

## STUDENT ASSESSMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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## **1. Overview**

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to outline the process of collecting relevant evidence and making informed judgements to evaluate student learning outcomes.
- 1.2 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**

- 2.1 The rationale for assessment is to:
  - a) Promote, enhance, and improve the quality of student learning through feedback that is clear, informative, timely, constructive and relevant to the learning needs of the student;
  - b) Measure and confirm the standard of student performance and achievement in relation to a subject’s defined learning outcomes;
  - c) Reward student effort and achievement with an appropriate grade;
  - d) 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**

- 3.1 Some assessment is formative; it is specifically intended to *monitor student learning* to provide ongoing feedback that can be used by students to improve their learning, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and target areas that need work. It can also help educators and other support staff to recognise where students are struggling and address problems immediately.
- 3.2 Other assessment is summative; its objective is primarily to *evaluate student learning* by comparing ‘high stakes’ assessment tasks against specific criteria and rubrics to evaluate and measure progress toward achievement of learning outcomes. Summative assessment results are recorded as marks or grades that are then factored into a student’s permanent academic record. Educators also provide constructive and timely feedback on summative assessment tasks to help students improve their learning and achieve the required learning outcomes. 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 and achievement but also about the effectiveness of teaching.
- 3.3 Normally, assessment of a subject will:
  - a) Have a minimum of two but no more than four graded assessments;
  - b) Have no single assessment task worth more than 50% of the total mark for the subject (except for capstone subjects);

- c) 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 subjects);
  - d) Limit group assessment to 30% of the total mark for the subject.
- 3.4 The forms of assessment to be utilised for each subject will be clearly set out in the Canvas LMS available to students at the commencement of each subject.
- 3.5 Types of assessment may include:
- a) Quizzes including multiple-choice and short answer questions
  - b) Essays
  - c) Literature reviews
  - d) Reports
  - e) Reflective portfolios or journals
  - f) Case study analyses
  - g) Individual and small group presentations
  - h) Practical exercises

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

- 4.1 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 and learning outcomes, the course structure, the teaching methods to be used, and the learning strategies to be fostered. Subject Educators must ensure that students are fully informed in the first week of a study period about subject objectives and learning outcomes, study expectations, and assessment requirements.
- 4.2 The details of all assessment tasks are notified to students in the Canvas LMS for each subject including the weighting of each assessable component, its marking criteria, rubric, and submission dates. The *Student Orientation and Study Support Guide* [HEL1101] provides additional generic information about assessment requirements and academic progression expectations.

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

- 5.1 Students are expected to achieve the learning outcomes of a subject progressively throughout the duration of the subject.
- 5.2 Assessment tasks are 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 learning outcomes. This might mean that an important task, such as a final assessment, is weighted heavily. Care is taken to avoid the imposition of a heavy imbalance of assessment load toward the second half of the study period. Assessment tasks aim to reflect both the level of the subject and the credit points assigned.

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

- 5.3 Normally, one or more assessment tasks are set, submitted, marked and returned to students by week 7 of a subject. Although students need regular feedback on their progress, set assessment tasks are kept to the minimum that is sufficient to enable students to make judgements about their progress. Due dates for assessment tasks are normally well separated in time to give students periods of time for reflective learning free from the pressure engendered by a looming deadline.
- 5.4 All assessed work will normally be returned to the student giving opportunity for the student to query the assessment result for clarification. Subject Educators are encouraged to provide constructive and timely feedback to students on all assessment events including formative assessments.
- 5.5 Subject-specific information in the Canvas LMS advises students at the beginning of a study period how all assessment results are to be combined to produce an overall mark for the subject. In particular, the information aims to clarify:
- a) The weight of each task in contributing to the overall mark;
  - b) The marking criteria and rubric used to determine the overall mark;
  - c) Minimum standards that are applied to specific assessment tasks, and the consequences if such standards are not met (including failure to submit particular tasks);
  - d) Rules regarding penalties applied to late submissions; and
  - e) Precise details of what is expected in terms of presentation of work for assessment.
- 5.6 Emphasis is 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 Policy and Procedure [QAF070]*.

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

- 6.1 Students are required to submit assessment items as specified in the Canvas LMS for that subject and as directed by the Subject Educator. Assessment items submitted after the due date are subject to a penalty unless the student has been given prior approval in writing for an extension of time to submit that item.
- 6.2 Assessments should be submitted in the form and by the due date specified in the Canvas LMS for that subject. Where assessment items are submitted electronically, the date and time the electronic submission was received is considered the date and time of submission.

## **7. Penalties for late submission**

- 7.1 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.

## **8. Extensions to assessment deadlines**

### **8.1 Policy**

- 8.1.1 Students may apply for an extension to an assessment deadline based on mitigating circumstances. These are circumstances outside of the student's control, that are predicted to impact the student's ability to complete assessment tasks by the due date specified in the relevant subject timetable. Students will normally be expected to produce evidence (e.g. doctor's note) supporting their claim for an extension based on mitigating circumstances.
- 8.1.2 Mitigating circumstances are defined in *Appendix A*.
- 8.1.3 Applications for extension to an assessment deadline are made *ahead* of the original deadline for an assessment; they cannot be granted after the deadline has passed. Where a deadline has passed, and students believe that their ability to complete assessment tasks by the due date has been compromised, they may apply for special consideration (Section 9).

### **8.2 Procedure**

- a) Students should apply to their Subject Educator for an extension to an assessment due date using *FRM019 Request for Extension to Assessment Deadline*. The application should normally include evidence supporting the claim of mitigating circumstances. Applications must be normally made *no later than three working days* prior to the originally specified due date.
- b) Prior to making a decision, the Subject Educator should refer to the *Register of Assessment Extensions [FRM090]*.
- c) Where an extension has previously been granted in the subject at hand or where there is a pattern of applications for extensions across two or more subjects then the student is deemed to be at risk academically.
- d) Where a student is deemed to be at risk, the application for extension should be referred to the Course Coordinator for review under section 3.2 of the *Student Progression and Exclusion Policy and Procedure [QAF095]*.
- e) Where a student is not deemed to be at risk, the Subject Educator will normally make a decision on an application for an extension to an assessment deadline within two working days of receiving an application for extension.
- f) The maximum period of extension allowed will normally be 7 calendar days later than the originally specified deadline.
- g) Extensions to assessment deadlines are at the discretion of the Subject Educator.
- h) Their decision to grant an extension (or not) should be documented on the form submitted by the student, with copies sent to the student, the Course Coordinator and the Dean. The Dean will enter the details of the extension on the Institute's *Register of Assessment Extensions [FRM090]*.
- i) Where the student does not accept the refusal of a Subject Educator to grant an extension and the student does not accept this, they should be referred to the *Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure [QAF090]*.

## 9. Special consideration

### 9.1 Policy

- 9.1.1 Special consideration is available to students who believe that their academic performance in a subject or course has been compromised by sickness, misadventure or other circumstances beyond their control (as defined under mitigating circumstances in *Appendix A*). An application for special consideration is normally made *after* the due date for submission of a piece of assessment or the completion of a subject or course.
- 9.1.2 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.

### 9.2 Procedure

- a) Students must apply in writing, using *FRM020 Request for Special Consideration* to the Course Coordinator for special consideration within three days of the due date of the assessment item or within three days of the last day of term to which their request refers or within three days of completing the course.
- b) When considering an application for special consideration, the Course Coordinator may take into account one or more of the following:
- i. The student's performance in other assessment tasks in the subject;
  - ii. The severity of the event;
  - iii. The student's academic standing in other subjects and in the course;
  - iv. Any history of previous applications for special consideration, especially where they indicate a chronic problem; and
  - v. Any history of previous applications for extensions to assessment deadlines, especially where they indicate that the student may be at risk academically.
- c) If an application for special consideration is accepted, any of the following outcomes may be appropriate:
- i. No action is taken;
  - ii. Additional assessment or a supplementary examination is offered to the student, which 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 Course Coordinator. Consequently, a revised mark based on additional assessment may be greater or less than the original mark;
  - iii. Marks obtained for the completed assessment tasks are pro-rated to achieve a final percentage result;
  - iv. The student is allowed to discontinue from the subject without failure. This is unlikely to occur after a final assessment has taken place;
  - v. The student is deemed to be at risk academically and consequently have their case reviewed under section 3.2 of the *Student Progression and Exclusion Policy and Procedure [QAF095]*.

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

## 10. Assessment feedback

### 10.1 Policy

- 10.1.1 The Institute will ensure that students are provided with constructive and timely feedback from Subject Educators that enables them to understand the reason for their result for each assessment.
- 10.1.2 Feedback will be against marking rubrics, which communicate standard grades of assessment to both students and educators, enabling standards-based assessment.
- 10.1.3 Marking rubrics contain descriptors of the grades for a number of criteria, e.g.,

	GRADES				
	↓				
	<i>HD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>N</i>
Knowledge and understanding					
Critical thinking skills					
Research skills					
Communication skills					
↑ CRITERIA	↑ DESCRIPTORS				

- 10.1.4 *Criteria* are the properties or characteristics against which Subject Educators assess the quality of the assessment task. *Grades* are levels of achievement or performance. *Descriptors* typify the content required to demonstrate achievement of each grade for each criterion.
- 10.1.5 Criteria have assigned marks which are weighted against descriptors based on the percentage bands associated with grades.
- 10.1.6 Descriptors provide the foundation for feedback to students but in practice should not be replicated *verbatim*. The primary aim of feedback is formative, that is to enable individual students to improve their performance in future assessments. Accordingly, written feedback based on descriptors should be tailored to each student.
- 10.1.7 Students will normally receive a grade for each assessment and an overall grade for each subject in which they are enrolled. Individual assessment grades will reflect the marks awarded for individual assessment items. The overall grade will reflect the sum of marks for all assessment items.
- 10.1.8 During each subject, students will be provided with an evaluation of their individual performance with reference to the marking criteria and rubric for each assessment task.
- 10.1.9 The Institute's grade definitions are in Appendix B.

### 10.2 Procedure

- a) Excepting the final assessment in a subject, written feedback on individual assessments will normally be given to students no later than 14 days after the assessment due date.
- b) In the case of the final assessment of a subject, excepting 'capstone' subjects assessed through substantial written projects (15,000 words or more), written feedback on the final assessment will normally be given to students within 7 calendar days of the last day of the term in which the subject was taught.

- c) In the case of a capstone subject assessed through a substantial written project (15,000 words or more), written feedback on the assessment will normally be given to students with 28 calendar days of the last day of the term in which the subject was taught.
- d) Written feedback on individual assessments will include the mark and grade level achieved by the student in the assessment.
- e) Written feedback on individual assessments will further include formative feedback based on the grade descriptors for criteria tailored to individual student assessment, to explain the grade level awarded. The descriptor must not be reproduced *verbatim*.
- f) Once all assessments are completed and the Dean approves results for a subject which are endorsed by the Results Review Committee, an overall mark and subject grade are published and notified to students.

## **11. Reasonable adjustment**

### **11.1 Policy**

- 11.1.1 Students with a disability may request reasonable adjustment to assessment tasks to accommodate their disability. Adjustments to assessments 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.
- 11.1.2 Proposed adjustments will normally be developed in consultation with the Student Support Officer prior to the commencement of the student's studies at the Institute and will apply to all subjects.

### **11.2 Procedure**

- a) A request for reasonable adjustment is made by the student in writing to the Student Support Officer prior to the commencement of the student's studies at the Institute.
- b) The Student Support Officer will discuss the student's request with the Course Coordinator and agree an assessment adjustment plan covering all assessments to be taken in the student's course of study.
- c) The assessment adjustment plan may reasonably adjust the procedures for conducting assessments by one or more of the following or other means:
  - i. allowing additional time for the completion of an assessment;
  - ii. extending deadlines for an assessment;
  - iii. varying question and response modalities for an assessment;
  - iv. providing or allowing additional resources or support in examinations.
- d) The Course Coordinator and Student Support Officer may also agree that no adjustment is required.
- e) The Student Support Officer will notify the student of the outcome of their request.
- f) The Course Coordinator will notify Subject Educators of the adjustment plan (if any).
- g) Where the student does not accept the refusal of the Institute to grant a reasonable adjustment and the student does not accept this, they should be referred to the *Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure [QAF090]*.



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

- 12.1 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 the highest weighted assessment for the subject.
- 12.2 Where a student achieves a total mark of 50% for the subject overall, but less than 40% in the highest weighted assessment for the subject, the Course Coordinator 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.

## **13. Resubmission**

A resubmission may be granted if either of the following conditions are met:

- 13.1 Where a student has completed all assessment tasks and marginally fails a subject (i.e. has achieved an overall score of 46-49%) then the Course Coordinator 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.
- 13.2 Where a student has completed all assessment tasks, has achieved an overall grade of 50% or more, but scores less than 40% in the final assessment, then the Course Coordinator 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.
- 13.3 The grade awarded after the additional assessment is finalised is limited to P (Pass) or F (Fail). If the student does not take up the opportunity to complete additional assessment work the grade remains as a F.

## **14. Publication of results**

### **14.1 Policy**

- 14.1.1 All results must be reviewed and approved before publication.
- 14.1.2 The Academic Quality Committee will nominate three of its members (but not any student member) to meet after the end of each term as the Results Review Committee to approve results prior to publication.

### **14.2 Procedure**

- a) For all subjects, excluding 'capstone' subjects assessed through substantial written projects (15,000 words or more), within 7 calendar days of the end of term, Subject Educators will provide to the Dean subject marks and grades and a written report of the conduct of the subject and spread of marks.
- b) For capstone subjects assessed through substantial written projects (15,000 words or more), within 28 calendar days of the end of term, Subject Educators will provide to the Dean subject marks and grades and a written report of the conduct of the subject and spread of marks.
- c) On receipt of educator reports, the Dean will convene a meeting of the Results Review Committee, supplying educator reports to the committee at least 24 hours prior to the meeting and seeking their feedback on the reports and subsequent endorsement for

approval by the Dean. Once results have been approved, the Dean will notify the Operations Manager that the approved mark and grade is recorded in Canvas and that students may be notified of their results.

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

### **15.1 Policy**

15.1.1 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.

15.1.2 The grounds upon which the student may request a review of an assessment decision are:

- a) That the student believes that an error has occurred in the calculation of the grade; and /or
- b) A demonstration that the assessment decision is inconsistent with the published assessment requirements, marking criteria or rubric.

15.1.3 Each review against an assessment decision is determined on its own merits without reference to other applications.

### **15.2 Procedure**

- a) In the first instance, students should approach their Subject Educator, where appropriate, to discuss their concerns about the assessment decision within seven calendar days of formal notification of the assessment result.
- b) Where the issue regarding the assessment decision is unable to be resolved between the student and the Subject Educator, 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 Course Coordinator within 14 calendar days of formal notification of the assessment result
- c) The Course Coordinator (or the Dean, if the Course Coordinator is the Subject Educator) will normally respond to the request for a review of an assessment decision in writing within 14 calendar days of receipt of the request 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.
- d) Where a published result is varied, the student record will be adjusted accordingly in Canvas and the student database, and the student will receive a revised notification of their result.
- e) 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**

- HELI101 Orientation and Study Support
- Subject-specific information in the Canvas LMS
- FRM019 Request for Extension to Assignment Deadline

- FRM020 Request for Special Consideration
- FRM021 Request for Review of an Assessment Decision
- FRM090 Register of Assessment Extensions
- QAF070 Student Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure
- QAF095 Student Progression and Exclusion Policy and Procedure
- 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
1.2	Academic Board	5 December 2018	Scheduled review
1.3	Academic Board	4 September 2019	Minor changes to clarify extension requests approvals (section 7) and requirements for successful completion of a subject (section 11)
1.4	Dean	5 February 2020	Change from maximum of three to four assessments and consequential changes
1.5	Dean	7 April 2020	Clarification of procedure for granting extensions to assessment submission date and special consideration ‘Mitigating circumstances’ defined for assessment extensions
1.6	Dean	15 April 2020	Minor amendments to clarify that <u>both</u> assessment criteria and rubrics are required.
2.0	Academic Board	2 September 2020	Major amendment restructuring the document and updating policy and procedure
2.1	Dean	12 November 2021	Amendments to clarify procedural changes in marking and grading and resubmissions.

Document owner: Dean

### **Appendix A: Definition of Mitigating Circumstances**

Mitigating circumstances normally include, but are not limited to:

- a. Serious accident or incident, including the impact of a natural or industrial disaster;
- b. Serious public health event that disrupts normal working patterns;
- c. Personal illness (acute or chronic), includes mental health;
- d. Serious illness of a close relative;
- e. Recent death of a family member or close friend;
- f. Serious personal disruption (e.g. fire, burglary, jury duty);
- g. Severe personal, family or relationship problems;
- h. **Significant** change of employment circumstances (e.g. substantial new duties, restructuring of employment, new job);
- i. Specific difficulty regarding disability or adjustments;
- j. Unplanned religious observance (e.g., subsequent to the death of a family member or close friend).

Mitigating circumstances normally **do not** include:

- k. Alleged medical conditions without supporting evidence;
- l. Social activities (e.g. sporting fixtures, family weddings);
- m. Temporary self-induced conditions (e.g. alcohol or drug-induced 'hangovers,' the effects of prescribed medications where adverse reactions are predicted);
- n. Minor ailments and other conditions (e.g. coughs, colds, sore throats, sprains, long-standing medical conditions for which special arrangements could have been made);
- o. Job seeking (e.g. preparing for and going to interviews for a new job);
- p. Domestic or personal disruptions that could have been anticipated and planned for (e.g., family holidays);
- q. Poor time management, including 'assessment stress' especially relating to employment for part-time students;
- r. Resourcing (e.g. computer or Internet difficulties, losing work not backed up on computer disk, other HELI deadlines or deadline congestion, missing books, examination rescheduling).

### Appendix B: Grade Definitions

Grade	Definition against criteria
High Distinction (outstanding performance) Code: HD Mark range: 85% and above	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.
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.