

# Teaching and Learning Guidelines: TEMPLATE (GENERIC)





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## PART A: TEACHING AND LEARNING PRINCIPLES AND SYSTEMS

### 1. Foundations of the Southern Cross approach to teaching and learning

Teaching and learning at Southern Cross University (SCU) is guided by the University's [Assessment, Teaching and Learning Policy](#) and the [Assessment, Teaching and Learning Procedures](#). The table below captures the six teaching and learning principles outlined in policy. It offers brief examples of how they can be translated into practice for Unit Assessors, Tutors and Markers.

**Please note:** Assessments are addressed in a separate Assessment Guidelines document (forthcoming).

Teaching and learning principles	Examples of practice
<p><b>1. Learning is supported through a culture of respect, enquiry and dialogue.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always be respectful of students, even when their views challenge your own or concepts presented in a unit</li> <li>• Present (in a neutral way) different points of view about a topic and ask students to compare and contrast, provide evidence for, or make an argument in favour of one or the other</li> <li>• Establish clear expectations about netiquette and safe and respectful class environments</li> <li>• Maintain a consistent teaching presence that invites questions and interaction</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Learning is supported by recognising and broadening students' beliefs and knowledge.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prompt students to apply theoretical concepts to their own life or work situation or a case study</li> <li>• Include activities that invite students to reflect on and describe their experiences and perspectives in relation to a concept or practice</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Learning is supported by a consistent teaching delivery approach across the University.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design self-access modules that are carefully curated, sequenced, media-rich, interactive and responsive</li> <li>• Design class learning activities that require students to problem solve, apply knowledge, discuss, collaborate, and/or create</li> <li>• Structure Blackboard sites in a way that is as consistent as possible with other units that students will encounter</li> <li>• Ensure that self-access modules are complemented by class plan / lesson plan or other resources to guide class learning in a consistent manner across locations</li> </ul>

<p><b>4. Learning is supported through quality learning tasks and feedback.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curate and prioritise learning activities that provide scaffoldings for building knowledge and skills needed for completing assessments and achieving learning outcomes</li> <li>• Establish clearly articulated learning expectations that integrate assessment design, rubric design, Unit and learning material design</li> <li>• Provide rubrics designed according to SCU guidelines before the commencement of the Unit</li> <li>• Provide exemplars and examples as benchmarks</li> <li>• Use concise language to ensure understanding</li> <li>• Use appropriate digital communication tools (media-rich) and text to support and streamline sensemaking and cognitive effort. For example, include embedded videos and related quizzes in learning sites to support the achievement of learning outcomes</li> <li>• Throughout self-access modules and class learning, guide students by clearly showing the alignment and linkages between learning activities, assessments and learning outcomes</li> <li>• Access clear, constructive, respectful, and timely feedback strategies through the <a href="#">ISCM practical guide on Assessment</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Learning is supported by readily available, high-quality learning materials and resources.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draw on best-practice examples and engage in professional development for teaching and educational design provided by the Centre for Teaching and Learning</li> <li>• Use this <a href="#">Accessibility checklist</a> to support equity and inclusion.</li> </ul>

Applying these principles contributes towards the [University's purpose](#):

Changing lives through revolutionary learning and research with real impact.

They also align with a key strategic priority in the [University's Strategic Plan 2030](#):

Education & student experience: Create outstanding student outcomes through our revolutionary Southern Cross Model and a seamless student journey.

The purpose of this document is to outline how the above principles can be enacted in units and courses at SCU. These guidelines are also underpinned by the following policies, procedures and rules, which all staff should familiarise themselves with:

- [Assessment, Teaching and Learning Policy](#)
- [Assessment, Teaching and Learning Procedures](#)
- [Curriculum Design and Development Policy](#)
- [Curriculum Design and Development Procedures](#)

- [Academic Integrity Procedures](#)
- [Student Academic and Non-academic Misconduct Rules](#)
- [Academic Integrity Guidelines and the Academic Integrity Framework](#)
- [Rules Relating to Awards – Rule 3 – Coursework Awards – Student Assessment and Examination](#)
- [Academic Quality, Standards and Integrity Policy](#)
- [Course Progress and Completion Within Expected Duration of Study Policy](#) (International students)
- [Course Progress and Completion Within Expected Duration of Study Procedures](#) (International students)

## 2. The Southern Cross Model

Units and courses are delivered via a distinctive new model of teaching and learning: the [Southern Cross Model](#) (SCM). Key features of the Southern Cross Model include:

- Units are organised into a six-week term, with an additional Orientation Week before the term begins and a separate seventh week for final assessments if needed. Students can enrol in up to a maximum of two single-weighted Units for each term (or an equivalent load of double or half-weighted Units) and up to six terms per year.<sup>1</sup>
- A typical full-time load is eight single-weighted Units per academic year and four terms per year. (More information on student enrolment can be found [here](#).)
- There are usually up to three course entry points per year, e.g. Terms 1, 3 and 5.

Learning in the Southern Cross Model is **active, interactive, responsive** and **guided**. Each Unit is delivered via two forms of study that are both designed to foster student achievement of the unit learning outcomes:

1. Self-access learning – six media-rich, interactive, responsive online modules per unit
2. Class learning – guided, active class experiences in which students apply new knowledge and skills to real-world problems, questions and scenarios.

A glossary of the Southern Cross Model's key terms related to teaching and learning is included below. Staff can learn more about how the model was developed and principles for designing units and assessments in the [Introducing the Southern Cross Model Blackboard site](#).

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that international students are also subject to requirements specified by the [Course Progress and Completion Within Expected Duration of Study Policy](#).

<b>Active learning</b>	Active learning is central to the Southern Cross Model. It is an umbrella term for a range of pedagogical approaches that engage learners in meaningful activities requiring them to take new information and apply it rather than simply recording, reading, viewing or listening to it. Active learning can be used in class in problem-solving, group discussion, practice activities and scenario-based tasks, and is facilitated through the teaching presence of staff and peers. The Centre for Teaching and Learning has curated examples and guidance for how to apply active learning in <a href="#">classes</a> and in <a href="#">unit modules</a> in the <i>Introducing the Southern Cross Model</i> Blackboard site.
<b>Guided learning</b>	Guided learning refers to learning experiences in which students advance their knowledge and skills with the support of others. A key role of the teacher in guided learning is to create clear connections between the elements involved in learning and signpost these connections to students, and to carefully structure learning experiences to build upon each other. This cohesive learning experience provides meaning to students about what they are supposed to do, learn, and why. Emphasising and exercising learner agency within a clear and structured environment is a key characteristic of guided learning (Billet, 2012). The Centre for Teaching and Learning has prepared a <a href="#">range of resources</a> to help you with creating a guided, supportive learning experience for students in a unit.
<b>Focused learning</b>	Focused learning means making decisions about what a curriculum – modules, classes, and assessments – will cover and, equally important, what it will not cover. In the Southern Cross Model, units are not simply compressed or ‘intensive’ versions of a 12 or 13-week unit. Instead, each piece of information, activity or media needs to be carefully selected and presented in a pedagogically purposeful manner – curated – so that the materials are meaningful and relevant for the learner. Examples and guidance for planning and delivering a focused curriculum can be found via the links above.
<b>Responsive learning</b>	Responsive refers to learning experiences that provide feedback on learners' engagement with learning tasks. This feedback should show the degree to which learners meet unit aims and how they can improve their knowledge, skills and application to meet learning objectives better. Responsive learning can be facilitated through interactive activities that provide feedback in <a href="#">self-access modules</a> , through formative feedback in classes, and through <a href="#">feedback on assessment tasks</a> .
<b>Module</b>	Module here refers to a discrete, self-access learning package, embedded in a unit Blackboard site, that addresses one or more unit learning outcomes and is media-rich and interactive (i.e. includes a variety of learning experiences and instructional approaches beyond a reliance on text). Typically, single-weighted units in the Southern Cross Model will include six self-access modules that students work through over the six-teaching weeks of a term.



### 3. About the Faculty, College or Discipline

*[The relevant Faculty, College and/or discipline will insert a brief outline here.]*

### 4. University systems for teaching and learning

Units are delivered via a range of University systems and spaces. Support is provided through [Technology Services](#). Information for new staff can be found [here](#). An introduction for academics new to teaching at SCU is located [here](#).

*The following is indicative/general information.*

#### **Blackboard and Blackboard Collaborate**

Blackboard is a browser-based Learning Management System (LMS) that houses unit learning sites. Learning sites contain the Unit's interactive self-access modules, assessment details and submission links, unit staff contact details, discussion boards, readings, and other unit-related information and tools.

Blackboard Collaborate is a virtual classroom within the learning site. Instructors can create 'rooms' in Collaborate for facilitating online classes.

Guidance for using [Blackboard](#) and [Blackboard Collaborate](#) is available.

#### **Zoom**

Zoom is very well suited to online classes, as it allows short polls, quizzes, and interactive whiteboards. It also has an audience-friendly Q&A feature. Zoom is now easily accessible through Blackboard to set up tutorial and workshop sessions and access recordings.

Guidance for using Zoom is available [here](#).

#### **Turnitin**

Students may be required to submit their assessment tasks for marking via the text-matching software Turnitin. To prepare for marking student work submitted via Turnitin, Markers and Unit Assessors should familiarise themselves with the resources on the [Academic Integrity Framework](#) page. Detailed information on Turnitin, including instructional videos, is available on this [CTL Knowledge Base page](#).

#### **Grades process dashboards**

Unit Assessors, Discipline Chairs, and Associate Deans (Education) also use a Grades process dashboard to review, submit, and approve final grades at the end of a Unit. More information on training and access is available [here](#).

#### **Physical teaching spaces**

*[The relevant Faculty, College and/or discipline will insert a brief outline here.]*



## **eAcademic and UCMS**

eAcademic is a web-based student/course information site accessed through [MySCU](#). It provides Unit Assessors access to student information such as enrolment, contact details, and class lists.

The Unit and Course Management System (UCMS) is the University's online system for managing course and unit approval processes per the University's policy. Some staff may be required to enter and update unit and course details in [UCMS](#). Training and support are provided by [UCMS Support](#).



## PART B: TEACHING AND LEARNING PRACTICE

### 5. Unit design and development

Unit design and development involves planning and creating a unit of study for delivery. This may include designing a new unit or redeveloping an existing unit. Unit design and development is governed by the University's:

- [Curriculum Policy](#)
- [Curriculum Design and Development Procedures](#)
- [Assessment, Teaching and Learning Policy](#)
- [Assessment, Teaching and Learning Procedures](#)

This process should also be guided by the SCM tenets that outline a range of [pedagogical principles of the Southern Cross Model](#).

Unit design starts as part of the course design process, and there are typically two key components: 1) constructive alignment and course mapping and 2) unit design and development.

1. **Constructive alignment and course mapping.** This component is completed as part of the [course level mapping and constructive alignment process](#). It is usually undertaken by Course Design Teams as specified in clause (5) of the [Curriculum Design and Development Procedures](#). It is guided by the curriculum design principles articulated in Sections 4 and 5 of the [Curriculum Design and Development Policy](#). Part of this process involves establishing core unit elements, such as:
  - specifying unit learning outcomes
  - specifying assessment types
  - mapping unit learning outcomes to both assessments and course learning outcomes
  - documenting the unit aim, key content topic areas and the assessment schedule for approval in the UCMS.
2. **Unit design and development.** This component includes:
  - Unit design involves intentional planning to support students during self-access and class learning. Units are guided by well-articulated Unit Learning Outcomes. Learning activities within the units build on prior knowledge and provide scaffoldings to support student learning and opportunities for reflection.
  - The establishment of an appropriate overarching approach to learning in the Unit (for example, an instructional approach combined with activity-based, project-based, inquiry-based, problem-based, or work-integrated learning)



- The design of assessments and rubrics are addressed in separate guidelines to meet current policy changes.
  - The [rubric guidelines](#) are a good tool to design your rubrics so they align with the ULOs and assessments.
  - The [assessment design](#) page provides good tips to consider when creating assessments. The assessment guidelines will be created through the GenAI project in the near future.
  - Assessments also need to consider the assessment volume guidelines and the [assessment design module in the ISCM Blackboard site](#).
- [Digital design](#) and the development of unit materials and resources, including population and development of the Blackboard learning site and self-access modules.
- Including an Orientation Module is an essential means of establishing student expectations about learning in the Unit.

The Associate Dean (Education) and/or relevant Chair of Discipline will liaise with staff in the Faculty or College to initiate the unit design process for a new or redeveloped unit. The University's Centre for Teaching and Learning provides resources and services to support this process and achieve good practice in unit design and development. Relevant resources and guides can be found on the relevant Unit, assessment and module design pages of the [ISCM Blackboard site](#).

## 6. Roles and responsibilities

### 6.1 Overview of roles

*Faculties/Colleges can augment these descriptions as needed, aligning with the appropriate role statements. The Chair of Discipline and Associate Dean Education Role Statements will be added when available. Note that these roles are not included in section 6.2.*

**Course Coordinator** - as per the [Course Coordinator Role Statement](#)

The Course Coordinator is the academic staff member designated to manage and administer a Course in line with the University's strategic directions. Course Coordinators are the University's 'champions' for the program and its success, and undertaking their roles and responsibilities will reflect Southern Cross's core values. Responsibilities fall into three key areas: 1) Course design, development and accreditation; 2) Course management and delivery; and 3) Course quality, integrity and review. Course Coordinators are guided by University academic policies, procedures and rules with which they must comply.

**Unit Assessor** - as per the [Unit Assessor Role Statement](#)

The Unit Assessor is the academic staff member designated to manage and administer a Unit of study and uphold the academic integrity of that Unit. The Unit Assessor has responsibility for three broad areas: 1) Unit design and curriculum development; 2) Unit administration and delivery; and 3) Unit quality and review. Unit Assessors are guided in their role by the University's academic policies and procedures, with which they must comply.



## Tutor

Tutors are responsible for delivering class learning, either online, face-to-face, or both. They are required to work under the guidance of the Unit Assessor, including attending preparation meetings, and to ensure that class learning is delivered in a way that is consistent across the Unit's modes and locations. Tutors may also be a first point-of-contact for students, and need to provide informative, respectful and timely advice, promptly escalating issues to the Unit Assessor.

## 7. Setting up a Blackboard learning site

### 7.1 Populating the learning site

*The following is indicative/general information.*

Blackboard sites can be crucial to how a student experiences a unit. Students respond positively to a logically organised and uncluttered site, with easily accessible information and resources.

Consistency for students should be achieved by following any checklists or templates provided by the relevant work unit or [this checklist](#) provided by the Centre for Teaching and Learning.

The Unit Assessor is responsible for setting up a unit's Blackboard site prior to the term.

Before sites open:

- each menu item, provided as per the University's [checklist](#) for Blackboard site structure, must be populated with the correct, up-to-date information and documents
- all links in the self-access modules should be checked, and materials updated as needed
- learning resources such as readings must be selected as per the University's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Procedures (Clauses 63–67)
- myReadings, if used, must be [requested via the myReadings team](#) by the due date (usually during the previous teaching period, so it must be organised well in advance).
- ensure all assessment instructions, assessment submission points, rubrics, and quizzes are uploaded and functioning correctly. Rubrics should be designed according to [best practice guidance](#).
- the teaching and marking team should be engaged in academic calibration according to the University's [Assessment Moderation Guidelines](#)
- ensure the [Grade Centre is complete and the running total is 100](#)



## 7.2 Welcoming and orientating students to the Unit

*The following is indicative/general information.*

The Unit Assessor should prepare a welcome announcement for when the Unit is available to students. This announcement will be the first thing students see when they enter a unit. It is vital that it is informative and has a positive tone.

- A suggested structure for a welcome announcement is provided [here](#).
- Embedding a video created through Camtasia or [Mediasite](#) is an excellent way to 'humanise' a staff member's presence in the Unit.
- Providing a short tour of the learning site, either in this welcome video or a separate screen capture video, can assist students with navigating essential areas of the site.

The Unit Assessor can also create a discussion board thread for students to introduce themselves to each other and to staff. The Unit Assessor can post a short introduction to themselves to begin this thread and link to it from the welcome announcement.

## 8. Delivering class learning

*The following is indicative/general information.*

Class learning in the Southern Cross Model should guide students through **active learning experiences** that consolidate and extend the self-access materials by asking students to:

- apply knowledge
- engage in dialogue around issues, ideas and concepts
- work on problems
- collaborate with peers
- co-create documents or products
- investigate issues and evaluate or analyse sources and cases
- practise and provide/receive and apply feedback on key skills.

How the classes in a unit are sequenced and what activities occur during each class will depend on the pedagogical approaches that best suit a particular topic or discipline.

- Classes could be workshops, practical exercises, laboratories, guided discussions, tutorials, problem-based scenarios, collaborative exercises, debates or simulations.
- A unit could include a one-hour online class early in the week attended by all students (and recorded), followed by a two-hour class for each location/mode later in the week. Or this order could be reversed.

Resources and guidance for best practice in teaching, both online and face-to-face, can be accessed via the [Centre for Teaching and Learning](#), the [Class Learning section](#) of the Introducing the Southern Cross Model Blackboard site, and through [professional development opportunities](#).

Consistent delivery, established at prep meetings and through use of the pre-prepared class learning materials, is expected in all unit locations and modes.



During each teaching period:

- The Unit Assessor should arrange prep meetings for teaching teams before and during the teaching period. *[Specify here the expected maximum length, e.g. 30 minutes, and frequency, e.g. weekly, of these meetings.]* Tutors are expected to attend these meetings.
- The Unit Assessor should continue the [moderation and calibration processes](#) established before the term.
- The Unit Assessor should prepare slides, handouts, and/or other resources to guide class learning. These will be attached in a hidden area of the Blackboard site for staff to access. Tutors are expected to use these resources in class in ways discussed in the prep meetings.
- The Unit Assessor will make available downloadable PDF copies of tutorial slides and resources for students no later than end-of-day on the Friday before each week commences.
- All staff teaching in physical spaces must conform to [relevant WHS policies](#) and complete a [work unit induction](#). The induction includes a WHS checklist that covers emergency procedures, specific workplace procedures and requirements, and safety personnel details for the relevant work unit. Further information about emergency and crisis management at each campus is available [here](#). An A-Z of emergency and WHS information is available [here](#).

## Grades submission

The support resources and academic staff training for the Grades Submission Process are in a [designated Blackboard site](#).

CTL has [a Knowledge Base page clarifying the submission process](#).

A contextualised overview and summary are provided [here](#).

## 9. Student communication

### 9.1 Learning site communication and response times

*The following is indicative/general information.*

Maintaining teaching presence in a unit is important for helping students feel that they matter, and that teaching staff are there to guide and support them in their learning. There are two main ways to achieve this in a unit.

#### 1. Learning site announcements

- During the Unit, the Unit Assessor should post regular *[what this means, e.g. weekly, will be specified here]* announcements in the learning site. These announcements should encourage student success. They can congratulate students on reaching milestones and foreshadow upcoming class activities, assessment tasks and opportunities for support and guidance. *[Whether staff should avoid sending announcements as emails will be specified here, e.g. Announcements should not be sent as emails unless they are welcoming students to the Unit, or they relate to an urgent matter or requirement.]*

- It is important to maintain a respectful, friendly and informative tone in all communications with students. Teaching staff should endeavour to be conversational rather than speaking as a teacher to a student.
- Avoid using imperatives in caps (e.g. READ THE ARTICLE THIS WEEK), red and green font and overuse of bold. Used sparingly these can catch students' attention; used frequently these set an inappropriate tone.

## 2. Discussion boards

- As above, all responses in discussion boards should be respectful, friendly and informative. Staff can find guidance about posting respectfully and meaningfully in online discussion forums on this [CTL Knowledge Base page](#), in [The Guide to Fostering Asynchronous Online Discussion in Higher Education](#), and in this resource for [Facilitating Online Discussions](#).
- Moderation of online discussion spaces must adhere to the University's [Code of Conduct Policy](#), [Information Technology Conditions of Use Policy](#), [Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination Prevention Policy](#), and the [Rules – Student Academic and Non-academic Misconduct Rules](#).
- The Unit Assessor is expected to monitor the discussion boards regularly [*what this means will be specified here*]\*\*. Students should be made aware of how often the discussion boards will be monitored at the beginning of a teaching period. When logging in, all posts since the last login should be read, including responses from other staff.
- In large units where there are multiple staff monitoring the same discussion boards, shifts should be arranged to avoid doubling-up on responses.
- In units where particular staff are responsible for monitoring particular discussion boards (e.g. group or tutorial-based discussion boards), each staff member should monitor the relevant discussion board regularly [*specify what this means*], reading all posts and responding where needed since their last login.

## 9.2 Other contact methods and response times

*The following is indicative/general information.*

- Teaching staff are expected to communicate with students outside of classes via University email or the unit discussion boards. [*Phone contact expectations will be specified here*\*\*.]
- Teaching staff are expected to respond to student emails within 24 hours during normal business hours. [*Where expectations differ this will be specified, e.g. if there are particular roles with agreed out-of-business-hours contact times.*]
- Students should be made aware of these contact expectations at the start of the teaching period.

## 9.3 Awareness of University services and support

*The following is indicative/general information.*

Teaching staff should maintain awareness of, and refer students to, the services that are available to support learning and wellbeing. A list of these services can be accessed [here](#). They include:



- Student Learning Zone – workshops, appointments, guides and other resources for academic skills development
- Library – researching for assessments, referencing, digital literacy
- Student administration (client services)
- Technology Services
- SCU International
- Student Access and Inclusion
- Indigenous Australia Student Services (IASS)
- Counselling
- Careers
- Health services
- Multifaith and pastoral care
- UniLife
- Student Advocacy Service

## 9.4 Code of Conduct

Staff and students are bound by the University's [Code of Conduct](#), which specifies minimum standards and obligations relating to the conduct and behaviour expected of members of the University community. All staff should familiarise themselves with this document and adhere to the Code in all interactions with other staff and students. *[Escalation processes and support provided where students or staff may have contravened the Code of Conduct will be specified here.]*

## 10. Unit evaluation and reporting

*The following is indicative/general information.*

The [Academic Quality, Standards and Integrity Policy](#) describes the University's approach to upholding and improving the quality, standards and integrity of its academic activities and outcomes, while supporting compliance with the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#).

- A formal process for the monitoring and review of units occurs through the [Internal Quality Indicators in Learning and Teaching \(iQILT\)](#) reporting process – the Unit Review Process – which evaluates unit performance at the conclusion of each teaching period in which that Unit was offered. A flowchart for this process can be found [here](#). Further information on the Student Feedback Survey administered at the end of each teaching periods can be found [here](#)
- The CTL provides guidance on [evaluating teaching](#), including benchmarking, peer review and gathering informal feedback.