

Assessment, Teaching and Learning Procedures

Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

Purpose

(1) These Procedures give effect to the [Assessment, Teaching and Learning Policy](#), and should be read in conjunction with [Rules Relating to Awards - Rule 3 - Coursework Awards - Student Assessment and Examinations](#).

Scope

(2) These Procedures apply to all staff involved in teaching and assessing student learning in coursework Units at all locations, including through the University's Educational Collaborations.

(3) Non-coursework research and thesis Units are excluded, as are professional development courses and other similar non-accredited offerings such as English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) teaching.

(4) These Procedures apply to all coursework Units unless exemptions are endorsed by the relevant Associate Dean (Education) and approved by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic Innovation) on the basis of the following reasons:

- a. documented and justifiable external accreditation requirements exist;
- b. there is a demonstrated need to manage risk for clinical placements, internships, work integrated learning, and other external learning experiences, or for preparation for laboratories; or
- c. a strong pedagogical rationale can be articulated which remains consistent with the [Assessment, Teaching and Learning Policy](#).

(5) Aggregate data on exemption approvals for each Faculty or College will be reported to each Teaching and Assessment Committee.

(6) Reasonable adjustment in assessment, teaching methods and learning resources will be made to accommodate learners with a documented disability or impairment. Adjustments will be in accordance with [Rules Relating to Awards - Rule 3 - Coursework Awards - Student Assessment and Examinations](#), Section 3 and the [Support for Students with Additional Requirements Procedures](#) and [Schedule](#).

Section 2 - Definitions

(7) For the purposes of these Procedures refer to the [Definitions \(Academic\) Policy](#) and the definitions below:

- a. Assessment Task – any task that is graded and collects evidence towards mastering the Unit Learning Outcomes forming part of the student's overall grade for the Unit.
- b. Assessment Scheme – the approved schedule, weighting and type of assessment item for a unit.
- c. Authentic Assessment – tasks that replicate or simulate real-world challenges, problems and standards of performance that students will typically face.
- d. Collective Component (of Group Work) - the mark for group work that is applied across the group, and thus is the same for each group member.

- e. Feedback - one or more pieces of written, verbal and digital communication to students on their academic performance. Clear, helpful and timely feedback:
 - i. is informative, beneficial and can facilitate a positive attitude toward future learning;
 - ii. can assist students to judge and improve the quality of their learning and work; and
 - iii. can guide students about how to improve the quality of their work. Formative feedback is delivered through formative assessment activities.
- f. Formative Assessment - assessment tasks and activities designed to monitor student learning and provide feedback that can be used to improve the quality of students' learning and performance. As such, formative assessment has a diagnostic nature, and is usually non-graded.
- g. Generic Grade Descriptors - general guides to the standard of work required at each grade level (i.e. High Distinction, Distinction, Credit, Pass, Fail) and are detailed in the [Grade Description Guidelines](#).
- h. Group Work Assessment - necessitate group cooperation and teamwork among two or more students in order to complete the task. The assessment task can be graded in a combination of ways including: the allocation of marks to the process; the product/outcome; individual effort or combined team effort.
- i. Hurdle - any assessment task that requires a student to pass the assessment task to pass the Unit.
- j. Moderation - is a quality assurance process to uphold the appropriate standards of assessment required by the University and external quality agencies. Moderation ensures all students receive fair treatment in their assessment processes and that marks are awarded appropriately and consistently. Moderation involves quality checks and reviews of assessment schemes, tasks and judgments.
- k. Peer Review - is a way to moderate assessment to ensure quality. Peer review can include internal peer review processes as well as regular external benchmarking against a range of reference points including comparable courses of study.
- l. Rubrics - guides to assist markers and students to make consistent and reliable judgments about the quality of submitted assessment work. Rubrics are sometimes called "criteria sheets", "grading schemes", or "scoring sheets". They are also used to provide feedback to students about the quality of their work and how they might improve.
- m. Standards-based Assessment - involves awarding marks to students based on their performance in relation to predefined standards. These standards are generally explicitly communicated to students through assessment criteria that outline different levels of achievement.
- n. Substantial Piece of Research - a body of research work normally leading to a recognised research output such as a paper, thesis, creative work or seminar.
- o. Sub-tasks - are graded submissions sitting underneath the assessment item, such as quizzes or portfolio tasks.
- p. Summative Assessment - assessment tasks used to cumulatively evaluate what students have learned over a certain time period, or across a set amount of unit content. Summative assessment tasks are usually graded, and feedback should be provided for all types of summative assessment.

Section 3 - Assessment Design and Validation

(8) Assessment is designed based on a whole-of-course approach, applying the principles and requirements set out in the [Curriculum Policy](#), the [Assessment, Teaching and Learning Policy](#) and the [Academic Quality, Standards and Integrity Policy](#).

(9) Assessment tasks are designed to assess student demonstration and achievement of Unit Learning Outcomes.

(10) Assessment tasks are designed based on:

- a. benchmarking of best practice in similar Units or Courses at Southern Cross and at other universities, where appropriate;

- b. relevant and contemporary disciplinary standards;
- c. previous student feedback, when available;
- d. previous student performance, when available;
- e. iQILT results; and
- f. feedback from other Assessment Monitoring and Review processes, as set out in Section 5.

(11) Design of assessment tasks will include explicit and detailed specification of:

- a. the task information and deliverables (i.e. what the student must submit);
- b. any restrictions on the use of particular technologies (including generative artificial intelligence technologies), tools or other resources for completing the task;
- c. how the task is designed to uphold academic integrity;
- d. marking criteria;
- e. expected student performance;
- f. the moderation process that will be used; and
- g. the learning resources and teaching activities that will be used to support students to successfully complete the task.

(12) All assessment tasks must be peer reviewed by an academic colleague or the Course Design Team within the Faculty, College, Discipline, Course or Educational Collaboration in relation to:

- a. compliance with the requirements of the [Assessment, Teaching and Learning Policy](#) and Procedures;
- b. alignment of the task deliverables and marking criteria with the Unit Learning Outcomes;
- c. appropriateness of the marking criteria and expected student performance standards; and
- d. clarity and presentation of the task for students.

(13) Assessment tasks will be validated prior to release to students by the Associate Dean (Education), who will check that the processes for design and peer review of the task, as set out in clauses (10) and (12) respectively, have been completed appropriately.

(14) Assessment is designed to be authentic for students wherever possible; for example, setting tasks that are performance-based, practice-based; industry-relevant; work-integrated; project-based; self-reflective or dilemma-based.

(15) Use of a particular technology, tool or resource for completing an assessment task will only be explicitly prohibited if its use could compromise:

- a. achievement of the learning outcomes that are intended to be assessed by the task; or
- b. assurance that the student had achieved the learning outcomes that are intended to be assessed by the task;
- c. professional standards or requirements set by external accrediting bodies; or
- d. assurance that the principles of academic integrity were upheld in completing the task.

(16) When the use of a particular technology, tool or resource for completion of an assessment task is prohibited, the method of assessment must enable the Unit Assessor to verify with reasonable certainty that these requirements have been met and academic integrity has not been breached.

(17) The Unit's assessment scheme is designed so that tasks are interlinked and progressive; a cumulative set of connective activities that lead to a summative task.

(18) The first graded assessment task should occur no later than Week 3 of the Term.

(19) Formative (non-graded) activities will commence from the first week of the Term, to aid early indication of student performance.

Assessment load, weighting and distribution

(20) Assessment is designed with an appropriate workload for staff and students, commensurate with the credit point weighting, length of the Teaching Period, and the Unit's Level of Study.

(21) Normally, there will be no more than three summative assessment tasks set in a Unit, inclusive of any graded sub-tasks. Approval from the Associate Dean (Education) is required to include more than three summative tasks per unit.

(22) Independent research project units must include a substantial piece of research which, except for ungraded or continuing units, is the primary assessable component.

(23) The maximum weighting of any graded assessment task is 60% of the mark for the Unit except for substantial pieces of research in independent research project units, which may be worth more than 60% of the mark for the Unit.

(24) Independent research project units must incorporate opportunities to provide students with regular formal feedback on their progress towards completing a substantial piece of research, through formative or summative tasks.

Group work, examinations, quizzes and hurdles

(25) Where assessment involves group work, or is a specified group task for grading, that assessment links explicitly to Unit Learning Outcomes.

(26) The maximum weighting for the collective component of a group assessment task is 30% of the mark for the Unit.

(27) In the Southern Cross Model, authentic assessment tasks are preferred over examinations, as per clause (14).

(28) Examinations must only be set as an assessment task where there are documented and justifiable external accreditation reasons approved by the relevant Associate Dean (Education) at the assessment design stage.

(29) Where proctored examinations must be used, they will be held via an online proctoring service approved and supported by the University.

(30) Examinations are managed and scheduled through the Faculty or College.

(31) Non-proctored automated tests, online multiple-choice quizzes, and Blackboard quizzes should not normally be set as a major summative task (ie, more than 30% weighting). Approval from the Associate Dean (Education) is required to do so.

(32) Where hurdle assessment tasks are considered critical to the student's progression in a Unit, such as for demonstration of a key laboratory skill, completion of a teaching placement, or to meet an external accreditation requirement, they must be approved by the relevant Associate Dean (Education), at the assessment design stage.

(33) Final assessment tasks must not be prescribed as hurdles.

Assessment information and transparency

(34) Full assessment details, as set out in clause (11), are provided to students in a timely manner, included in the Blackboard learning site seven days prior to commencement of the Teaching Period.

(35) Course Coordinators and Unit Assessors can only make changes to the type, timing or weighting of assessment tasks after the Teaching Period has started, where exceptional circumstances apply and:

- a. approval has been given from the relevant Associate Dean (Education);
- b. an additional notice is posted to the relevant Unit Blackboard site advising students that a change has occurred;
- c. an email is sent to the relevant student email list advising all students that a change has occurred.

(36) In the first week of teaching, the Unit Assessor and Teaching Staff will discuss the Unit's assessment requirements with students, in the context of the University's [Assessment, Teaching and Learning Policy](#) and these Procedures.

(37) Clear and explicit marking criteria are provided to students, in the form of a rubric where appropriate.

(38) Where available, annotated exemplars of best practice assessment are provided to students at the commencement of teaching.

Section 4 - Assessment Submission, Marking and Feedback

Submission and penalties for late submission

(39) Assessment will occur and be submitted within the defined Term.

(40) Normally, assessment tasks will be due on Mondays, 11.59pm AEST, at the beginning of the week in which that assessment task is due.

(41) Assessment tasks are submitted online via Blackboard, wherever possible.

(42) All written assessments are submitted through Turnitin, and similarity reports reviewed prior to grading by the marker (or by the Unit Assessor in the case where the marker is external to the University).

(43) Except when special consideration is awarded under [Rules Relating to Awards - Rule 3 - Coursework Awards - Student Assessment and Examinations](#), late submission of assessment tasks will lead automatically to the imposition of a penalty. Penalties will be incurred as soon as the deadline is reached.

(44) The University's penalty scheme is as follows:

- a. 'available marks' in this context means the maximum marks available for the piece of work (for example, 30 is the available mark for an assessment task that is allocated 30 percent of the Unit's marks);
- b. all assessments tasks will be due at the time specified by the Unit Assessor;
- c. a penalty of 5% of the available marks will be deducted from the actual mark at one minute after the time described under clause (40).
- d. a further penalty of 5% of the available mark will be deducted from the actual mark achieved by the student on each subsequent calendar day;
- e. penalties will be applied until the mark reaches zero.

(45) Where required for practical reasons, the relevant Associate Dean (Education) may approve a different penalty scheme for the non-completion of certain forms of assessment or for certain cohorts, such as those undertaking enabling courses. In such cases, the alternate scheme should be applied consistently and must be recorded in the "Additional Assessment" section of the UCMS.

(46) Resubmission of assessment tasks is allowed in limited circumstances, as set out in [Rule 3 - Coursework Awards - Assessment and Examinations](#), Section 6.

Marking and moderation

(47) The Unit Assessor will develop, implement and articulate a consistent moderation process for each task, at all locations and partner collaborations, in line with the [Assessment Moderation Guidelines](#).

(48) The moderation process is approved as part of the assessment validation and design process, and prior to release of that task to students.

(49) Marks will be based solely on merit and academic achievement assessed against academic standards with explicit criteria.

(50) Once the assessment item is marked and moderated, the Unit Assessor will obtain data on grading distribution of previous student cohorts for the same assessment task. Working with the Course Coordinator, a decision is made as to whether marking standards have been applied fairly and consistently, and as against the criteria set out in Assessment Design.

(51) If marking standards have not been met, the assessment task will be re-marked and re-moderated. If standards have been met, marks can then be released to students.

(52) When learning is being assessed in the workplace (e.g. in a clinical setting), Unit Assessors are responsible for overseeing moderation of assessment and reporting of grades. Workplace or clinical supervisors may contribute to but are not responsible for grading students.

(53) Any substantial piece of research in an independent research project unit must be marked by at least two markers, of whom:

- a. neither is the supervisor of the student;
- b. both possess a qualification at least one AQF level above the AQF level of the course, or equivalent; and
- c. at least one has expertise in the relevant Field of Research at the Group level under the [Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification](#) 2020.

(54) The Unit Assessor must establish, and clearly communicate to students beforehand, a process that is consistent with the [Assessment Moderation Guidelines](#) to reconcile any variation in marks awarded by markers of a substantial piece of research in an independent research project unit.

Feedback, grades and results

(55) The University's Grade Descriptors apply to all assessment tasks.

(56) Results for assessment items are recorded in Blackboard and not released to students until moderation and calibration against academic standards has taken place.

(57) Marked assessment tasks submitted on time will be returned to students within 7 days of submission in Terms.

(58) Where required for practical reasons, or in exceptional circumstances, the relevant Associate Dean (Education) may grant exemptions to clause (57). Such reasons may include, but are not limited to, marking of large submissions such as Honours theses, or where markers external to the University are required to be involved.

(59) Markers of a substantial piece of research will provide reasoning supporting their judgment, which must be provided to the student.

(60) Where these exceptional circumstances result in delays in the timely return of graded assessment tasks, the Unit Assessor must:

- a. notify the Associate Dean (Education); and
- b. notify students as soon as possible and make any necessary allowances.

(61) Students are provided an opportunity to discuss assessment results and may query assessment grades as set out in [Rules Relating to Awards - Rule 3 - Coursework Awards - Student Assessment and Examinations](#), Section 14 – Student Query of Assessment Results Other Than Final Grades.

Section 5 - Assessment Monitoring and Review

(62) Following each Term, and when all relevant reporting data, student feedback and iQILT results are available, the Unit Assessor will review this information and use it to inform assessment design for future Unit delivery, as set out in clause (11).

(63) Each Faculty Board will develop and maintain a rolling two-year schedule for external benchmarking of assessment validity and reliability, as set out in the Benchmarking Schedule of the [Academic Quality, Standards and Integrity Policy](#). Outcomes from this process will be reported to the Teaching and Assessment Committee annually.

(64) The effectiveness of assessment at the whole-of-course level will be reviewed annually with respect to the provisions of clause (7) of the [Assessment, Teaching and Learning Policy](#) as part of the annual Course Reporting process, set out in clause (14) of the [Academic Quality, Standards and Integrity Policy](#).

(65) At the end of each Term, an Assessment Quality Assurance Report will be produced to document the alignment of grading standards and practices with the requirements of the [Assessment, Teaching and Learning Procedures](#) and assessment quality assurance criteria, as set by Academic Board. The Assessment Quality Assurance Report will include a summary of assessment tasks, any changes to approved assessment details, unforeseen events during the Term, marking and grade analytics, and conformance with quality assurance criteria for each Unit delivered during the teaching period.

(66) After each Term, the Faculty Boards will review Assessment Quality Assurance Reports and:

- a. make any recommendations for changes to assessment practices in future Teaching Periods: and
- b. provide an Assessment Quality Assurance Summary Report to the Teaching and Assessment Committee which will include any further recommendations to Academic Standards and Quality Committee or Academic Board.

Section 6 - Teaching and Learning Procedures

(67) Teaching and Learning Procedures will be governed through a University-wide set of [Teaching and Learning Guidelines](#). These Guidelines are tailored to each Faculty or College and will be:

- a. developed by a working party led by the Associate Dean (Education) with membership including a representative from the Centre for Teaching and Learning and from the student body, where appropriate.
- b. based on the Centre for Teaching and Learning guidelines and templates including sections on:
 - i. University systems for teaching and learning;
 - ii. Best practice moderation and marking; and
 - iii. Student matters (e.g. responses to enquiries, at risk students, special considerations, assessment resubmission);
- c. aligned with the [Assessment, Teaching and Learning Policy](#).
- d. endorsed by the Faculty Board and approved by the Teaching and Assessment Committee.

(68) Faculty Boards will review their Teaching and Learning Guidelines annually with respect to effectiveness in achieving the Teaching and Learning principles set out in the [Assessment, Teaching and Learning Policy](#) and provide a report to the Teaching and Assessment Committee on outcomes, recommendations, and any proposed actions from the review.

Learning Resources for Students

(69) Learning resources are prescribed to support student learning and build knowledge. As described in the [Curriculum Design and Development Procedures](#), learning resources will:

- a. directly and demonstrably contribute to the achievement of one or more of the Unit Learning Outcomes;
- b. provide students with opportunities to engage with learning resources irrespective of their study location or mode of participation;
- c. meet the learning needs of all students, irrespective of cultural and family background, age, and disability.

(70) When prescribing learning resources, academic staff must consider any potential barriers that may prevent students from engaging in the unit, including the cost of learning resources and digital rights management restrictions.

(71) The University promotes the adoption of Open Educational Resources (OERs) as the preferred option to prescribed textbooks.

(72) Textbooks will only be prescribed in a unit where:

- a. There is prior approval of the textbook by the Associate Dean (Education);
- b. There is a stated accreditation or formal discipline-specific requirement to prescribe the textbook;
- c. The cost of the textbook is less than AUD\$350;
- d. Open Education Resources are not available.

(73) Prescribed learning resources, such as journal articles, book chapters and other assigned readings, will not exceed 20 items per undergraduate or postgraduate coursework units. Academic staff are able to use additional, non-prescribed citations and references in the content of their teaching activities when required. If more than 20 learning resources are required to achieve the Unit Learning Outcomes, approval is required from the Associate Dean (Education).

Status and Details

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Responsible Executive	Erica Wilson Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic Innovation) +61 2 66203151
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