

# Assessment, Teaching and Learning Policy

## Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

### Purpose

(1) This Policy:

- a. articulates the principles that underpin the University's approach to teaching and assessment of student learning; and
- b. supports compliance with relevant regulatory frameworks, including the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#) and the [Australian Qualifications Framework](#) and the standards of professional accrediting bodies (HESF 3.1.5).

### Scope

(2) This Policy applies to assessment, teaching and student learning in the context of all award and non-award coursework units delivered by or on behalf of the University.

## Section 2 - Definitions

(3) The [Definitions \(Academic\) Policy](#) applies to this Policy.

## Section 3 - Policy Statement

### Southern Cross Model

(4) The Southern Cross Model (SCM) is a curriculum design and delivery framework at Southern Cross University. It is an institution-wide immersive block teaching framework delivered in six-week terms to enhance academic focus, engagement and success. It is grounded in principles of focused, guided, and active learning to support achievement across diverse student groups.

(5) Assessment, Teaching and Learning Principles are aligned with the Design Principles in the [Curriculum Policy](#).

(6) The primary purpose of assessment is the systemic assurance of a student's attainment of learning outcomes. The University applies and upholds the following Assessment Principles and Teaching and Learning Principles.

(7) Consistent with these principles, and the principles set out in the [Academic Quality, Standards and Integrity Policy](#), the University supports the use of technology (including generative artificial intelligence) in teaching, assessment and learning provided that its use:

- a. does not compromise achievement of learning outcomes;
- b. does not contravene professional standards or requirements set by external accrediting bodies; and
- c. is represented or acknowledged in a way that is consistent with the values of academic integrity.

## Part A - Assessment Principles

(8) Assessment is designed and developed to monitor, assess and support student progress in accordance with the following principles:

- a. Assessment Principle 1: Assessment is, normally, designed for delivery in the Southern Cross Model.
- b. Assessment Principle 2: Assessment is designed on a whole-of course basis for the attainment of learning outcomes.
- c. Assessment Principle 3: Assessment is designed for student learning, engagement and success.
- d. Assessment Principle 4: Assessment is authentic, innovative and relevant to students.
- e. Assessment Principle 5: Assessment is inclusive, fair, transparent and equitable.
- f. Assessment Principle 6: Assessment incorporates timely, clear and constructive feedback to help improve student learning and performance.
- g. Assessment Principle 7: Assessment maintains academic and professional standards, assuring quality and demonstrable learning informed by scholarship.

### **Assessment Principle 1: Assessment is, normally, designed for delivery in the Southern Cross Model.**

(9) Our assessment:

- a. Employs the tenets of focused, guided and active learning;
- b. Is mindful of student cognitive load, and purposefully aligned to the intended learning outcomes;
- c. Is designed around six-week terms with a seventh week used for study, review and assessment.

### **Assessment Principle 2: Assessment is designed on a whole of course basis for the attainment of learning outcomes.**

(10) Our assessment design:

- a. Takes a systematic whole-of-course approach aligned with the discipline and award;
- b. Aligns with course and unit learning outcomes, study content and learning activities, in accordance with the [Curriculum Policy](#);
- c. Is appropriately scaffolded and interlinked across both units and courses;
- d. Encourages the appropriate use of technologies, tools and resources; and
- e. Is aligned with professional accreditation and expectations, where appropriate.

### **Assessment Principle 3: Assessment is designed for student learning, engagement and success.**

(11) Our assessment:

- a. Engages and motivates students' learning across the course progression;
- b. Facilitates students' induction into higher education and the principles of academic integrity;
- c. Evidences the process of learning over time and in context;
- d. Builds a future-focused foundation for lifelong learning; and
- e. Is appropriate in volume and cognitive load.

## **Assessment Principle 4: Assessment is authentic, innovative and relevant to students.**

(12) Our assessment is:

- a. Fit for purpose in the Southern Cross Model, relevant to students and their educational and/or professional goals.
- b. Designed specifically for the teaching period in which units are offered;
- c. Evaluated using multiple means of assessment across a unit and course;
- d. Designed using practice-based and/or authentic tasks, and relevant to students' career or further study aspirations; and
- e. Enhanced through the use of technology, and where appropriate, generative artificial intelligence, enabling students to engage with innovative tools, while maintaining academic integrity. Refer to [GenAI Tool Descriptors - Feb 2025](#) for Students and Staff.

## **Assessment Principle 5: Assessment is inclusive, fair, transparent and equitable.**

(13) Our assessment is:

- a. Inclusive of all students, irrespective of educational background, entry pathway, mode or place of study;
- b. Cognisant of student diversity, learners' needs and multiple ways of knowing;
- c. Evaluated on the basis of students' achievement against clear criteria, rubrics and standards;
- d. Designed to minimise complexity and confusion; and
- e. Written in simple, clear and plain English.

## **Assessment Principle 6: Assessment incorporates timely, clear and constructive feedback to help improve student learning and performance.**

(14) Our assessment feedback is:

- a. Timely, clear, and directly relevant to the assessment task, criteria and purpose;
- b. Based on structured rubrics and clear grading standards, guiding students to accurately appreciate the quality of their learning; and
- c. Constructive, formative and respectful, taking a strengths-based approach focused on current and future learning.

## **Assessment Principle 7: Assessment maintains academic and professional standards, assuring quality and demonstrable learning informed by scholarship.**

(15) Our assessment is:

- a. Designed by academics with contemporary skills and expertise in curriculum design, informed by scholarship and disciplinary knowledge, and industry or professional skills;
- b. Peer reviewed in line with the Assessment Principles, to ensure quality in design, implementation and against academic standards;
- c. Developed against academic, quality and grading standards, and is continuously improved and updated;
- d. Benchmarked to ensure consistency with the level of qualification awarded; and
- e. Built on a foundation of professional learning and contemporary assessment practice and drawing from a range of assessment methods.

## Part B - Teaching and Learning Principles

(16) Teaching is designed and practised to support learning according to the following principles:

- a. Teaching and Learning Principle 1: Learning is, normally, supported by a consistent teaching delivery approach across the University, founded on the tenets of focused, guided and active learning in the Southern Cross Model.
- b. Teaching and Learning Principle 2: Learning is supported through a culture of respect, enquiry and dialogue.
- c. Teaching and Learning Principle 3: Learning is supported by recognising and broadening students' beliefs and knowledge.
- d. Teaching and Learning Principle 4: Learning is supported through quality learning tasks that scaffold students' learning.
- e. Teaching and Learning Principle 5: Learning is supported by high quality materials and resources that are readily available and designed to be inclusive and accessible to all learners where possible.
- f. Teaching and Learning Principle 6: Learning is supported through scholarly teaching practice which is informed by research, feedback and reflection.

### **Teaching and Learning Principle 1: Learning is, normally, supported by a consistent teaching delivery approach across the University, founded on the tenets of focused, guided and active learning in the Southern Cross Model**

(17) Our teaching is:

- a. Learning-centred, consisting of a combination of self-access learning and class learning that provide equivalent learning experiences for all students, regardless of mode or location of study;
- b. Delivered through self-access learning, which consists of on-demand, self-paced, media-rich, interactive and responsive modules that provide automated feedback to students;
- c. Complemented by class learning, which consists of carefully planned, scheduled, interactive learning experiences that move beyond first exposure to new knowledge and skills and place greater emphasis on active learning such as application, problem-solving, critiquing, simulating, group inquiry and creating; and
- d. Cognisant that experiential learning, including placements and work-integrated learning, are best developed through individual units at the Faculty/College level

### **Teaching and Learning Principle 2: Learning is supported through a culture of respect, enquiry and dialogue.**

(18) Our teaching:

- a. Promotes the University's values, as well as a culture of respect, enquiry and dialogue;
- b. Promotes culturally safe spaces for developing knowledge;
- c. Acknowledges that making mistakes is important in the learning process, for staff and students alike; and
- d. Fosters teaching presence of both staff and student peers.

### **Teaching and Learning Principle 3: Learning is supported by recognising and broadening students' beliefs and knowledge.**

(19) Our teaching:

- a. Promotes students' sense of responsibility for and agency over their learning;
- b. Builds from students' experiences, but also helps them to critically reflect upon understandings, beliefs and

assumptions; and

- c. Promotes life-long learning and supports the fulfilment of students' potential.

#### **Teaching and Learning Principle 4: Learning is supported through quality learning tasks that scaffold students' learning.**

(20) Our teaching:

- a. Promotes student success through quality learning tasks that are clearly articulated, align with unit or course learning outcomes and are engaging;
- b. Employs an appropriately sequenced, guided, active, peer-engaged and interactive learning experience;
- c. Promotes meaningful engagement with issues, theories and challenges that are relevant to and broaden students' futures; and
- d. Employs feedback that is timely, clear, constructive, strengths-based and respectful; and
- e. Is inclusive, fair, transparent and equitable.

#### **Teaching and Learning Principle 5: Learning is supported by high-quality materials and resources that are readily available and designed to be inclusive and accessible.**

(21) Our teaching:

- a. Emphasises the design and curation of quality, fit for purpose learning materials for self-access learning incorporating a variety of media rich, technology enhanced learning materials to provide an interactive learning environment;
- b. Is supported by the Centre for Teaching and Learning guides and best practice examples of media rich, interactive Learning Environments and class plans; and
- c. Is enabled, where appropriate, by the use of technologies that enhance engagement, learning and the student experience.

#### **Teaching and Learning Principle 6: Learning is supported through scholarly teaching practice which is informed by research, feedback and reflection.**

(22) Our teaching is:

- a. Conducted by appropriately qualified and experienced staff, as outlined in the [Academic Quality, Standards and Integrity Policy](#);
- b. Informed by evidence, drawing on studies of success;
- c. Improved by feedback on our work from students and peers, and informed by quality data and metrics; and
- d. Continuously informed and enhanced by our own professional development, reflective practice and research: we are responsible for our own life-long learning.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Effective Date</b>	22nd September 2025
<b>Review Date</b>	22nd September 2028
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Academic Board
<b>Approval Date</b>	22nd September 2025
<b>Expiry Date</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Executive</b>	Erica Wilson Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic Innovation) +61 2 66203151
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