



Student Assessment Policy

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to provide guidance for making informed judgements on assessment tasks.

The Australian Institute of Higher Education Pty Ltd ('the Institute') has designed this Policy to ensure that all student assessment tasks are appropriately designed to determine the extent to which students have met the learning and skills outcome requirements in a unit of study, and to assist academic staff to make decisions about the performance of individual students within a unit of study, with a view to improving performance outcomes.

2. Principles

Assessment is to be designed to contribute to high quality student learning and underpin the development, delivery and quality assurance of units and courses.

All assessments:

- a) must be standards-based and provide evidence of the level of achievement with respect to learning outcomes, graduate attributes and criteria as outlined in the **Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)**;
- b) must be a transparent process carried out with honesty, integrity and confidentiality;
- c) is integral to pedagogically informed learning and teaching;
- d) must comprise a variety of tasks which are reasonably achievable by students; and
- e) must be fair, inclusive and equitable with due recognition of reasonable adjustment;
- f) be marked by appropriately qualified assessors, with grades applied consistently in accord with the Grading Criteria
- g) encourage and reinforce learning through the provision of meaningful and timely feedback
- h) must be assessing graduate attributes which are scaffolded in the course and subject learning outcomes

3. Context

Assessment is an integral part of the learning and teaching system and an important aspect of maintaining academic standards. It measures learning outcomes, evaluates the effectiveness of the learning environment, and formally certifies student achievements for external audiences.

4. Scope

This Policy applies to all students and academic staff at the Institute.

5. Definitions

See the *AIH Glossary of Terms* for definitions.

6. Policy Details

This **Student Assessment Policy** is authorised by the Academic Board to provide guidelines for the Institute's staff and students on the procedures and guidelines for student assessment.

Details of the process are contained in the **Student Assessment Procedure**.

6.1 Rationale for Assessment

Every subject will include student assessment.

The rationale for assessment is:

- to promote, enhance, and improve the quality of student learning through feedback that is clear, informative, timely, constructive and relevant to the needs of the student,
- to measure and confirm the standard of student performance and achievement in relation to a unit's defined learning outcomes,
- to reward student effort and achievement with an appropriate grade, and
- to provide relevant information in order to evaluate continuously and improve the quality of the curriculum and the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process.

6.2 Forms of Assessment

Normally, assessment of a unit of study will involve a number of different forms of assessment.

- a. **Formative:** this is specifically intended to assist students identify weaknesses in their understanding, so that they may improve their understanding and enhance their learning.
- b. **Summative:** this is primarily to pass judgment on the quality of a student's learning, generally in terms of assigned marks and grades.
- c. **Critical reflection on the outcomes of assessment tasks, both formative and summative:** this can inform lecturers and students, not only about the quality of student learning but also about the effectiveness of teaching.

6.3 Notification to students of assessment requirements

A fundamental aspect of developing a unit is the specification of the prescribed assessment tasks in a way that relates them directly to the unit's objectives (including expected learning outcomes), the course structure, the teaching methods to be used, and the learning strategies to be fostered. Lecturers should ensure that students are fully informed, in writing, in the introductory session of a unit, about unit objectives and expectations, including the assessment requirements and submission dates. The details of all assessment tasks are clearly stated in the Unit Outline, which includes a statement of the objectives of the unit; its assessment plan, including

weights allocated to each assessment item and related submission dates; deadlines, sanctions and penalties; all in a way that is appropriate to the academic level of the students.

6.4 Submission

Students must be advised of submission requirements for assessment tasks via the Unit Outline.

Students may be required to submit all work in electronic copy so that it can be subject to electronic scanning by Turnitin software to detect plagiarism.

6.5 Special Consideration and Reasonable Adjustment

Special consideration and/or reasonable adjustment may be made in cases of disability, long and short-term illness, chronic and temporary illness or other major disruptions to study which affect a student's ability to submit an assessment task.

Applications for special consideration or reasonable adjustment must be made using the prescribed form and include any required supporting evidence in accordance with the ***Student Assessment Procedure***.

6.6 Requirements for Successful Completion of a Unit of Study

- a) Students achieve at least 50% of the total marks for the unit of study to pass the unit.
- b) A Supplementary Exam will be given to students who have failed that unit and obtained total marks between 46 – 49% (inclusive) provided the student has completed all other assessment items.

6.7 Timing and Weight of Assessment

Students are expected to achieve the objectives of a unit of study progressively throughout a semester. There should be set tasks during the semester that allow the students' progress to be evaluated against established criteria. Such tasks should contribute to the final assessment in a unit.

There should be at least three assessment tasks per unit, and a maximum of four assessment tasks per unit, except in units where all assessments are examinations, in which case two assessment items are sufficient.

Assessments should be designed carefully; first, to keep in proportion student time commitment and the weight of the assessment task in the overall assessment (at least 70% must be an individual performance: i.e. no more than 30% group); and second, to reflect, as far as possible, the importance of each task in determining the effectiveness of students having met the unit's objectives. This might mean that an important task, such as an end of term exam, is weighted heavily. Care should be taken to avoid the imposition of a heavy imbalance of assessment load toward the second half of the semester.

Usually, one or more assessment tasks should be set, submitted, marked and returned to students by the mid-point of a unit. Although students need regular feedback on their progress, set assessment tasks should be kept to a minimum that is sufficient to enable students to make judgements about their progress. Due dates for assessment tasks should be spread out so as to give students periods of time for reflective learning that are free from the pressure caused by a looming deadline.

In some disciplines, students are expected to practise skill development continuously. To evaluate students' ability to perform such on-going tasks, consideration should be given to strategies for self-assessment. In this way, students can obtain evidence concerning their level of understanding of the work, while avoiding the stress of frequent formal appraisal by an examiner.

Apart from examination scripts, all assessed work should be returned to the student, preferably in a class context where the student has the right to query the assessment result for clarification either then or at a later time.

Unit Outlines should advise students at the beginning of a unit of study how all assessment results are to be combined to produce an overall mark for the unit. In particular, the Unit Outline should make expressly clear:

- the weight of each task in contributing to the overall mark;
- the formulas or rules used to determine the overall mark;
- minimum standards that are applied to specific assessment tasks, and the consequences if such standards are not met (including failure to submit particular tasks);
- rules regarding penalties applied to late submissions; and
- precise details of what is expected in terms of presentation of work for assessment. This is the marking criteria.

Emphasis should be placed on appropriate referencing conventions and requirements, on the degree of cooperation permitted between students, and on what constitutes academic dishonesty and the consequences of committing it as outlined in the **Academic Misconduct Policy**.

6.8 Communication Skills

Communication skills, fundamental to the success of a business leader, will be mainstreamed through all courses and assessments delivered at the Institute.

Students will be presented with progressively more challenging communication situations as they move from 100/1000 to 300/3000 level units. The suite of indicators is indicative, not comprehensive, and is intended as a guide for use by academics in the interests of constructing rigorous and challenging communication activities as part of Unit Outlines.

Practical indicators of performance levels required for use at the 100/1000, 200/2000 and 300/3000 levels are as follows:

Requirements for all levels (100/1000 – 300/3000):

- Written reports that are associated with oral presentations will vary in length and complexity. Where the presentation is a means of summarizing the results of a major assignment, the length of the written report will depend on the assignment that is the subject of the presentation. Where the primary focus of the assessment is the presentation, such as might be the case where the presentation is based on the topic for the weekly tutorial session, the report may be about 1000 words in length.
- Case studies need not be as long as essays.
- Student communications should be sensitive to cultural differences and deal responsibly and positively with conflict.

Level 100/1000 Communication skills:

General: At this level assignments and classroom experience are designed to challenge students' ability to build an argument that draws material together from a number of sources. In written form, this suggests written reports of 1000 – 1500 words in length that have an explicit structure of argument leading to a conclusion.

Essays: At this level, the essay form requires an introduction which raises key questions and foreshadows the approach to an answer, a body of logically sequenced points of argument and supporting evidence, and a conclusion that shows how the evidence and argument provides the answer to the questions set.

Where essays are used in examinations, examiners should expect to students to be able to interpret, plan and execute an essay of between 3 - 4 examination script pages per hour of examination time. The answers should be able to deploy material from different parts of the unit within a single narrative form.

Oral presentation skills: Oral presentation skills include the ability to develop a theme. An appropriate challenge at this level is for students to plan collectively and deliver formal presentations of 10-15 minutes in length, to

integrate multimedia aids such as PowerPoint presentation, video and music as appropriate and to tie the content conveyed by these aids to the theme of the presentation.

Level 200/2000 Communication skills:

Written Assignments: At this level, written assignments should be structured to make an extended argument. The answers should be complex enough to take account of a variety of factors impinging on the question. Implications should be clearly identified. Conclusions should include implications drawn from a variety of perspectives. The length of these assignments is between 1500 – 2500 words depending on the nature of the assignment.

Oral Presentations: Oral presentations should demonstrate the same capabilities for analysis and structure as presented in the written form. They should also include the capacity to run a group discussion. This may include posing of broad, open questions, which are pitched at the appropriate level to stimulate and engage an audience. Presenters should be able to respond to answers from other students with feedback or development or redirection of the question.

Essays in examinations: Where essays are used in examinations, examiners should expect students to interpret, plan and execute an essay of between 3 - 4 examination script pages per hour of examination time. The answers should be able to utilize material from different parts of the subject matter and arrange that material in a logical sequence that develops a functional argument.

Short answer questions: Where short answer questions are used, students should be able to develop responses in a paragraph form, using over one or more paragraphs. The paragraphs should have an internal logic that is well focused on the question being answered.

Level 300/3000 Communication skills:

General: At the 300 level both oral and written communication skills should benchmark well against industry practice. For example, students may present reports or briefings, which are clearly and cogently argued and can be acted upon by colleagues, subordinates and more senior management. The assignment length at this level could be between 2000 to 3000 words. Students should be able to present coherent written arguments based on the application of concepts under pressure of time and without resort to notes e.g. in class discussion or the examination context.

Oral presentations/tutorials: Students should be able to deliver oral presentations as per 100 level skills and run class discussions as per 200 level skills. In addition to this, they should be able to construct meanings out of the disparate contributions of other students. They should be able to draw together implications of what has been put forward in tutorial discussions and present conclusions back to the tutorials that form a synthesis or reconciliation of their own presentation and the responses of the students. By way of further illustration, this communication process should be analogous to the chair of a meeting, drawing together the conclusions that have emerged from diverse perspectives brought to the meeting table. Students should be able to recognise and acknowledge those perspectives that remain irreconcilable. They should be able to recognise ambiguity and show appropriate tolerances for multiple meanings.

Essays in examinations: Where examinations prescribe essays, the appropriate exams would be four essays of 3 – 4 exam script pages in a three-hour examination. The answers should be able to utilize material from different parts of the unit and arrange that material in a logical sequence, and draw implications to develop a persuasive argument that develops a functional argument. The argument should also be able to frame and resolve issues and/or account for alternative perspectives as the occasion may warrant.

Short answer questions: Students should be able to develop responses to short answer questions in a paragraph form that bring together concepts and theories from different parts of the unit being examined.

6.9 Grading Criteria

Overall student performance in individual units shall be graded in accordance with the following guidelines:

Grade	Definition
High Distinction (outstanding performance) Code: HD Mark range: 85% and above	Complete and comprehensive understanding of the unit content; development of relevant skills to an outstanding level; demonstration of an extremely high level of interpretive and analytical ability and intellectual initiative; and excellent achievement of all major and minor objectives of the unit.
Distinction (very high level of performance) Code: D Mark range: 75-84%	Very high level of understanding of the unit content; development of relevant skills to a very high level; demonstration of a very high level of interpretive and analytical ability and intellectual initiative; and comprehensive achievement of all major and minor objectives of the unit.
Credit (high level of performance) Code: C Mark range: 65-74%	High level of understanding of the unit content; development of relevant skills to a high level; demonstration of a high level of interpretive and analytical ability and achievement of all major objectives of the unit; some minor objectives not fully achieved.
Pass (competent level of performance) Code: P Mark range: 50-64%	Adequate understanding of most of the basic unit content; development of relevant skills to a satisfactory level; adequate interpretive and analytical ability and achievement of all major objectives of the unit; some minor objectives not achieved.
Non-graded Pass Code: NGP	Successful completion of a unit assessed on a pass/fail basis, indicating satisfactory understanding of unit content; satisfactory development of relevant skills; satisfactory interpretive and analytical ability and achievement in all major objectives of the unit.
Fail - unsatisfactory performance Code: F Mark range: below 50%	Inadequate understanding of the basic unit content; failure to develop relevant skills; insufficient evidence of interpretive and analytical ability; and failure to achieve some or all major and minor objectives of the unit.
Fail - no assessment submitted Code: FNS	Did not present any work for assessment, to be considered as failed.
Grade Pending Code GP	A final grade is yet to be awarded for the unit. This is a temporary grade only and must be finalised before the end of the following semester.
Supplementary Exam Code SX	A final grade is yet to be awarded for the unit as a supplementary exam has been approved. This is a temporary grade only and must be finalised before the end of the following semester.
Withdraw With Failure Code: WF	Cancelled enrolment in the unit after the final date for withdrawal without failure. Cancelled enrolment in the unit for non-payment of fees.

Withdraw Without Failure Code: AW	Cancelled enrolment in the unit before the final date for withdrawal without failure. This grade may also be awarded to students who withdraw from a unit after the withdrawal date under special or compassionate circumstances. In these cases the grade is awarded at the discretion of the Teaching and Learning Committee. A unit with the grade of AW does not appear on a student's academic transcript.
Advanced Standing Code: AS	Credit has been granted for the unit of study following an application and its approval for Advanced Standing.

Rounding of Grades

Individual assessment results shall be rounded to one decimal place. Aggregate marks for a unit of study shall be rounded to a whole number.

6.10 Appeals

Students may appeal against a decision made under this Policy and associated Procedure. Appeals must be made as prescribed in the appeals process outlined in the **Assessment Appeal Policy** and associated Procedure.

7. Version Control

This Policy has been endorsed by the Australia Institute of Higher Education Academic Board as at 7 June 2017 and is reviewed every 3 years. The Policy is published and available on the Australian Institute of Higher Education website <http://www.aih.nsw.edu.au/> under 'Policies and Procedures'.

Change and Version Control				
Version	Authored by	Brief Description of the changes	Date Approved:	Effective Date:
2016-1	Registrar	Updated template.	6 July 2016	6 August 2016
2017-1	Ms. McCoy	Revised rules.	22 February 2017	6 March 2017
2017-2	Registrar	Added Internal Assessment Moderation Policy and Procedure to related documents.	7 June 2017	13 June 2017