Year 7
Selective High School Placement Test
for entry in
2015

High Performing Students Unit

Test information for parents and students

1. Who must sit the Selective High School Placement Test?
Students seeking placement in Year 7 at a selective high school must take the Selective High School Placement Test unless they have a satisfactory explanation, e.g. illness. (See section 14 on page 4 for further information.)

2. What tests do the students do?
There are four tests. Three of the tests consist of multiple-choice questions with answers recorded in computer-marked answer booklets. These three tests are reading, mathematics and general ability. The fourth test is a writing task. Candidates have 20 minutes to complete the writing test. The writing test is marked by trained markers using pre-determined criteria. A stimulus such as an image, a statement or a question is provided and students respond in writing. The writing will be judged on the quality of the thinking about a topic, the organisation of ideas and the control of language demonstrated in developing the piece of writing. It is expected that students will produce writing that is their own original work in response to the stimulus in the test. Marks will not be awarded for writing that does not specifically address the stimulus. Marks will also not be awarded where the writing of students is discovered to have elements in common with the writing of other students or published works. There are two lined pages provided for the writing task.

3. When will the test be held?
The test will be held on Thursday 13 March 2014 at 9.00 am.

4. How long does the test take?
The following is a sample timetable for the test.
Parents should drop students off at the test centre by 9.00 am and return at 1.15 pm to pick them up. Apart from the arrival time and duration of the tests this timetable is approximate and will vary according to the size and location of the test centre.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>START</th>
<th>FINISH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Candidates arrive by</td>
<td>9.00 am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidates assemble in school groups</td>
<td>9.00 am</td>
<td>9.20 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 1: Administration and practice</td>
<td>9.20 am</td>
<td>10.00 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading test (40 minutes)</td>
<td>10.00 am</td>
<td>10.40 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break</td>
<td>10.40 am</td>
<td>10.45 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics test (40 minutes)</td>
<td>10.45 am</td>
<td>11.25 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break</td>
<td>11.25 am</td>
<td>11.45 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 2: Administration</td>
<td>11.45 am</td>
<td>12.00 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General ability test (40 minutes)</td>
<td>12.00 pm</td>
<td>12.40 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break</td>
<td>12.40 pm</td>
<td>12.45 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing test (20 minutes)</td>
<td>12.45 pm</td>
<td>1.05 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidates dismissed</td>
<td>1.05 pm</td>
<td>1.15 pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parents must not remain on the school grounds during the test.
5. How do students get to the test centre?

Parents must arrange transport to and from the test centre. Parents must be ready to collect students from the test centre by 1.15 pm, the approximate dismissal time. **Parents must not park or wait on school premises.** If the test finishes early and parents have not yet arrived to collect their children, students may return to the examination room and remain under supervision until 1.15 pm. Students are not to be left waiting after the test.

6. What should the students wear to the test?

Students should wear school uniform, including a jumper if it is a cool day. Before the test the students will be assembled in primary school groups outside the test centre. The wearing of the school uniform helps the supervisors running the test to organise the students more easily.

7. What must the students bring to the test?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students SHOULD bring:</th>
<th>Students SHOULD NOT bring:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two black pens</td>
<td>Pencil cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter or email from the High Performing Students Unit which shows their student number</td>
<td>Note paper or other material such as dictionaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear plastic water bottle – with no writing on it except for the brand name (to be stored under the seat to avoid spills)</td>
<td>Equipment such as rulers, calculators, computers, mobile phones, watches that calculate or are set to beep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A snack to eat during the break.</td>
<td>Snacks containing nuts or nut products.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If students need to work anything out they are permitted to write in the question booklet.

8. How are the students identified at the test?

When students go to their desk they will find an answer booklet labelled with their name, date of birth and current school details. Students will be asked to record the number of the question booklet issued to them.

These identifying details are removed before the answer sections are marked to ensure that all papers are anonymous to the markers.

9. How do students show their answers?

The presiding officer (the person in charge of the test centre) will show students how to record their responses in the answer booklets at the beginning of the first test session. Students will be given a chance to practise recording their answers. Students who need further help should raise their hands.

*Part of an answer booklet showing the bubbles students will fill in to show their answers*
On page 2 is a part of an answer booklet showing the bubbles students will fill to show their answers. Note that the answers are grouped according to the page number in the question booklet, e.g. questions 1, 2, 3 and 4 are on page R3 of the question booklet. This helps students to make sure they are answering each question on the right line of the answer page. It also shows how students mark and change an answer. Sample answer pages can be viewed on the Unit’s website under ‘Test information’.

10. What is expected of the students?

Students must be careful not to look at the work of others during the test. Students found to be cheating risk disqualification from the test. Students must follow the presiding officer’s and supervisor’s instructions both during the tests and in the breaks. In a small number of cases parents will be advised if they are permitted to stay on the school grounds for student welfare reasons. Generally, parents are not permitted to enter the test centre and they are requested to leave the school grounds during the test.

11. What happens during the 20 minute break?

In the break from approximately 11.25 am to 11.45 am students will leave the test room. During this period they will not be allowed to run or play vigorous games, but they may eat food they have brought with them. The test centre’s canteen facilities may not be available to candidates.

12. What happens if a student arrives late?

Tests will start promptly. Students who arrive late may be allowed to take the test, but will be required to finish at the same time as other students.

13. How do the students know how much time they have in each test?

The presiding officer will show students the test clock being used to time the test. If students cannot see the test centre clock, they should raise their hands and tell the presiding officer or supervisor. No time warnings will be given before the end of each test.

14. What if the student is unable to take the test?

Students unable to take the test will not be eligible for placement at a selective high school unless there are exceptional circumstances. If your child misses the test because of exceptional circumstances, download an illness/misadventure form from the Unit’s website, complete it and return the completed form to the Unit within 14 days of the test. Parents may submit an illness/misadventure claim if the student took the test while suffering from illness or misadventure which prevented them from doing their best.

Please ensure the child seeks medical attention on the day of the test and attach a medical certificate to any illness/misadventure claim. Note: Ask the doctor to complete the Independent evidence of illness on page 3 of the illness/misadventure form.

It is generally better to do the test and lodge a claim than to miss the test. Although there is an appeals process later in the year, appeals based on illness will be considered only in exceptional circumstances.

15. How can students do their best in the test?

A. There is nothing you should study especially for the tests. It is most important to think clearly and to use your ability to deal with new problems and situations to arrive at an answer.

B. Pay attention when the presiding officer (the person in charge of the tests) talks to you and shows you where to record the answers for each test.

C. If you have any problems understanding the instructions put your hand up and the presiding officer will answer your questions.

D. Do NOT open the question booklet until the presiding officer tells you to do so.

E. At the beginning of the first session there will be practice questions to help you become familiar with the kinds of questions on the tests and to make sure that you know how to show your answers in the
test. Work through these when you are told, and then wait for the presiding officer to give you the answers.

F. Read each test question carefully before you start answering it. Think about what it asks you to do. Use your time wisely. Do not rush or you might make careless mistakes. Work steadily. Choose the answer that you think is best. If you find a question too difficult, do not spend a long time on it. Mark the answer you think is best and come back to that question later if you have time.

G. To change an answer, draw an X through the answer you don’t want and fill in the bubble of the new answer. To choose a crossed-out bubble again, draw a circle around the crossed-out answer you want.

H. Each multiple-choice test takes forty minutes, while the writing test takes 20 minutes.

I. In each multiple-choice test every question has equal value. Marks are awarded for each correct answer. Incorrect or blank answers score zero. It is better to have a guess rather than leave an answer blank.

J. Keep checking that the number of the question you are working on in the question booklet is the same as the number you are marking on the answer sheet. There are ‘Answer check’ reminders throughout the tests (like the one shown below) to check this. If you find you are answering a question at the wrong place, put your hand up and tell your supervisor. The supervisor will record the details and report the problem to the selection committee. Start the next question at the correct place and come back to fix the problem if you have time, changing one question at a time. Under no circumstances should you cross out a whole group of answers at once as you could run out of time correcting them. Do not waste too much time trying to fix the problem before you have finished the last question. Once the problem is reported, the selection committee can take it into consideration.

ANSWER CHECK (Reading No. 1)

Look at your answer booklet — was the last bubble you filled in for Question 18? If it was, keep going. If it wasn’t, put your hand up now for help.

K. If you want to work anything out in the multiple-choice tests you can write on the question booklet. There is also space for planning provided in the writing task question booklet if you choose to use it. The question and answer booklets will be collected at the end of the tests, but rough working you have done in the question booklet will not be marked.

L. There will be no time warnings during the test. Once the test starts you will need to check the test centre’s clock frequently to find out how much time you have left. The presiding officer will tell you which test centre clock is the official one. Put your hand up if you cannot see it or if you are unsure of where it is.

M. Put your hand up if you have any other problems or any questions.

16. Where can I find sample test papers?

Sample test papers are available on the Internet. There are also sample answer sheets so that the candidates can practise colouring in the answer bubbles as they are required to do in the test. Check the Unit’s website for updated sample answer sheets under ‘Test information’.


Enquiries: High Performing Students Unit
Telephone: 1300 880 367 or Email: ssu@det.nsw.edu.au Internet: http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/shsplacement