

Policy:

Assessment in Higher Education Coursework, ELICOS and Enabling Courses

Effective: 26 June 2020

Audience: Staff and Students

Policy Category: Academic
Policy Sub-category: Learning and Teaching

Key words:	Assessment, Coursework, ELICOS, Enabling
Policy Owner:	Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic
Responsible Officer:	National Director, Learning and Teaching
Review Date:	26 June 2023

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1 OBJECTS OF THE UNIVERSITY

The University's Objects are defined in Section 5 of its Act of Parliament:

In pursuing these Objects, the University seeks to be an outstanding Australian university, and one of the best Catholic universities in the world.

The Objects of the University are:

- (a) the provision of university education, within a context of Catholic faith and values; and
- (b) the provision of an excellent standard of -
 - i. teaching, scholarship and research;
 - ii. training for the professions; and
 - iii. pastoral care for its students.

2 PURPOSE

2.1 This Policy outlines the principles of assessment to support enhancement of student learning.

3 SCOPE

- 3.1** This Policy applies to all forms of assessment in Higher Education coursework awards; the coursework component of Higher Degree by Research (HDR) awards; and non-award courses, including English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) and pathway programs.
- 3.2** This Policy does not apply to Research Degrees without coursework components, or to Vocational Education and Training courses.

4 PRINCIPLES

4.1 Assessment and feedback is designed to actively engage and support student learning.

Methods to achieve this principle include, but are not limited to:

- 4.1.1 Assessment tasks and methods are aligned with expected course learning outcomes required for the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) level (where applicable) and in the professional workplace/discipline area.
- 4.1.2 Design of assessment reflects a progressive increase in complexity, depth and autonomy of learning as Students move through to higher level courses or skills in their course of study.
- 4.1.3 Assessment is designed for both formative and summative purposes and a variety of methods are used. Normally, diagnostic, formative and/or low-stakes summative assessment should be implemented early to enhance opportunities for student success in high-stakes assessment, especially in first year undergraduate and foundational postgraduate courses.
- 4.1.4 Processes for providing feedback from formative assessments are built into the formal assessment cycle plan in ways that ensure Students can effectively apply it to

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subsequent assessment.

- 4.1.5 Feedback is available for all assessment tasks and is timely and appropriate, providing Students with the opportunity for reflection.

4.2 Assessment is based on pre-determined standards, intended learning outcomes and criteria that contribute to setting clear expectations for learning and teaching for the competencies and capabilities required.

Methods to achieve this principle include, but are not limited to:

- 4.2.1 Assessment is criterion-referenced and standards-based rather than norm-referenced. Accordingly, there is no requirement for final grades or results to reflect a prescribed distribution.
- 4.2.2 Grade distributions are monitored by the Dean (or Delegate) and the Board of Examiners as a means for identifying potential issues with the validity and reliability of the assessment scores and grading process.
- 4.2.3 Assessment practices provide valid and reliable measures of students' achievement of intended program and course learning outcomes.
- 4.2.4 Assessment criteria clearly identify the characteristics of assessable work used as evidence to evaluate students' achievement of a course's intended learning outcomes.
- 4.2.5 Assessment criteria and standards guide students in understanding the level of performance expected and allow for defensible judgements of the quality of student work.
- 4.2.6 Students are given the opportunity for Evaluative Judgement, and peer feedback and assessment, through observation, use of exemplars and through receiving effective feedback.

4.3 Assessment practices are inclusive and fair.

Methods to achieve this principle include, but are not limited to:

- 4.3.1 Assessment practices recognise student diversity and are designed to benefit all Students.
- 4.3.2 A range of assessment methods are employed to engage and cater for the learning needs of all Students, as well as to minimise the limitations of a particular type of assessment task (for example, essays or examinations), mode (for example written, spoken or visual) and medium (for example print or technological) of presentation.
- 4.3.3 Assessment is conducted in accordance with the principles of assessment (fairness, flexibility, validity, and reliability).
- 4.3.4 Information about assessment is provided to Students in Course Outlines at the commencement of a teaching period. Substantive assessment details would normally not change following the date of publication of the Course Outline. In exceptional circumstances the permission to make changes must be sought and may be granted by the Dean (or Delegate).
- 4.3.5 The design of group tasks takes into account safeguards for ensuring Academic Integrity, equality of student workload and provisions for under-performing group members.

4.4 Assessment is conducted by staff and students in an ethical and honest manner.

Methods to achieve this principle include, but are not limited to:

- 4.4.1 Staff take into account safeguards for ensuring Academic Integrity, security and data protection.

- 4.4.2 Academic rigor and impartiality is applied when awarding grades and during marking processes.
- 4.4.3 Assessment results are not discussed or disclosed to anyone who does not have a legitimate right to access the information.
- 4.4.4 Academic dishonesty is managed fairly and accurately.

4.5 Assessment practices and standards are subject to ongoing monitoring and review.

Methods to achieve this principle include, but are not limited to:

- 4.5.1 Systematic monitoring and periodic review of assessment and grading practices reflect developments in the discipline and are based on clearly established standards.
- 4.5.2 Assessment tasks are aligned with learning outcomes through moderation and, where relevant, blueprinting or test specification processes that ensure the marks and grades awarded accurately reflect the marking or assessment criteria and the level of student attainment.
- 4.5.3 Student grades or results are reviewed and approved at the end of every teaching period and are based on fair and valid judgements of students' achievements of the intended learning outcomes.
- 4.5.4 Outcomes of assessment review processes are formally documented as part of course monitoring and reporting.

5 GRADING SYSTEM

- 5.1** The system of grades that apply to learning achievement in assessment tasks and in Courses of study will be:
- 5.1.1 High Distinction (HD);
 - 5.1.2 Distinction (D);
 - 5.1.3 Credit (C);
 - 5.1.4 Pass (P);
 - 5.1.5 Conceded Pass (CP);
 - 5.1.6 Fail (F);
 - 5.1.7 Ungraded Pass (UP);
 - 5.1.8 Non Graded Pass (NGP);
 - 5.1.9 Fail due to Non-Completion (FN);
 - 5.1.10 Withdrawal with Fail (WF).

6 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 6.1 The Dean (or equivalent or delegate)** has responsibility across the School for:
- 6.1.1 Ensuring that assessment practices comply with this Policy.
 - 6.1.2 Confirming that a Course Outline is in line with the course outline template for the applicable teaching period.
 - 6.1.3 Approving any changes to a published Course Outline for each teaching period.
 - 6.1.4 Making decisions pertaining to special consideration, resubmission of tasks and student appeals (with advice and informed by the Program/Course Coordinator or equivalent).
 - 6.1.5 Approving, monitoring and reviewing final grades and reporting the grades to the relevant Board of Examiners.

- 6.2 The Associate Dean (or equivalent or delegate)** has responsibility across the School for:
- 6.2.1 Promoting quality assessment and feedback practices that provide students with rich learning opportunities and produce evidence of levels of achievement of course learning outcomes.
 - 6.2.2 Ensuring that Course Outlines have been subject to peer review.
- 6.3 The Program Coordinator (or equivalent)** has responsibility for:
- 6.3.1 Implementing ongoing monitoring and review which includes the renewal and development of the assessment regime within a program.
 - 6.3.2 Leading the design and implementation of assessment across the program and ensuring that:
 - 6.3.3 Leading the design and implementation of assessment across the program and ensuring that:
 - 6.3.3.1 Curriculum mapping is in place to confirm all learning outcomes are taught and assessed;
 - 6.3.3.2 Standards of assessment are rigorous and consistently applied; and
 - 6.3.3.3 Assessment design and assessment standards applied in courses are subject to peer review processes.
 - 6.3.4 Ensuring the Course Outline meets the requirements of the course outline template for the current teaching period.
 - 6.3.5 Collating the final results and providing these to the Dean.
- 6.4 The Course Coordinator (or equivalent)** has responsibility for:
- 6.4.1 Meeting the requirements of the course outline template for the current teaching period.
 - 6.4.2 Specification of course assessment, including descriptions, due dates, weighting and marking rubrics for individual assessment tasks.
 - 6.4.3 Ensuring that the Course Outline is available to Students no later than the Monday prior to week one of the teaching period in which the Course is delivered.
 - 6.4.4 Leading a community of practice to ensure academics teaching and marking in the course have a calibrated understanding of the assessment tasks and marking rubrics or, in instances when they are the only assessor, employing strategies to ensure consistency.
 - 6.4.5 Making decisions pertaining to extensions and initial requests from Students to have a task remarked.
 - 6.4.6 Submitting the final marks and grades to the Dean, providing an explanation of the grade distribution or convening a panel to determine a defensible position and/or scaling if required.
- 6.5 Academics** have responsibility for:
- 6.5.1 Ensuring that Students enrolled in the course are aware of and understand the assessment requirements.
 - 6.5.2 Providing appropriate and timely feedback to Students about assessment tasks through the Course Coordinator; and providing the Course Coordinator with a list of marks and grades (where relevant) for the marked tasks.
- 6.6 Students** have responsibility for:
- 6.6.1 Being aware of this Policy and other requirements pertaining to assessment.
 - 6.6.2 Understanding the assessment requirements provided in the Course Outline and requesting clarification from the Course Coordinator or lecturer if needed.

- 6.6.3 Actively engaging with the learning activities and resources provided for their course.
- 6.6.4 Following the guidance and instructions provided for completing and submitting assessments, including formats, methods and due dates for submission.
- 6.6.5 Undertaking all assessment tasks ethically, including avoiding any action or behaviour in accordance with the *Policy: Academic Integrity (Students)*.

7 RELATED DOCUMENTS

Policies and Regulations

- 7.1 School and Course Regulations
- 7.2 *Policy: Academic Integrity (Students)*
- 7.3 *Policy: Information Security*
- 7.4 *Policy: Student Appeals*
- 7.5 *Policy: Students with a Disability*
- 7.6 *Policy: Social Media*
- 7.7 *Policy: Course Outlines*
- 7.8 *Procedure: Assessment in Higher Education*
- 7.9 *Guideline: Supporting Good Practices in Assessment*
- 7.10 *Guideline: Higher Education Course Monitoring and Reporting*
- 7.11 *Guideline: Supplementary, Deferred and Irregularly Scheduled Examinations*

Legislation and Regulatory Instruments

- 7.12 *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Act 2011*
- 7.13 *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*
- 7.14 *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015*
- 7.15 *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015*
- 7.16 *National ELICOS Standards*
- 7.17 *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- 7.18 *Disability Standards for Education 2005*
- 7.19 *Australian Qualifications Framework and the AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.*

8 DEFINITIONS

8.1 For the purpose of this Policy, the following definitions apply:

Academic Integrity has the same meaning as given in the *Policy: Academic Integrity (Students)*.

Academic Staff Member has the same meaning as given in *The University of Notre Dame Australia Staff Enterprise Agreement*.

Academic standards means an agreed specification (such as a defined benchmark or indicator) that is used to define levels of academic performance or achievement.

Assessment means the process of making a judgement about the quality and extent of a student's knowledge, skills, competence and abilities as demonstrated through their achievement or performance in completing specific tasks.

Board of Examiners has the same meaning as given in the University Statutes.

Breach of Academic Integrity has the same meaning as given in the *Policy: Academic Integrity (Students)*.

Course means a course of study that is discrete in its objectives, content, methods, and assessment.

Course Coordinator is the academic staff member responsible for the administration and management of a particular course of study.

Course Outline is the official University course information document available to students enrolled in the course.

ELICOS means English Language Intensive Course for Overseas Students.

Evaluative judgement means “the capability to make decisions about the quality of work of self and others” (Tai et al., 2018, p.471)¹. It involves developing an understanding of quality so as to be able to appraise the quality of one’s own and others’ work, and to carry this capability into future work, often in complex and unsupervised environments.

Formative assessment means any assessment task that assists in monitoring student progress against intended learning outcomes, and provides feedback comparing their progress towards the outcomes, with a view to helping students to achieve the outcomes. The intention behind formative assessment is to promote student learning during a course by eliciting information on students’ progress, helping students become aware of the strengths and gaps in their abilities, provide constructive feedback to the students to improve their quality of work and to staff to adjust their teaching . Formative assessments are generally *low stakes*, which means that they have low or no point value.

Graduate Attributes are the generic qualities, skills and understandings which the University aspires to develop in its students.

Intended Learning outcomes are statements of the knowledge and skills a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning.

Mark means the numerical representation of a summative assessment of performance.

Moderation of assessment refers to quality assurance processes and activities such as peer review that aim to assure: consistency or comparability, appropriateness and fairness of assessment judgments; and the validity and reliability of assessment tasks, criteria and standards.

Program means a program of study approved by the University, the completion of which leads to the awarding of a degree, diploma or certificate at undergraduate or postgraduate level,

¹ Tai, J., Ajjawi, R., Boud, D., Dawson, P., & Panadero, E. (2018). Developing evaluative judgement: enabling students to make decisions about the quality of work. *Higher Education*, 76(3), 467-481.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-017-0220-3>

including ELICOS and enabling programs.

Program Coordinator means the person designated by the Dean to be in charge of a program and who shall be responsible to the Dean for the overall coordination of a program.

Research Coursework course means a program leading to the award of:

- (a) graduate certificate;
- (b) graduate diploma; or
- (c) a masters degree that does **not** involve the conduct of research leading to a thesis or dissertation which is a major component of the overall course requirements (that is comprising two thirds or more of the student load).

Semester has the same meaning as in the General Regulations and includes the teaching period immediately prior to the official commencement of the Semester (known as Summer or Winter Term) or other teaching periods used in the delivery of ELICOS courses.

Standards and criteria-based assessment refers to the evaluation of students' work or performances using pre-defined assessment criteria and standards.

Standard setting refers to the process in which the assessment standard is determined.

Student means a person enrolled in a Program or Course at the University of Notre Dame Australia.

Summative assessment means any assessment that contributes to the final course grade or result.

Version	Date of approval	Approved by	Amendment
1	January 2015	Vice Chancellor	Effective date - New Policy: Assessment in Coursework Courses
2	March 2019	Vice Chancellor	Updated nomenclature
3	26 June 2020	Vice Chancellor	Replacement policy, major updates, and new supporting procedure and guidelines.