Higher Education Examination Policy

Section 1 - Preamble

(1) Charles Darwin University ('the University', 'CDU') is committed to providing effective and high-quality assessment items as part of the integrity of the issuing of University awards.

(2) The University will use a range of assessment items, including formal examinations, to measure and assure students' learning outcomes and achievements.

Section 2 - Purpose

(3) This policy outlines the University's approach to formal examinations, including those held online or at approved University locations.

Section 3 - Scope

(4) This policy applies to all higher education coursework students who are enrolled in units that have a formal, end-of-semester examination as an accredited assessment item.

(5) Mid-semester tests and other assessment items are managed under the Higher Education Coursework Assessment Policy and Procedure.

(6) Higher degree by research examinations are managed under the Higher Degree by Research - Preparation, Submission and Examinations Procedure.

Section 4 - Policy

(7) The University recognises that assessment is an essential part of the teaching and learning process and uses examinations as an assessment item within some units to assess students' learning outcomes and achievements.

(8) The University will ensure:

a. examinations are designed to assess the extent to which a student has achieved the learning outcomes specified within the relevant published unit information.
b. examination timetables and rules are accessible to all staff and students in advance of the central Examination Period. The dates of the Examination Period are published at Important dates.
c. academic standards and integrity are upheld through the consistent application of examination rules, policies, and associated processes across all University examinations.

(9) All students have a responsibility to:

a. familiarise themselves with the examination timetable, including any permitted examination materials, and ensure that there are no timetable clashes.

b. be available during the central Examination Period and attend their scheduled examinations on the date, time and by the method specified.
c. apply for a reasonable adjustment, alternate examination sitting or special consideration within the appropriate timeframes where relevant.
d. comply with all instructions, policies, procedures, and guidance in relation to examinations.

Examination scheduling & administration

(10) Examination timetables will be published on the University Examinations webpage and emailed to students no later than two (2) weeks before the examinations commence.

a. Timetables will include the time, date, duration of the examination, and the mode by which the exam will be conducted.
b. Every attempt will be made to schedule examinations between the hours of 8am and 8pm ACST from Monday to Friday. If necessary, exams may be scheduled on a Saturday.

(11) Students are required to make themselves available on all days of the central Examination Period.

a. A student will fail the examination if they cannot sit the examination on the day and time the examination is scheduled unless their circumstances support an application for an Alternate Exam Sitting or Special Consideration.

(12) All correspondence regarding examinations will be via the student email address held on the University student system. It is the responsibility of students to check their University email account.

Examination rules and conditions

(13) Examinations will take place online, unless otherwise specified on the examination timetable.

(14) Students undertaking an online examination should:

a. download and test the examination software prior to the examination; and
b. complete their examination under exam conditions, ensuring that:
    i. their environment is private, free from distractions and interruptions,
    ii. there is steady and reliable internet connection,
    iii. they have access to a web cam, and
    iv. they adhere to the terms and conditions of the invigilation software and examination rules.

(15) Online examinations may be recorded, and recordings may be used to investigate cheating or any other academic misconduct.

Examination commencement & duration

(16) Students may be required to show identification prior to the commencement of their examination.

a. If a student does not have a University student card, other official photo identification is also acceptable.

(17) Students must commence their examination no later than the first 30 minutes of an examination session.

Examination duration

(18) Examinations will usually be scheduled for either two (2) hours or three (3) hours in duration.

Permitted examination materials and resources

(19) A student must comply with all instructions provided for the examination, including those given by teaching staff, and with any examination notice displayed for that exam period.

(20) Examinations will be clearly identified as either:

a. An open book examination - where all written and printed materials, including dictionaries, may be referred to during the examination.
b. A limited material examination – where only the written or printed materials specified by the Unit Coordinator are permitted.
c. A closed book examination – where no written or printed materials, including dictionaries, other than those supplied by the Invigilator, are permitted.

(21) Unit Coordinators will advise students what materials and resources, if any, may be permitted in an examination as specified on the examination timetable.

Examination conduct

(22) Students must comply with all examination instructions and must not engage in behaviour which can be interpreted as cheating or a breach of academic integrity during an examination.

(23) Where it is suspected that there has been use of unauthorised materials, or cheating, the student/s will be allowed to finish the examination, but the incident will be reviewed and investigated.

a. An incident report will be forwarded by the Examination staff to the relevant Unit Coordinator for review and subsequent action.

(24) Potential breaches will be managed under the Academic Integrity Policy and the Code of Conduct - Students.

Examination content errors

(25) Any examination content errors discovered after the commencement of the examination session will not result in any examination being reissued. In such cases, Unit Coordinators will adjust the criteria for marking the examination.

Reasonable adjustments to examinations

(26) A student who has specific needs or support requirements can apply for a reasonable adjustment through Access and Inclusion in accordance with the Students with Disability Policy.

(27) A request for reasonable adjustments for examinations must be submitted at least fifteen (15) working days prior to first day of the Examination Period.

Alternate exam sitting

(28) Students who are unable to attend an examination (online or on-campus) at the scheduled time may request an Alternate Exam Sitting in the following circumstances:

a. medical or compassionate grounds;
b. work commitments beyond their control;
c. religious and cultural obligations;
d. sporting or cultural commitment; or
e. volunteer community service activity.

(29) Early departure for vacation is not an acceptable reason for a change of venue or an Alternate Exam Sitting.

(30) A request for an alternate exam sitting must be submitted within two (2) weeks of the publication of the examination timetable and be supported by documented evidence.

a. Students will only be granted one (1) Alternate Exam Sitting for each unit attempted, unless the student is granted special consideration and the accreditation documentation specifies that examination is the only acceptable method of assessment for that unit.

(31) Students with a Supplementary Assessment (SA) grade for a unit that has an exam will automatically be included in the Alternate Exam Sitting unless advised by the Unit Coordinator.

(32) Alternate Exam Sittings will be held over a one (1) week period at the end of each semester in accordance with the University Academic Calendar, unless otherwise approved by the Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor.

Special consideration

(33) Special consideration is an equity measure that may be applied in recognition that compassionate or compelling circumstances have impacted on a student's performance in an examination.

a. A student who leaves the examination within 30 minutes of commencement due to unforeseen circumstances or the sudden onset of an illness will not be given special consideration, and instead can apply for an Alternate Exam Sitting.
b. A student who remains in the examination for more than 30 minutes will have their paper graded and may apply for Special Consideration if one of the following applies:
    i. Illness of short duration (less than 6 weeks);
    ii. Accident or injury;
    iii. Disability;
    iv. Bereavement;
    v. Compassionate grounds;
    vi. Other unforeseen or extenuating circumstance.

Applying for special consideration

(34) Requests for special consideration must be made in writing to the Examinations and Timetabling Team within five (5) calendar days after the scheduled examination.

a. Applications must be accompanied by relevant supporting evidence (e.g., medical certificate, letter from employer, statutory declaration, copy of an accident report etc). More information, examples, and lists of acceptable evidence can be found on the University website.

(35) The Examinations and Timetabling team will assess the application and may ask the student to clarify information or provide additional evidence to support their application. The application will then be referred to the Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor or delegate for determination.

(36) Students will generally receive a written response within five (5) working days of their submission, including details of the basis of any decisions. Approval of a request for special consideration is not guaranteed, and may result in the following determinations:

a. no change (final grade including examination marks stands);
b. final grade based only on prior work in the unit (where that work represents more than 50% of the total marks

for the unit);

c. final examination mark is based on performance in prior work in the unit and the marks for the components of the examination the student was able to finish;
d. alternate examination sitting. An alternate examination will only be granted if no previous alternate examination sitting has been granted for that unit, OR if an examination is the only acceptable method of assessment for that unit, as specified in the relevant Accreditation documentation; or
e. an alternate assessment task.

(37) A student who undertakes an alternate assessment task or examination will have their new mark applied, which may be lower than the first mark originally achieved.

Security of non-electronic examination papers

(38) University staff involved in handling examination papers are responsible for ensuring proper handling and storage so that no unauthorised access to electronic or hard copies occurs. All versions of an examination paper must be held securely at all times.

(39) Only staff with direct involvement in the development, approval and administration of an examination will have access to the examination in both electronic and hard copy formats. Where a breach of security is believed, the unit co-ordinator will provide a new examination prior to the examination commencing.

(40) Staff in breach of these handling and storage directions may be found in breach of Code of Conduct - Employees.

Section 5 - Non-Compliance

(41) Non-compliance with Governance Documents is considered a breach of the Code of Conduct - Employees or the Code of Conduct - Students, as applicable, and is treated seriously by the University. Reports of concerns about non-compliance will be managed in accordance with the applicable disciplinary procedures outlined in the Charles Darwin University and Union Enterprise Agreement 2025 and the Code of Conduct - Students.

(42) Complaints may be raised in accordance with the Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedure - Employees and Complaints Policy - Students.

(43) All staff members have an individual responsibility to raise any suspicion, allegation or report of fraud or corruption in accordance with the Fraud and Corruption Control Policy and Whistleblower Reporting (Improper Conduct) Procedure.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	12th June 2025
Review Date	12th June 2028
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Approval Date	5th June 2025
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Louise King Provost
Implementation Officer	Lisa-Marie Stones Director Student and Academic Services
Enquiries Contact	Lisa-Marie Stones Director Student and Academic Services

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Reasonable adjustments" - Adjustments that can be made to enable a student with disability to participate in education on the same basis as students without a disability. An adjustment is reasonable if it successfully balances the interests of all parties affected and does not compromise the academic standards or inherent requirements of a unit or course.

"Volunteer community service activity" - Includes: a voluntary emergency management activity (e.g., State Emergency Service); Defence Force training; jury service that is required by or under relevant legislation; a witness in a civil, criminal or industrial matter; a significant cultural or ceremonial event; or a national or international sporting event where the student is a participant or appointed as a recognised national or international official.

"University" - Charles Darwin University, a body corporate established under section 4 of the Charles Darwin University Act 2003. The University is comprised of the various faculties, CDU TAFE, organisational units, and formal committees, including the governing University Council and Academic Board.