



AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE  
OF HIGHER EDUCATION

# Student Assessment Policy and Procedure

## Category: Academic (ACA)

### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to outline the process for collecting relevant evidence and making informed judgements to evaluate student learning outcomes.

The Australian Institute of Higher Education Pty Ltd (“AIH” or “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 make decisions about the performance of individual students within a unit of study and with a view to improving performance outcomes.

### 2. Policy Statement

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

### 3. Rationale for 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 objectives,
- 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.

### 4. Communication Skills

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

Students will be presented with progressively more challenging communication situations as they move from 100 to 300 level units. This **Student Assessment Policy** is to be read in conjunction with the **Mainstreaming Communication Policy**, and the **Course Design, Development and Evaluation Policy and Procedure** which provides practical indicators of performance levels required for use at the 100, 200 and 300 levels and distinguish levels of challenge for communication tasks at each level. The suite of indicators is indicative, not comprehensive, and is intended for use by academics who construct Study Guides. These indicators provide a guide in the construction of rigorous and challenging communication activities.

## 5. 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.

The forms of assessment to be utilised for each unit are clearly set out in the Study Guides given to students at the commencement of the unit.

Each form of assessment should also reflect the level of rigour and challenge related to whether a unit is a 100, 200 or 300 level unit.

The **Course Design, Development and Evaluation Policy and Procedure, section 4.3.2** defines learning outcomes that differentiate each unit level. In general, level 100 units refer to the development of knowledge and comprehension of subject matter taught. Level 200 units expect/require the application of knowledge and the ability to analyse and distinguish between different bodies of knowledge. Level 300 units expect/require the ability to synthesize and evaluate the unit's content areas.

The **Mainstreaming Communication Policy section 4 Mainstreaming Communication Policy** defines the communication outcomes that differentiate each unit level. Section 4 of the Policy should be applied to each of the assessment items below to ensure that the assessments stipulated for each unit adhere to the communication outcomes in the Policy in accordance with the relevant level of a 100/200/300 unit.

**Composition and Format of assessment may include**

### 5.1 Mid-semester exam

Mid-semester exams are closed book exams that test knowledge acquired up to the mid-semester point and will include multiple choice questions, short answer questions, and problem solving exercises. The limit on multiple-choice questions to be adhered to is fixed at no more than 50% of the examination. The mid-semester exam can range in value up to 40% of the total unit's marks.

### 5.2 Short quizzes

Short quizzes are intended to test that students study regularly and have a good grasp of the theoretical material covered in lectures and tutorials. They usually take the form of multiple choice questions and short answer questions. Each quiz often represents 5 to 10% of the total unit marks. As many as four quizzes may be used in each unit.

### 5.3 End of semester exam (final exams)

End of semester exams (Final Exams) are (usually) closed book exams that test knowledge acquired from the entire unit and will include multiple choice questions, essays, short answers questions, problem solving exercises and practical exercises. The limit on multiple-choice questions to be adhered to is fixed at no more than 20% of the examination. An end of semester exam may range in value from between 50-70% of the total unit's marks with a duration of up to 3 hours, maximum.

A student cannot attempt a Final Exam and then sit for a Supplementary Exam. If the student is unwell, the student sits for a Deferred Exam by submitting a Medical Certificate and completing the Extension of Assessment Item form.

### 5.4 Essay / Report/ Literature review

Essays/ reports/ literature reviews are intended to test a student's ability to assess information, to formulate arguments, and to evaluate critically different alternatives to issues or problems. They usually also seek to demonstrate a student's research skills through conducting literature reviews and the creation of appropriate reference and reading lists. They can vary between 1000 words in 100 level units through to 3000 words in 300

level units. As many as two essays may be used in a unit, although one is more common. They can vary in value between 20-40% of the total unit's marks.

### 5.5 Case study/written report

Case studies vary in length. They are not usually expected to be the same length as an essay. Case studies must adhere to expected academic standards, including referencing and should demonstrate appropriate levels of research as indicated by literature reviews.

### 5.6 Practical exercise(s)

These can be conducted individually or in groups and address a practical element of a unit. They might include some kind of written report and may employ several different media. They usually involve resolving some kind of technical problem or demonstrating a student's practical and technical skills, abilities, and understanding of the unit.

### 5.7 Presentations and group work

Group work and presentations demonstrate a student's ability to work and interact with others. They often require the ability to demonstrate both leadership and follower abilities. They are usually accompanied by written or visual presentation. Where the presentation is a means of presenting the findings of some larger piece of research, the length of the written report will be determined by the nature of the project being presented. Where the presentation is based on the topic for the week, the written report may be as simple and brief as a 1000 word executive summary of the key concepts and issues within the topic.

Presentations can be of varying length and weighting, depending on the nature of the unit. They are particularly appropriate for technical or creative units.

### 5.8 Assessment of Participation:

Assessment of Participation is to be a genuine assessment of participation and not that of attendance. To ensure that this is the case, students should complete exercises in class which will be audited and marked on a random basis of three times a semester.

### 5.9 Requirements for Successful Completion of a Unit

- a) Students must pass the end of semester exam and achieve at least 50% of the total marks for the unit of study to pass the unit, taking into account c) below,
- b) A Supplementary Exam will be given either because students have failed that unit and obtained total marks between 46 – 49% (inclusive) or because they have failed the final exam but have total marks to pass that unit, provided the student has completed all other assessment items,
- c) However, if individual exams and/ or assessment items completed under exam conditions (e.g. close book quizzes) constitute an overall 75% of the unit's assessment, there is no need to pass the final exam to pass the unit. In all other circumstances, condition a) will apply.

## 6. Other Relevant Policies

### Attendance Requirement:

Students are expected to attend at least 80% of all schedule lectures and tutorials (or seminars) in a stated semester. This is to ensure that students are able to fully participate in the stated teaching and learning activities, assessment items, development of their generic skills, and comply with the unit's learning outcomes in a comprehensive and supported manner. This attendance expectation will be stated in all units' Study Guides. If the student does not comply with the attendance requirement, the students could fail that Unit.

A lecturer may take into account a student's attendance record when determining whether to re-administer missed assessment item when requested by a student.

The assessment items are all communication tasks. The standard of communication skills required at each of the three levels is therefore governed by the policy entitled **Mainstreaming Communication Policy**. The principle underpinning this Policy is that the assessment tasks should serve to develop communication skills by

making them progressively more difficult throughout the three levels of study. Performance standards are detailed in the **Mainstreaming Communication Policy**.

Assessments are also designed to help academic staff track progress in accordance with the Generic Skills that AIH seeks to develop in all graduates. In addition to the unit-specific learning outcomes listed in each unit outline, AIH graduates will, throughout their study, acquire and develop a range of generic academic and personal skills. Skills that are taught, practised and assessed to varying degrees throughout AIH programs include:

- 1) The ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, with a diverse range of audiences
- 2) The ability to liaise, cooperate, and work effectively with others
- 3) The ability to conduct thorough, accurate, and targeted research
- 4) The ability to address and solve problems creatively and in a structured and methodical way
- 5) The ability to understand and identify ethical problems and demonstrate ethical behaviour
- 6) The ability to critically assess and evaluate different approaches to issues and problems.

Not all of these capabilities will be addressed in each unit, but the complete suite of assessment items over the course of a whole course will include activities that serve to demonstrate and achieve these learning outcomes.

To ensure academic integrity, the **Academic Misconduct Policy** must be read in conjunction with this Policy to maintain consistent standards and treatment of instances where academic integrity has been questioned and dealt with in a consistent manner.

## **7. Notification of Assessment**

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 Study Guide, 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.

## **8. Timing and Weight of Assessments**

Students are expected to achieve the objectives of a unit of study progressively throughout a semester. They should be set tasks during the semester that allow their 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, 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 the minimum that is sufficient to enable students to make judgments 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 engendered 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.

Study Guides 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 Study Guide 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.

The Study Guide should also make clear to students that the aggregated mark for the unit of study will be moderated. Moderation may result, in some cases, in a variation of the final grade awarded to the student for the unit of study which is inconsistent with the individual marks awarded to the student for individual assessment items.

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*.

## **9. Submission of Assessment Items**

Students are required to submit assessment items at the time and date specified in the Study Guide. Assessment items submitted after the due date will be subject to a penalty unless the Dean has given prior approval in writing for an extension of time to submit that item, or if mitigating circumstances apply.

Assessments should be submitted in the form specified in the Study Guide or as notified by the Lecturer. Where assessment items are submitted electronically, the date and time the email was received will be considered the date and time of submission. Written papers or other physical submissions are to be time and date stamped as a record of receipt.

## **10. Penalties for Late Submission**

An assessment item submitted after the assessment due date, without an approved extension or without approved mitigating circumstance, will be penalised. The standard penalty is the reduction of the mark allocated to the assessment item by 5% of the total mark applicable for the assessment item, for each day or part day that the item is late (a 'day' for this purpose is defined as any day on which the campus administration is open).

Extensions to assignment deadlines based on mitigating circumstances shall be at the discretion of the Dean, and should be granted in writing by completing the Extension of Assessment Item Request Form with appropriate documentation. Mitigating circumstances are circumstances outside of the student's control that have had an adverse affect on the student's work or ability to work. A Request is not automatically approved, and lecturer and/ or Dean will inform the student in writing of the outcome of their Request.

Penalties for late submission shall also be in line with **Section 13 Special Consideration**.

## **11. Detection and Prevention of Plagiarism**

Students are advised of the nature of plagiarism and the penalties for plagiarism in the *Student Assessment Policy* and *Academic Misconduct Policy*. These policies are communicated to the students through the:

- Student Orientation,
- Student Handbook, and
- Introductory session of each new unit of study

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.

Every assessment item submitted requires students to include an Assessment Item Cover Sheet. Students will be required to sign a statement that makes them accountable for original work submitted and that they are aware of the penalties and process for submitting plagiarised work.

Wherever practical, exams will be utilised at least once per unit to ensure the student demonstrates mastery of the material in a controlled environment. Exams should be comprehensive so that they re-examine knowledge that may have been demonstrated in other written assessments.

Students will be required to provide their Student ID Cards when sitting for their exams.

When setting assessment tasks, academic staff are encouraged to utilise methodologies that reduce the opportunity for students to reproduce work that has been completed in other circumstances, and to ensure that the student's work is their own.

Where there is doubt as to a student's understanding of content in their assessment or suspicions of submitted assessment items not being authentic (that of the student), the student may be called upon to provide a VIVA –style defence of the content. Where the student fails to adequately defend the content by demonstrating understanding or evidence of their work, the assessment item will be deemed as a fail grade and the process for academic misconduct as per the *Academic Misconduct Policy* will be instigated.

This section of the *Student Assessment Policy* must be read in conjunction with the *AIH Academic Misconduct Policy*, which outlines the processes and procedures for dealing with plagiarism.

## **12. Assessment Feedback**

To minimise the number of requests for reviews of an assessment decision, the Institute will provide students with feedback which enables them to understand the reason for their results.

## **13. Special Consideration**

Students whose ability to submit or attend an assessment item is affected by sickness, misadventure or other circumstances beyond their control, may be eligible for special consideration. No consideration is given when the condition or event is unrelated to the student's performance in a component of the assessment, or when it is considered not to be serious. Students must apply in writing to the Dean for special consideration within 3 days of the due date of the assessment item or exam or fill in the Special Consideration Form during the exam.

When considering the special consideration application, the Dean may take into account one or more of the following conditions:

- the student's performance in other assessment tasks in the unit,
- the severity of the event,
- the student's academic standing in other units and in the course, and
- any history of previous applications for special consideration, except where they indicate a specified chronic problem
- supporting evidence such as documentation. The application may be rejected without external objective documentation.

If an application for special consideration or misadventure is lodged, any one of the following outcomes may be appropriate:

- no action is taken,
- additional assessment or a supplementary examination is undertaken. The additional assessment may take a different form from the original assessment. If a student is granted the additional assessment, the original assessment may be ignored at the discretion of the Dean. Consequently, a revised mark based on additional assessment may be greater or less than the original mark;
- marks obtained for other completed assessment tasks in the unit are aggregated or averaged to achieve a percentage result,
- the deadline for assessment is extended, and/ or
- the student is allowed to discontinue from the unit without failure. This is unlikely to occur after an exam or final assessment has taken place.

The student will be advised in writing of the final decision regarding their application for special consideration at the earliest opportunity.

## 14. Resubmission

Where a student marginally fails a unit of study (i.e. has achieved a score of 46-49%) the Dean may recommend that the student be offered a Supplementary Exam which if passed, will result in the student passing the unit. The grade awarded after the Supplementary Exam is finalised is limited to P or F. If the student does not take up the opportunity to complete the Supplementary Exam the grade reverts to an F. The Dean reserves the right to not award a Supplementary Exam if the student has not complete or attempted all other assessment items for that unit.

If the additional assessment task relates to the final exam for a unit the temporary grade awarded will be SX, otherwise it will be entered as GP. All SX and GP grades must be finalised before the end of the following semester.

## 15. Grades

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

Grade	Definition
<b>High Distinction</b> (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.
<b>Distinction</b> (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.
<b>Credit</b> (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.

Grade	Definition
<b>Pass</b> (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.
<b>Non-graded Pass</b> 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.
<b>Fail - unsatisfactory performance</b> 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.
<b>Fail - no assessment submitted</b> Code: FNS	Did not present any work for assessment, to be considered as failed.
<b>Grade Pending</b> 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.
<b>Supplementary Exam</b> 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.
<b>Withdraw With Failure</b> 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.
<b>Withdraw Without Failure</b> 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.
<b>Advanced Standing</b> 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.



## 16. Moderation

Moderation is the process of ensuring that assessment is valid, reliable and fair, and refers to the processes of moderating grades and moderating individual assessment items.

Moderation comprises 3 forms:

- 1) Assessment moderation: Blind marking using marking criteria; model answers; answers provided by an external source;
- 2) Moderation of marks: this is conducted by the Course Coordinator and the Dean at the end of each semester
- 3) External Moderation of units and marks, e.g. multiple marking based on sample of 20% of exams submitted

**16.1** The moderation of grades for each student in a unit seeks to ensure that the standard of assessment is uniform. The Course Coordinator will consider samples from students studying a particular unit to determine the fairness of the application of the assessment criteria for all students, the appropriateness of the assessment scheme and all summative assessment items for students in a unit.

**16.2** The Dean and Course Coordinators are responsible for the moderation of grades, the appointment of Lecturers and reporting the final outcomes of moderation activity to the Teaching and Learning Committee.

**16.3** The Course Coordinator will compile a report to submit to the Dean for each set of moderated assessment items covering distribution of marks, highlighting any adjustments to marks, making recommendations for change to assessment tasks and/or relevant feedback to markers.

The Dean will moderate the marks to ensure that:

- the standard of achievement is uniform, particularly for units being delivered to different groups of students by different staff in different locations,
- each assessment task matches the specified outcomes and performance criteria listed in the Study Guide,
- where feasible, assessment tasks within units are integrated,
- assessment is consistent through “double-marking” a sample of submitted tasks, and
- all relevant resources required for conduct of assessment are available.

Where the same unit is offered across different courses, unit moderation will be common across all courses to ensure consistency of standards.

**16.4** The Dean will be responsible for providing evidence of appropriate moderation to the Teaching and Learning Committee who has operational responsibility for the moderation process being carried out internally and externally.

External moderation will be scheduled by the Teaching and Learning Committee who will invite the coordinators to participate. The Teaching and Learning Committee must prepare plans for external moderation for approval and authorisation by the AIH Academic Board.

## 17. Review of an Assessment Decision

A student may request a review of an assessment decision. In the first instance, students should approach the Lecturer, where appropriate, to discuss their concerns about the assessment decision. Where the issue regarding the assessment decision is unable to be resolved at this level, a request for a review may be made in writing and lodged with the Dean within 5 working days of formal notification of the assessment result.

The grounds upon which the student may request a review of an assessment decision are:

- that the student believes that an error has occurred in the calculation of the grade; and /or

- a demonstration that the assessment decision is inconsistent with the published assessment requirements or assessment criteria.

Students should note that each review against an assessment decision is determined on its own merits without reference to other applications.

The Dean will normally respond to the request for a review of an assessment decision in writing within 10 working days and may confirm or vary the original decision. All decisions relating to reviews of assessment decisions are sent to the Dean who compiles an annual report for review by the Teaching and Learning Committee.

## 18. Appeals

A student may appeal against a decision made under this Policy. Appeals must be made as prescribed in the appeals process (Stage 2) outlined in the ***Student Grievance Handling and Resolution Policy and Procedure***.

## 19. Version Control

<b>Policy Code</b>	ACA-HE-04
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