

## **STUDENT ASSESSMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

### **1. Overview**

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

The Higher Education Leadership Institute (“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 within a subject and to assist educators to make decisions about the performance of individual students within a subject.

### **2. 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 subject’s defined learning outcomes;
- to reward student effort and achievement with an appropriate grade;
- to provide relevant information in order to continuously evaluate and improve the quality of the curriculum and the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process.

### **3. Forms of assessment**

Some assessment is formative; it is specifically intended to assist students to identify weaknesses in their understanding, so that they may improve their understanding and enhance their learning. Other assessment is summative; its objective is primarily to pass judgment on the quality of a student’s learning, generally in terms of assigned marks. Furthermore, critical reflection on the outcomes of assessment tasks, both formative and summative, can inform educators and students, not only about the quality of student learning but also about the effectiveness of teaching.

Normally, assessment of a subject will:

- have a minimum of two but no more than three different forms of assessment;
- have no single assessment task worth more than 50% of the total mark for the subject (except for capstone units);
- Include an early formative assessment task within the first third of the study period to identify the need for additional support for individual students<sup>1</sup> (except for capstone units);
- Limit group assessment to 30% of the total mark for the subject.

The forms of assessment to be utilised for each subject will be clearly set out in the documentation given to students at the commencement of each subject.

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<sup>1</sup> Refer also section 4 of the *Student Progression and Exclusion Policy and Procedure (QAF095)*

Types of assessment will be as specified in the *Subject Study Guide*, and may include:

- short answer questions
- online quizzes
- multiple-choice questions
- essays
- literature reviews
- reports
- reflective portfolios
- analysis papers
- presentations
- practical exercises

#### **4. Notification of assessment**

A fundamental aspect of developing a subject is the specification of the prescribed assessment tasks in a way that relates them directly to the subject objectives (including expected subject learning outcomes), the course structure, the teaching methods to be used, and the learning strategies to be fostered. Educators should ensure that students are fully informed, in writing, by the end of the first week of the study period, about subject objectives and expectations, including the assessment requirements. The details of all assessment tasks should be stated clearly in the *Subject Study Guide* and include a statement of the objectives of the subject; its assessment plan, including the weighting of each assessable component and related submission dates; deadlines, sanctions and penalties; and the objectives of the subject in a way that is appropriate to the academic level of the students.

#### **5. Timing and weight of assessments**

Students are expected to reach the objectives of a subject progressively throughout the course of the subject. They should be set tasks during the study period that allow their progress to be evaluated against established criteria. Such tasks should contribute to the final assessment in a subject.

Assessment tasks should be designed carefully, first, to keep in proportion student time commitment and the weight of the assessment task in the overall assessment of a subject, and second, to reflect, as far as possible, the importance of each task in determining the effectiveness of students' having met the subject objectives. This might mean that an important task, such as a final assessment, is weighted heavily. Care should be taken to avoid the imposition of a heavy imbalance of assessment load toward the second half of the study period. Assessment should reflect both the level of the subject and the credit points assigned.

Usually, one or more assessment tasks should be set, submitted, marked and returned to students by the mid-point of a subject. 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 judgements about their progress. Due dates for assessment tasks should be well separated in time 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 giving opportunity for the student to query the assessment result for clarification. Educators are encouraged to provide feedback to students on all assessment events including final examinations.

*Subject Study Guides* should advise students at the beginning of a subject how all assessment results are to be combined to produce an overall mark for the subject. In particular, the *Subject 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.

The *Subject Study Guide* should also make clear to students that the total mark for the subject will be moderated. Moderation may result, in some cases, in a variation of the final grade awarded to the student for the subject 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 *Student Academic Integrity and Honesty Policy and Procedure (QAF070)*.

## **6. Submission of assessment items**

Students are required to submit assessment items as specified in the *Subject Study Guide* and as directed by the subject educator. Assessment items submitted after the due date will be subject to a penalty unless the student has been given prior approval in writing for an extension of time to submit that item.

Assessments should be submitted in the form specified in the *Subject Study Guide*. Where assessment items are submitted electronically, the date and time the electronic submission was received will be considered the date and time of submission.

## **7. 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 10% of the total mark applicable for the assessment item, for each day or part day that the item is late. Assessment items submitted more than ten days after the assessment due date are awarded zero marks.

Extensions to assignment deadlines based on mitigating circumstances shall be at the discretion of the Dean, and must be granted in writing. Mitigating circumstances are circumstances outside of the student's control that have had an adverse effect on the student's work or ability to work.

## 8. 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 three days of the due date of the assessment item.

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

- the student's performance in other assessment tasks in the subject;
- the severity of the event;
- the student's academic standing in other subjects and in the course; and
- any history of previous applications for special consideration, especially where they indicate a chronic problem.

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

- no action is taken;
- additional assessment or a supplementary examination is undertaken. Additional assessment may take a different form from the original assessment. If a student is granted 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 the completed assessment tasks are pro-rated to achieve a final percentage result;
- the deadline for assessment is extended;
- the student is allowed to discontinue from the subject without failure. This is unlikely to occur after a final assessment has taken place.

When reviewing requests for special consideration, particular attention will be given to the progression and completion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

## 9. Assessment feedback

The Institute will ensure that students are provided with timely feedback from educators that enables them to understand the reason for their results for each assessment.

Assessment feedback will be provided for each assessment task along with the mark for the assessment in line with the assessment instructions provided in the *Subject Study Guide*.

## 10. Reasonable adjustment

Students with a disability may request reasonable adjustment to an assessment task to accommodate their disability. Adjustments to an assessment must take into account the special characteristics of the student. Any adjustments made must be 'reasonable' so that they do not impose an unjustifiable hardship upon the Institute.

A request for reasonable adjustment is made by the student in writing to the educator of the subject affected.

Making a reasonable adjustment will involve varying the procedures for conducting an assessment, for example:

- allowing additional time for the completion of an assessment;
- extending deadlines for an assessment;
- varying question and response modalities for an assessment;
- providing or allowing additional resources in examinations.

### **11. Requirements for successful completion of a subject**

Students must attempt all assessment tasks and achieve at least 50% of the total marks for the subject to pass the subject. Students must normally achieve a mark of at least 40% in their final assessment. Where a student achieves a total mark of 50% for the subject but less than 40% in their final assessment the Dean will review the overall assessment and contribution of the student and make a decision on whether to waive the subject requirements and allow the student to pass with their overall mark for the subject.

### **12. Resubmission**

Where a student has completed all assessment tasks and marginally fails a subject (i.e. has achieved a score of 46-49%) the Dean may recommend that the student be offered the option of completing additional assessable work which, if completed at the prescribed standard, will result in the student passing the subject. The grade awarded after the additional assessment is finalised is limited to P or FO. If the student does not take up the opportunity to complete additional assessment work the grade remains as an FO.

### **13. Grades**

Students will receive a grade for each subject in which they are enrolled. The grade will be the addition of the marks awarded for each assessment item.

During each subject, students will be provided with an evaluation of their individual performance with reference to the criteria for each assessment task. Student performance in individual subjects shall be graded in accordance with the following guidelines:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Definition</b>
High Distinction (outstanding performance) Code: HD Mark range: 85% and above	Complete and comprehensive understanding of the subject 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 learning outcomes of the subject.
Distinction (very high level of performance) Code: D Mark range: 75-84%	Very high level of understanding of the subject 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 learning outcomes of the subject.

Grade	Definition
Credit (high level of performance) Code: C Mark range: 65-74%	High level of understanding of the subject content; development of relevant skills to a high level; demonstration of a high level of interpretive and analytical ability and achievement of all learning outcomes of the subject.
Pass (competent level of performance) Code: P Mark range: 50-64%	Adequate understanding of most of the basic subject content; development of relevant skills to a satisfactory level; adequate interpretive and analytical ability and achievement of all learning outcomes of the subject.
Non-graded Pass Code: NGP	Successful completion of a subject assessed on a pass/fail basis, indicating satisfactory understanding of subject content; satisfactory development of relevant skills; satisfactory interpretive and analytical ability and achievement of all learning outcomes of the subject.
Fail (not meet academic standards) (attempted all assessments but did not achieve 50%) Code: F Mark range: below 50%	Inadequate understanding of the basic subject content; failure to develop relevant skills; insufficient evidence of interpretive and analytical ability; and failure to achieve some or all learning outcomes of the subject.
Fail (non-submission) (did not attempt all assessments and did not achieve 50%) Code: FN Mark range: below 50%	Inadequate understanding of the basic subject content; failure to develop relevant skills; insufficient evidence of interpretive and analytical ability; and failure to achieve some or all learning outcomes of the subject.
Withdraw With Failure Code: WF	Withdrew from the subject after the census date.
Withdraw Without Failure Code: WO	Withdrew from the subject before census date or after the census date with special circumstances.
Credit Granted Code: CPL	Credit has been granted for the subject following an application and its approval.

#### **14. Publication of results**

All results must be reviewed and properly approved before publication. The Academic Quality Committee will nominate three of its members (but not any student representative) to meet at the end of each study period as the Results Review Committee to approve results prior to publication. At least one of the members will be an independent member of the Academic Quality Committee.

Once results have been approved the Dean will ensure that the approved mark and grade is recorded in the student database against the relevant subject and students notified of their results.

#### **15. Review of an assessment decision**

A student may request a review of an assessment decision. A request for a review may relate to the decision regarding an individual assessment item or a final grade for a subject.

In the first instance, students should approach their subject educator, 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 on the prescribed form (*FRM021 Request for Review of an Assessment Decision*) and lodged with the Dean within five 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 ten working days and may confirm or vary the original decision. All decisions relating to reviews of assessment decisions will be reported to and reviewed by the Academic Quality Committee.

If a student remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the review of an assessment decision they may utilise the Institute's *Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure (QAF090)*.

## 16. Related documents

- Subject Study Guides
- FRM020 Assessment Cover Sheet
- FRM021 Request for Review of an Assessment Decision
- QAF090 Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure

## 17. Version history

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Sections modified
1.0	Academic Board	20 April 2016	Document creation and initial approval
1.1	Academic Board	2 November 2016	Minor changes to better address new HE Standards Framework Incorporation of nomenclature of "educator" Clarification of subject completion requirements

Document owner: Dean