



## Assessment Policy

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In developing this policy the University had regard to the provisions of section 40B(1)(b) of the Human Rights Act 2004 (ACT).

### 1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1. This policy sets out the University's principles underlying how student assessment occurs at the University of Canberra.
- 1.2. Information on all types of assessment, irrespective of mode of delivery or assessment method is presented.

### 2. SCOPE:

- 2.1. This policy applies to all coursework units delivered by the University of Canberra (UC), at the undergraduate and postgraduate level, except where an exemption is approved in this document.
- 2.2. Information included relates to assignments and examinations (including intra-semester/term exams), and deferred examinations.
- 2.3. Policy and procedures for assessment in higher degree by research courses are found on the [Higher Degree by Research Policy](#) page.

### 3. PRINCIPLE:

#### Introduction

- 3.1. The performance of each student is individually assessed against the learning outcomes of the unit, independently of the assessment of other students in the unit.
- 3.2. Student performance is recorded in the form of marks and grades in relation to a set of agreed standards known as grade descriptors. These standards are applicable across all disciplines and professional fields.
- 3.3. Assessment will be moderated to ensure that judgments of students' performance are consistent, transparent, reliable and valid.

3.4. The keeping of records of assessment processes, samples and outcomes is required for University accountability to students, staff and the community.

3.5. The [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#) and the [Disability Standards for Education 2005](#) require the University to reasonably accommodate the needs of students with a disability or health condition.

3.6. A student may appeal the final result of an assessment item or unit, if evidence is provided in support of the appeal (in accordance with the [Student Grievance Resolution Policy](#)).

## **Assessment**

3.7. Assessment is used to evaluate a student's achievement of identified learning outcomes.

3.8. Assessment may include items which are normally submitted as work conducted during the semester, and which help to develop graduate attributes.

3.9. Assessment items can be formative or summative, formal or informal and can take many other forms including, but not limited to, essays, short answer questions, case study analysis, practicals, demonstrations, workshops, portfolios and examinations to measure graduate skills.

3.10. Unit outlines will give information on assessment briefs which will outline the method of submission, format, deadline for submission and information on late submission acceptances, and other relevant information.

3.11. All assessments are required to be submitted electronically, unless exceptions are granted by the Associate Dean (Education) (ADE) for the relevant faculty. Where an assessment cannot be submitted electronically (e.g. a photograph, a model, a practical assessment), an electronic coversheet must be submitted online.

3.12. Assessment must include a student number as the sole identifier. Students' names should not be visible for grading and/or moderation.

3.13. The University uses text-matching software to check originality of all text-based student submissions.

3.14. Students have a responsibility to fulfil participation and assessment requirements set out in the unit outline for the unit in which they are enrolled.

3.15. A student may apply for an extension if extenuating circumstances unduly disadvantage the student in their university studies, and where the circumstances can be evidenced.

3.16. All units (unless exempted) will offer students supplementary assessment according to the criteria and organisational principles outlined in the Assessment Procedures.

## **Examinations**

3.17. University examinations are designed and held in an environment that allows students to perform to their potential within the scope of a unit's learning objectives.

3.18. Assessment of a unit must not rely on a final examination as the only form of assessment.

3.19. The timetabling of examinations must minimise disadvantage to students.

3.20. No material other than those specified in the examination paper will be allowed in an examination room. Changes to permitted materials will not be allowed after the final version of the examination timetable has been published.

3.21. Deferred exams

- a. There must be evidenced and acceptable grounds for the approval of a deferred examination. Any request for deferral that does not meet the grounds specified ([Assessment Procedures](#)) and does not have suitable evidence, will not be accepted.

- b. The content of the deferred examination should be significantly different from the original

examination.

- c. Students are only permitted one deferral per examination unless otherwise approved.
- d. Any student unable to attend their deferred examination will be given a fail grade for that examination, or permitted a late withdrawal if acceptable evidence is provided and approved.

### **Feedback**

- 3.22. In the context of assessment, feedback is information on a student's progress in their course or unit, and which is returned to students in a timely manner, within 15 working days.
- 3.23. The purpose of feedback is to provide students with information on:
  - a. what the student has learnt and how effectively they are learning;
  - b. what standard of performance the student has achieved; and what the student needs to do to improve that standard of performance. Students will be provided feedback, so that they may be able to anticipate their final results.

### **Grades**

- 3.24. Grades (for example, pass, credit, distinction) are symbols that indicate either the level of student performance in an assessment item or overall performance in a unit against specified standards.
- 3.25. With the exception of ungraded passes, the final grade in a unit provides a final aggregation of a series of prior assessments of student performance in that unit of the student's achievement of the learning outcomes in that unit (see Procedure 3.16.).
- 3.26. In some units, it is appropriate to require students to pass all, or only specified, items of assessment to achieve a pass grade in the unit.
- 3.27. Grades reflect an individual student's performance in relation to pre-defined standards set out as grade descriptors. The awarding of grades is an issue of professional judgment. Such judgments will be managed by moderation to ensure consistency, both within and, across units.

### **Moderation and review**

- 3.28. Moderation enables judgments made by different staff involved in assessing student performance to be compared and either validated or adjusted as appropriate.
- 3.29. Pre-moderation of a question/assessment item will be undertaken by faculty appointed internal moderators.
- 3.30. Moderation of assessment items will include independent peer review either within or across offerings as appropriate; where borderline grades occur, a teaching team is to adjudicate.
- 3.31. Moderation is fundamental to good assessment practice. The purpose of moderation is to:
  - a. maintain agreed standards in the assessment of student work through a valid, consistent and transparent process; and
  - b. ensure that assessment reflects student performance rather than variable standards among different markers.
- 3.32. Units must have documented moderation procedures where they vary from the recommendation.

### **Record Retention**

- 3.33. Records must be kept by faculty to:
  - a. keep track of the multiple assessment items required for good practice in assessment. It is from such records that an overall judgment will be made about what progress a student has made;

- b. judge the reliability and validity of assessment items;
- c. provide a basis for teachers to reflect on assessment practice, especially where records refer to the processes and contexts of assessment;
- d. provide a legal basis for judgments made about student performance; and
- e. provide evidence (such as samples of examination script books) of the quality of courses or of compliance with professional accreditation requirements.

3.34. Faculties will maintain a database of assessment not managed by central servers such as LMS. The database should include a record of:

- a. each assessment item regardless of the form of the assessment item;
- b. the receipt of an assessment item from a student;
- c. the marks (and grades) for each assessment item; and
- d. any special consideration given to a student's submission of assessment items (such as applications for extensions).

*This information needs to be retained for twelve months longer than the duration of the student's course.*

3.35. Where electronic versions of unit outlines and assessments are not maintained on central servers such as the Learning Management System (LMS), faculty record-keeping will also include:

- a. information provided in the section on assessment in the unit outline;
- b. the retention, for the purpose of external audits and benchmarking, of samples of assessment items awarded different grades; and
- c. the retention for at least one year of completed examination script books from centrally timetabled examinations.

3.36. Records of assessment will be sufficient to enable an adjudicator within or outside the institution to make a credible and independent judgment on a student's progress or result. This applies, in particular, to the review of a result under grievance procedures.

## 4. RESPONSIBILITIES:

### Responsibilities

The following responsibilities apply to final exams that the Timetabling and Examinations Office in Student Connect, schedules and manages during the University examination period.

Who	Responsibility
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is the student's responsibility to ascertain the correct timetable for their examinations.</li> <li>• A maximum of three consecutive exams with no more than two on any single day is permitted (for example, two on one day, and one the following morning). A student with either three exams in one day or four consecutive exams is responsible for immediately contacting the Timetabling and Examinations Office to have one exam rescheduled.</li> </ul>

Student Connect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Connect will provide an annual report to Academic Board on the auditing and resolution of all long-term unresolved WH grades (and extensions to WH grades).</li> <li>• The Timetabling and Examinations Office in Student Connect is responsible for administering final, supplementary and deferred exams during the University's formal examination periods. This includes, but is not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ scheduling and managing final, deferred and supplementary exams</li> <li>◦ providing preliminary and final timetables for exams</li> <li>◦ arranging the printing of exam papers which are received within five working days of the exam date</li> <li>◦ organising exams, arranging their supervision, invigilation and overseeing conduct in the examination room</li> <li>◦ reporting alleged breaches of examination rules to associate deans (education)</li> <li>◦ securely holding exam question papers and script books prior to collection by authorised examiners</li> <li>◦ releasing exam question papers to the Library.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Timetabling and Examinations Office will monitor the use of supplementary assessment, including supplementary examinations.</li> <li>• The Director, Student Connect will provide the University Education Committee (UEC) with an annual report which will identify the units that have conducted supplementary assessment, number of students involved, outcomes (such as the number of pass and fail grades) and any issues or recommendations. This report, together with any recommendations from the UEC, will be referred to Academic Board.</li> <li>• Provide grade distribution summaries to faculties for consideration by faculty assessment boards.</li> <li>• The Timetabling and Examinations Office will maintain a register of deferred examination applications to monitor the frequency and number of applications students.</li> </ul>
Faculties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Releasing exam question papers to interested students after the conclusion of deferred exams</li> <li>• Providing students with supervised access to their own completed exam answer sheets</li> <li>• Retaining completed exam answer sheets for one year</li> <li>• Ensure moderation of units, including those delivered offshore, as well as the documenting and communicating of the moderation procedures in units</li> <li>• Provide grade distribution reports to the UEC.</li> </ul>
Unit Conveners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For final examinations, Unit Conveners are responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ writing exam papers, using plain English wherever possible;</li> <li>◦ arranging certification of the exam paper by the head of discipline;</li> <li>◦ including information on materials permitted in exams in unit outlines;</li> <li>◦ notifying the Timetabling and Examinations Office of exam requirements, including permitted materials;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

- arranging delivery of exam papers to the Examinations Office by the set date;
  - arranging the printing, security and delivery of exam papers not received by the Examinations Office by the set date;
  - (or a nominee) being at the examination room 10 minutes prior to the exam and for the first 15 minutes of the exam;
  - being available by telephone during an exam to answer queries;
  - collecting examination question papers, script books and other related examination material within 48 hours of the examination concluding. After this time the appropriate ADE will be informed that papers are waiting to be collected;
  - determining whether an exam question paper for a unit should be released;
  - ensuring that students receive timely and constructive feedback on all assessment items;
  - notifying the Timetabling and Examinations Office of exam question papers to be released to the Library; and
  - ensuring that the information on permitted materials and exam duration outlined on the preliminary timetable complies with their instructions.
- For intra-semester and intra-term exams, Unit Conveners are responsible for:
    - the printing, security and delivery of exam papers
    - providing instructions to examination invigilators
    - managing examinations for online units, addressing issues of security, verification of student identity and provision of technical support for students
    - complying with this policy's requirements in regard to exams in the final two weeks of semester
    - marking and grading assessment items to reach a final grade for a unit according to University requirements;
    - setting out in the unit outline information on the grading of assessment items, such as the weighting of prior summative assessments towards the final grade and the criteria to achieve a pass in the unit;
    - electronically submitting final marks and grades to the University's Student Management System (*Callista*) in accordance with the set timeframe.
  - Unit conveners are responsible for all assessment in a unit as set out in this section, including:
    - designing assessment tasks;
    - preparing students for different modes of assessment;
    - ensuring equivalency in multiple offerings of units;
    - accommodating the specific requirements of particular forms of assessment, such as assessment of group work, online assessment and work integrated learning;
    - producing marking criteria for assessment tasks;
    - approving extensions to the due date for submission of assessment items; and
    - ensuring the safe keeping and return of assessment items.

- When sessional staff, external staff or other faculty colleagues assist the unit convener in assessing a unit, the unit convener is responsible for:
  - ensuring that any individual conducting assessment is appropriately qualified and approved;
  - providing guidelines for marking each assessment item;
  - providing support and training to other assessors where necessary to ensure that marking is consistent across a unit;
  - taking overall responsibility for the final grade for each student; and
  - ensuring that adequate moderation procedures are followed (see also procedure 14 on moderation).
- Unit conveners are encouraged to liaise with other unit conveners in the same course to share information on assessment items and coordinate such matters as the spread of assignment submission dates.
  - being available on the next working day following the release of results for students wishing to review their final results (or if the unit convener is unavailable, he or she must ensure a staff member relevant to the unit is present);
  - referring students to the appropriate services if identified as needing support as a result of the feedback process.
  - marking and grading assessment items to reach a final grade for a unit according to University requirements;
  - setting out in the unit outline information on the grading of assessment items, such as the weighting of prior summative assessments towards the final grade and the criteria to achieve a pass in the unit;
  - electronically submitting final marks and grades to the University's Student Management System (*Callista*) in accordance with the set timeframe.
- The unit convener is responsible for coordinating the moderation procedures in the unit, including:
  - documenting the moderation processes that are used in the unit;
  - ensuring that all staff involved in assessment in the unit are fully informed of moderation standards, procedures and outcomes; and
  - storing examples of student work and the related assessment items in the unit and passing these to the next unit convener.
- Unit conveners will ensure that full records of assessment are kept for units including marks given by part-time tutors.

Course Conveners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are encouraged to provide advice and feedback to unit conveners and, in particular, new lecturers on assessment items.</li> <li>• Where practicable, course conveners are responsible for monitoring the number and type of assessment items in units across the course to ensure a manageable workload for staff and students.</li> <li>• Ensure moderation of courses, including those delivered offshore, as well as the documenting and communicating of the moderation procedures in courses.</li> </ul>
Heads of discipline (or equivalent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heads of discipline are responsible for ensuring that periodic moderation takes place between different offerings of the same unit, and the UC unit and similar units taught in other universities.</li> <li>• Heads of discipline are responsible for certifying exam papers.</li> </ul>
Associate deans (education)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In consultation with unit conveners, must ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ the appropriate moderation of the marking or grading of assessment items and the award of results in units across the faculty;</li> <li>◦ periodic benchmarking of assessment standards against similar courses at other institutions; and</li> <li>◦ ensuring assessment is conducted in accordance with all information presented in this document.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• May approve the late withdrawal of a student who can provide evidence of exceptional circumstances leading to them not attending a requested deferred examination.</li> <li>• May approve a second deferred exam for intra-semester examinations, on receipt of approved and evidenced extenuating circumstances.</li> </ul>
Deans of faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring that secure records of assessment are kept if not stored through the LMS.</li> <li>• Ensuring that individual members of academic staff retain records of student grades and records of assessment as above (maintained and submitted in electronic form) for storage on a central server such as LMS (or other system as appropriate).</li> <li>• Ensuring that staff members (including sessional staff) leaving the University (including for extended periods of leave), hand over all records to another appropriate member of academic staff or the faculty office.</li> </ul>
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) (DVC(A))	<p>The DVC(A) will resolve student appeals regarding an ADE's decision to fail a student who has not provided sufficient evidence of exceptional circumstances leading to that student not attending a requested deferred examination.</p>



Faculty assessment board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership of the faculty assessment board will comprise the associate dean (education) as chair, the dean of faculty, heads of discipline, course conveners of coursework courses, unit conveners of units in coursework courses, and one staff member of SAP.</li> <li>• The purview of faculty assessment boards is all coursework units and courses, regardless of mode or method of delivery and location.</li> <li>• Papers provided to the faculty assessment board are confidential. The names of students will be omitted from faculty assessment board reports unless required.</li> <li>• Faculty assessment boards may seek explanations through heads of discipline for anomalies in individual results or performance at the unit or course level.</li> <li>• Faculty assessment boards provide a publicly accountable quality assurance process for assessment in undergraduate and postgraduate coursework courses. Assessment boards report to both faculty boards and the University Education Committee.</li> <li>• A faculty assessment board is required in each faculty by Academic Board. The faculty assessment board reports to both the faculty board and the University Education Committee. This dual reporting pathway ensures detailed moderation of grades at unit and course level and University-wide overview of assessment and distribution of grades.</li> <li>• Ensure assessment, moderation at the unit and course level, grade allocation and release of grades are undertaken in a timely fashion, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ student progression and achievement;</li> <li>◦ performance at the unit and course level;</li> <li>◦ reviewing the effectiveness of assessment practice within the faculty.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Approve final grades and authorise the release of final grades.</li> <li>• Provide quality assurance reports to the University Education Committee on grade distribution summaries prepared by Student Connect.</li> <li>• Meet at least at the end of each semester to consider business related to the release of grades.</li> <li>• Schedule additional meetings as required to consider quality assurance matters in relation to assessment practices in the faculty.</li> <li>• Advise on matters referred to it by the faculty board or the University Education Committee.</li> <li>• Establish relevant sub-committees or working groups that facilitate the work of the faculty assessment board.</li> </ul>
Faculty board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider reports from faculty assessment boards and monitor their activities.</li> <li>• Monitor academic standards and student outcomes in learning and teaching within the faculty, including the activities of faculty assessment boards. Faculty boards report to Academic Board.</li> </ul>

University Education Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider quality assurance reports on grade distributions from faculty assessment boards. At a broad level the Committee maintains oversight of assessment policy and practice across the University including implementation of this document. The Committee approves the assessment procedures and considers changes to the procedures.</li> <li>Advises Academic Board on policies and procedures relating to learning and teaching, including assessment. Specific responsibilities include monitoring grade distributions and academic standards across the University and reviewing the learning and teaching activities of faculties.</li> </ul>
Academic Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider advice and recommendations from the University Education Committee on all aspects of teaching and learning, including assessment. The Board approves this document and any changes to the Policy.</li> <li>Academic Board is responsible to Council for all academic matters and quality assurance in relation to academic matters. The assessment and examination of students enrolled in courses or parts of courses is a particular responsibility under University legislation.</li> </ul>

## 5. LEGISLATION:

This policy constitutes part of the procedures approved by Academic Board in accordance with Rule 13 of the [Courses and Awards \(Courses of Study\) Rules 2023](#).

University legislation relevant to examinations and other assessment includes the [University of Canberra \(Student Conduct\) Rules 2023](#).

## 6. SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

[Assessment Procedures](#)

## 7. DEFINITIONS:

Terms	Definitions
Final examination	A final examination is an invigilated examination based on, for example, a test, quiz or essay paper set for students to complete in the official examination period at the end of each teaching period.
Marking Guides (also known as Marking Criteria or Grading Schema/Descriptor)	Refers to the general aspects against which work is assessed and gives the the generic indicators of a level of achievement such as HD, D, C, P etc.; or A, B, C etc.

Marking Rubric	A rubric is an evaluation tool or set of guidelines used to promote the consistent application of learning outcomes and expectations, and to measure their attainment against a consistent set of criteria. Rubrics clearly define academic expectations for students and help to ensure consistency in the evaluation of academic work from student to student, and assessment task to assessment task. Rubrics are also used as scoring instruments to determine grades or the degree to which learning standards have been demonstrated or attained by students.
Record-keeping (assessment)	In the context of assessment, record-keeping refers to the documentation of all aspects of the assessment process. This includes records of individual student performance and progress, summary statistical data relating to each unit and evidence of assessment standards.

For other University definitions please refer to the [Academic Glossary](#).