### Supervisors must not:

- speak to students during the exam except in the course of their duties
- assist students with the understanding and interpretation of exam questions. If a student questions any part of the exam paper content, the supervisor must advise the student to answer the paper to the best of their ability
- undertake personal activities during exam sessions, including reading, writing, eating, talking, listening to music with headphones, using their mobile phones, sleeping or knitting
- discuss any details or events that occur during an exam with any outside party
- provide notepad or scribble paper for students to use. If a student requests paper to write notes, the supervisor must provide the student with generic booklets printed by NESAs.

## 4 Pay rates

The 2020 hourly rates for presiding officers and supervisors below may be used as a guide for the 2021 hourly rates. They do not include any increase that may be awarded in 2021.

### Presiding officers

1 student	\$23.82	251–350 students	\$39.47
2–50 students	\$27.13	351–450 students	\$43.66
51–150 students	\$31.24	451–550 students	\$47.78
151–250 students	\$35.37		

For each additional 100 students, add multiples of \$4.00.

The hourly rate is determined by the highest number of students sitting any one exam session, eg if 173 students sit for the English Standard, Advanced and EAL/D Paper 1 exam, the hourly rate paid will be \$35.37. Presiding officers are paid at the determined rate throughout the whole exam period.

Presiding officers can also claim up to 19 hours of preparation time prior to the exams. They may claim additional preparation hours if reasonable explanations are provided, subject to NESAs's approval. The Presiding Officer Handbook will outline the records required by the presiding officer to claim additional hours.

Presiding officers can also claim work-related expenses as a reimbursement with receipts (such as phone costs, printer ink, some stationery).

### Assistant presiding officers (for schools with over 300 students)

A single rate of \$27.13

### Supervisors and disability provisions supervisors

A single rate of \$23.82

'Non-papers' presiding officers are paid at the rate of a presiding officer.

'Papers' presiding officers are paid at the rate of a presiding officer and a supervisor in accordance with their duties.

**Relieving presiding officers** are paid at the rate of a presiding officer on the day(s) they are on duty as relieving presiding officer.

**Payments for presiding officers and supervisors are processed at the completion of the HSC exam period and usually paid by mid-December.**

## 5 What to expect

Once the principal nominates you as the school's HSC presiding officer, NESAs will process your nomination and contact you if we require further information. Generally, you may not hear from us until we email confirmation of your appointment in early July.

### 5.1 Support available

In early August, you will receive a Presiding Officer Handbook that details all the processes and procedures you need to understand to undertake your role as a presiding officer.

The Presiding Officer Support team is available year-round to assist with any questions you may have. In the lead up to the exam period from early September, we also have a few experienced presiding officers available on the phones.

On exam days, we are open for extended hours from 7.00 am – 7.00 pm.

### 5.2 Training for new presiding officers

New presiding officers are expected to complete an online, self-paced training course. The course may include online webinars held by NESAs. Access to the training course will be available from mid-August, and NESAs recommend training to be completed by mid-September.

NESA will email new presiding officers with information about training closer to the date.

### 5.3 General overview and key dates

Below is a general overview of what to expect as an HSC presiding officer.

Date	Event	Your role
Early July	You will receive email confirmation of appointment from NESAs.	You are required to complete exam preparation tasks at your own pace over the next few months. The Presiding Officer Handbook will detail all processes and procedures.  You can claim up to 19 hours of preparation time on your pay claim form.
Early August	You will receive the Presiding Officer Handbook in the mail.	



Date	Event	Your role
Mid-August - September	If you are new, you will receive information about completing the online, self-paced training course. This training course must be completed in conjunction with reading the Presiding Officer Handbook.	<p>You may claim additional hours if reasonable explanations are provided, subject to NESAs approval. It is important you keep a log on how much time you spend on different tasks.</p> <p>The number of hours required to prepare for the exams will vary between schools depending on candidature size.</p>
Mid-August	NESAs delivers exam stationery materials to the school.	<p>You will be required to visit the school to check and organise the exam materials delivered to your school before the exams start.</p>
Mid-September	NESAs delivers non-confidential, personalised exam materials to the school.	
Early October	<p>NESAs delivers confidential exam papers to the security centre.</p> <p>Security centres are facilities hired by NESAs to securely store exam papers. They are located as close to the school as possible.</p>	<p>You will be required to visit the security centre to check and organise the exam papers delivered for your school before the exams start.</p> <p><b>The security centre assigned to you will be confirmed in September.</b></p> <p>Generally, they will be en route from your home to school, however there may be times you are required to travel additional distance.</p> <p>As a presiding officer you can claim mileage for travel between home, security centre and school.</p> <p>Your hours will commence at the time you arrive at the security centre.</p> <p>You are required to collect exam papers from the security centre each morning and return completed papers to the centre after each exam day (regional arrangements for return of papers may vary).</p>

Date	Event	Your role
Early October	Final checks	<p>We recommend you to make one final preparatory visit to the school to ensure that everything you have organised with the principal or their delegate is in place and ready for the exams.</p> <p>You are paid for up to five (5) visits to the school prior to exams.</p>
12 October – 4 November	HSC exam period	See <a href="#">Section 6</a> .
After the exams	Submission of financial paperwork	<p>You will be required to submit you and your supervisors' pay claim forms to NESAs.</p> <p>Finance will process claim forms in the order they receive them, and payments will be made once paperwork has been checked to be fully complete for the whole exam centre.</p> <p>It is encouraged you submit this paperwork as soon as possible (ie on the last day of the exam) to receive payment sooner.</p> <p>Ensure all supervisors have submitted bank details and tax file forms to enable efficient payment.</p>
By mid-December	NESAs issues payments	You and your supervisors will receive payment for your work by mid-December.

## 6 A typical exam day

Every presiding officer's experience of an exam day will be different. Some days you will be required to work under high-pressure environment. Start and finish times will also vary day-to-day depending on the school's exam timetable.

Generally, if you have a both morning and afternoon exams, you can expect a 7.30 am – 8.00 am start and finish around 5.00 pm – 6.00 pm.

Below is a general guide on what an exam day could look like for you:

- Pick up exam papers at the security centre before arriving to school at least an hour before the first exam.
- Check that all rooms are set up and ready, including separate exam rooms for disability provisions.
- Distribute exam materials onto desks with the help of your supervisors.
- Ensure supervisors running the exams in the disability provision rooms are fully equipped with what they need.
- Students enter the exam room in an orderly manner.
- Read exam announcements to the room and commence the exam.
- Supervise exams, check other exam rooms regularly, and resolve issues that may arise. The Presiding Officer Hotline is available by phone for assistance.
- After conclusion of the exam, collect and bundle exam papers as per NESA's instructions.
- Pack completed exam papers securely and promptly return them to the security centre.

The Presiding Officer Hotline is available from 7.00 am – 7.00 pm throughout the exam period.

## 7 Contact

Should you have any questions about the role, you can contact Presiding Officer Support at:

P: 1800 200 955

E: [presidingofficers@nesa.nsw.edu.au](mailto:presidingofficers@nesa.nsw.edu.au)