Grading Policy

Section 1 - Preamble

(1) Charles Darwin University ('the University', 'CDU') is committed to the awarding of grades underpinned by robust and consistent criteria and standards. Assessors exercise professional judgement informed by well-designed assessment items that provide evidence of achievement of learning outcomes.

Section 2 - Purpose

(2) This document provides a fair and consistent grading schema, for determining the assessment results of both the University's Higher Education (HE) units and Vocational Education and Training (VET) units of competency.

Section 3 - Scope

(3) This policy applies to all units offered in the current academic calendar, including:

a. Higher Education and VET units, including short courses;
b. Tertiary Enabling Program (TEP);
c. Preparation Tertiary Success (PTS); and
d. credit transfers.

(4) Academic staff are to refer to this policy when awarding grades.

Section 4 - Policy

(5) The results achieved by a student in each unit will be recorded in accordance with the following tables:

Higher education grading schema

Table 1 – Merit-based assessment grades

(6) The following merit-based assessment grades contribute to the calculation of a student's Grade Point Average (GPA).

a. A grade of Not Applicable (NA) will not be included in the calculation of a GPA.

Notation	Grade and explanation	Range	Contribution to GPA
HD	High Distinction Demonstrates imagination, originality or flair, based on proficiency in all aspects of the unit; work is interesting or surprisingly exciting, challenging, well read or scholarly.	85 to 100%	7

Notation	Grade and explanation	Range	Contribution to GPA
D	Distinction Demonstrates awareness and understanding of deeper and less obvious aspects of the unit, such as ability to identify and debate critical issues or problems, ability to solve non-routine problems, ability to adapt and apply ideas to new situations, and ability to evaluate new ideas.	75 to <85%	6
C	Credit Demonstrates ability to use and apply fundamental concepts and skills of the unit going beyond mere replication of content knowledge or skill to show understanding of key ideas, awareness of their relevance, some use of analytical skills, and some originality or insight.	65 to <75%	5
P	Pass Satisfies all of the basic learning requirements of the unit, such as knowledge of fundamental concepts and performance of basic skills; demonstrates satisfactory, adequate, competent, or capable achievement.	50 to <65%	4
PS	Pass Supplementary Indicates that the student passed a supplementary assessment and their composite final mark is >50%. PS is awarded by the Faculty Higher Education Assessment Review Panel. PS is only available in AQF qualifications at level 5, 6 and 7, and level 8 where the qualification is a Bachelor Honours Degree (embedded). For these qualifications, a PS grade may be awarded for coursework units at 100, 200 and 300 level for awards, provided that the PS grade is not otherwise restricted by the specific course rules. PS is not awarded in any AQF Level 9 or 10 qualification. PS has the same GPA contribution as a Pass (P). PS is deemed to satisfy prerequisites for higher-level units.	>50% (following SA)	4
PU	Pass Ungraded Indicates that the unit is assessed only on the basis of pass or fail, and that the student's work has achieved a pass level.		NA
F	Fail Fails to satisfy the requirements of the unit.	<50%	0
FNS	Fail Not Submitted Fails to satisfy the requirements of the unit. Did not complete 50% or more of the assessment		0

Table 2 – Continuing or incomplete notations – HE

(7) A student may be allocated by the Faculty an incomplete or continuing notation to signify where a grade is not yet complete.

Notation	Notation and explanation	Contribution to GPA
PO	Practicum Ongoing Indicates an administrative notation issued to a student who has commenced, but not completed a practicum or placement unit. The grade is applicable for 12 months. If at the end of this time a grade has not been awarded the PO grade will automatically convert to a Fail (F) grade unless the Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor (or delegate) approves in writing an extension of the PO grade.	NA

Notation	Notation and explanation	Contribution to GPA
SA	Supplementary Assessment Indicates that a student has received a composite final mark in the range of 47 to 50% and has been assigned a supplementary assessment by the Faculty Higher Education Assessment Review Panel. A supplementary assessment can only be attempted once per unit. Students must have completed all assessment items and achieve a passing grade in more than 50% of assessments within that unit to be granted a supplementary assessment. A final grade of Pass Supplementary (PS) will be awarded by the Faculty where the student has successfully passed the supplementary assessment. A final grade of Fail (F) will be awarded where a student does not pass the supplementary assessment or does not attempt the assessment and no final results are recorded within six (6) months of the student being notified. SA is only available in AQF qualifications at level 5, 6 and 7, and level 8 where the qualification is a Bachelor Honours Degree (embedded). For these qualifications, a SA notation may be awarded for coursework units at 100, 200 and 300 level for awards, provided that the SA notation or PS grade is not otherwise restricted by the specific course rules. SA is not awarded in any AQF Level 9 or 10 qualification.	NA
AC	Assessment Continues Indicates that the student has received a written extension by the relevant Faculty Dean (or delegate) for a period of up to three (3) months from the end of the semester (teaching period) to submit outstanding assessment items towards the final grade for the unit. Extensions requested by students can only be approved if circumstances prevail indicating student disadvantage. For example: - a student is suffering from an illness that prevents them from completing the unit within the timeline as stated in the unit outline; - personal circumstances based on written evidence by a counsellor, or medical practitioner; - work-related circumstance based on written evidence by their employer; or - delays with the completion of assessment caused by external factors. Unit lecturers may make a request on behalf of the student, for a three (3) month extension at the relevant Faculty Higher Education Assessment Review Panel meeting. If the outstanding work is not completed by that time, or if no assessable work has been submitted by the student by the end of the following semester (teaching period), the result of F will be awarded. Students are required to re-enrol in the unit, should they wish to complete the unit attempt.	NA
SPEC	Alternate Examination Sitting Approved Indicates that a student has applied to sit an alternate examination due to meeting certain conditions as outlined in the Higher Education Examination Policy, and this has been approved. If no results are recorded within six (6) months of the SPEC grade being notified to the student, the result of F must be awarded.	NA
IR	Under Investigation or Review A grade cannot be assigned until the resolution of the investigation or review. Once the investigation or review has been completed, the IR grade will convert to a merit-based assessment grade (see table 1). The grade is applicable for 12 months. If at the end of this time a grade has not been awarded the IR grade will automatically convert to a Fail (F) grade unless the Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor (or delegate) approves in writing an extension of the IR grade.	NA

Table 3 – Academic credit outcomes – HE

(8) The following notations will be made where a Credit Transfer or Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) has been awarded to a student under the Academic Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy.

Notation	Notation and explanation	Contribution to GPA
CRDT-TRANS	Credit Transfer Indicates that credit has been given for a unit, based on successful completion of equivalent study. Credit for units should only be granted for units completed within the past seven (7) years, however, should professional practice and personal development have been undertaken within the field, then this could be extended to ten (10) years. The unit/s do not need to be completed by the student.	NA

Notation	Notation and explanation	Contribution to GPA
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning Indicates credit granted at the University based upon the assessment of an individual's prior formal, non-formal and informal learning (or a combination thereof) to determine the extent to which that individual has achieved the required learning outcomes of a specified unit. Fees may be applicable.	NA

Table 4 – Administrative notations – HE

(9) The following notations will be recorded to signify a non-academic outcome. Further information is available in the Enrolment Policy.

Notation	Notation and explanation	Contribution to GPA
WF	Withdrawn Fail Indicates a student has formally withdrawn from a unit with academic penalty, after dates given for WW below.	0
W	Withdrawn without Penalty Indicates a student has formally withdrawn from a unit prior to the Census Date.	NA
WW	Withdrawn without Academic Penalty Indicates a student has formally withdrawn from a unit without academic penalty, after the census date prior to the start of week 9 for a 12-week teaching period, or the end of week 5 for a 6-week teaching period.	NA
NE	Not Examinable - Research Indicates that a student has commenced a research unit and is eligible to continue.	NA
NA	Not Available Indicates that the result for a unit is not available. The use of NA will enable a student to re-enrol in a unit previously undertaken, but where no grade has been issued by the unit lecturer.	NA

Calculation of grade point average

(10) The Grade Point Average (GPA) is used, for example, to calculate University and Chancellor's Medal recipients.

(11) The GPA will be calculated according to the following formula:

GPA = Sum (Unit contribution to GPA X unit credit points)/Total Credit points

(12) An Ungraded Pass and other notations indicated by NA above are not included in the GPA calculation.

a. The standard GPA is calculated by averaging all attempts at all units except those indicated by NA above.

Table 5 – Calculation of GPA example: Program of learning ABC (80CP)

	Unit credit points	Grade	Contribution to GPA	Unit contribution to GPA X unit credit points
Unit 1	10CP	HD	7	7 x 10 = 70
Unit 2	10CP	C	5	5 x 10 = 50
Unit 3	20CP	D	6	6 x 20 = 120
Unit 4	10CP	F	0	0 x 10 = 0
Unit 4 repeat	10CP	C	5	5 x 10 = 50
Unit 5	10CP	C	5	5 x 10 = 50

	Unit credit points	Grade	Contribution to GPA	Unit contribution to GPA X unit credit points
Unit 6	10CP	HD	7	7 x 10 = 70
Unit 7	10CP - NA	PU	NA	NA
TOTAL	80CP			410

GPA = 410/80 = 5.125

Table 6 – Honours class

(13) Honours Class is based on the mean (average) percentage over the total number of graded credit points attempted in the Honours degree (see Calculation of Honours Class, below). Where the Honours degree is embedded in a four (4) year degree, only the Honours degree units will be included in the Honours Class calculations.

Notation	Mean percentage
H1 (Honours First Class)	80 to – 100%
H2A (Honours Second Class Group A)	70 to <80%
H2B (Honours Second Class Group B)	60 to <70%
H3 (Honours Third Class)	50 to <60%

Calculation of Honours class

(14) The calculation of Honours Class is used to determine which Honours Class is to be awarded. It may also be used to rank student achievement e.g. for scholarships, awards or competitive entry to other programs.

a. An Ungraded Pass and grades for academic credit are not included in the Honours Class calculation.

(15) The Honours Class will be based on the mean percentage over the total number of graded credit points attempted in the Honours degree as per the following formula:

Mean percentage = Sum (Unit percentage X unit credit points) / Total graded credit points

a. The Honours Class is calculated by averaging the percentage achieved in all attempts at all units except those indicated with an NA.

(16) Honours Class calculations will be:

a. completed by the Honours Coordinator of the relevant Faculty;
b. confirmed by the relevant Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor (or delegate);
c. recommended to Academic Board through the Learning and Teaching Committee; and
d. reported to the Research Committee.

Table 7 – Calculation of honours class example 1: Degree ABC (Honours) (80CP)

	Unit credit points	Grade	Percentage	Unit percentage X unit credit points

	Unit credit points	Grade	Percentage	Unit percentage X unit credit points
Unit 1	10CP	HD	91	91 x 10 = 910
Unit 2	10CP	C	73	73 x 10 = 730
Unit 3	20CP	D	78	78 x 20 = 1560
Unit 4	10CP	F	48	48 x 10 = 480
Unit 4 repeat	10CP	C	67	67 x 10 = 670
Unit 5	10CP	D	82	82 x 10 = 820
Unit 6	10CP	HD	87	87 x 10 = 870
Unit 7	10CP	PU	NA	NA
TOTAL	80CP			6040

Mean percentage = 6040/80 = 75.5 (Honours Second Class Group A)

Unit 7 is an Ungraded Pass therefore neither the percentage nor the credit points are included in the calculation of Honours class.

Table 8 – Calculation of honours class example 2: Degree DEF (Honours) (80CP)

	Unit credit points	Grade	Percentage	Unit percentage X unit credit points
Unit 1	40CP	HD	90	90 x 40 = 3600
Unit 2	20CP	C	69	69 x 20 = 1380
Unit 3	20CP	D	78	78 x 20 = 1560
TOTAL	80CP			6540

Mean percentage = 6540/80 = 81.75 (Honours First Class)

Grades from other higher education providers

(17) Where a student is required to complete a core unit or specialist elective through another Higher Education provider who is a Table A provider as listed within the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Cth); and that unit has been accredited by the University for inclusion on the student's transcript, the partner institution's grading system may be honoured if it uses the same grading schema letters as the University. Where different grading schema letters exist, these may be translated into the University's grading schema.

Publication of higher education results

(18) A student's final result in any unit will be awarded by the Faculty Higher Education Assessment Review Panel. Once the Panel has awarded the final grade, the grades will be released to students on the designated grade release date. The final result in any unit will be available to students on the 'My Student Info' site.

(19) Grade release dates are set no later than eighteen (18) calendar days following the last day of a central examination period.

(20) Students may be prevented from accessing their grades if they have a hold on their account, including if they

have unpaid fees or have not completed the Academic Integrity Unit in Learnline.

Vocational education and training grading schema

Table 9 – Competency-based assessment results

(21) The following competency-based assessment results contribute to the student's achievement.

Notation	Result and explanation
CA	Competency Achieved Indicates the student demonstrated competence against all requirements detailed in the unit of competency.
NYC	Not Yet Competent Indicates the student attempted all of the requirements for the assessment and has been assessed as not competent, or as not satisfying one or more of the requirements for the unit of competency or module.
CE	Continuing Enrolment CE is not a final result. It is an administrative notation used in lieu of a competency grade when it is not appropriate to provide a final grade. There must be evidence of participation in the current academic year. CE must be converted to a final grade when the "Activity End Date" for the unit occurs. This normally corresponds with the end date of the teaching period. Where the end date is extended past 30 December of the current academic year, a CE grade can be carried into the next year, but must be resulted by the activity end date.
OWA	Ongoing Workplace Assessment OWA is not a final result. It is an administrative notation used in lieu of a competency grade to identify students who have completed the 'off the job' requirements of a unit of competency but have yet to complete the 'on the job' requirements. There must be evidence of participation in the current academic year. OWA must be converted to a final grade when the "activity end date" for the unit occurs. This normally corresponds with the end date of the teaching period. Where the end date is extended past 30 December of the current academic year, a OWA grade can be carried into the next year, but must be resulted by the activity end date.
IP	Insufficient Participation Indicates that a student has not participated sufficiently to attempt all assessment requirements for the unit. No formal withdrawal has taken place. There must be evidence of at least one (1) valid participation. Valid participation occurs when a student is engaged with the learning process specifically related to the elements and performance criteria detailed in the unit of competency. Evidence of participation needs to be provided.
SP	Successful Participation Indicates a Learner Support unit where the student has successfully participated in the Learner Support activities, thereby increasing the likelihood of successful outcomes for units of competency within the associated VET qualification in which they were enrolled. The grade may only be used for resulting Learner Support units of competency.
UP	Unsuccessful Participation Indicates a result in a Learner Support unit where the student has not successfully participated in the Learner Support activities, thereby reducing the likelihood of successful outcomes for units of competency within the associated VET qualification in which they were enrolled. The grade may only be used for resulting Learner Support units of competency.

Table 10 – Academic credit notations – VET

(22) The following notations will be made where a Credit Transfer or Recognition of Prior Learning has been awarded to a student under the Academic Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy.

Notation	Notation and explanation
CRDT-TRANS	Credit Transfer Indicates that credit has been given for a specified unit based on successful completion of equivalent study. Credit for units should only be granted for units completed within the past five (5) years, however, should professional practice and personal development have been undertaken within the field, then this could be extended to (10) ten years. The unit/units do not need to be completed by the student. Evidence is required. Fees are not applicable. Funding is not applicable.
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning (VET) Indicates credit given towards a program of learning based on skills attained through employment and/or life skills. Current competence needs to be demonstrated. Evidence is required. Fees are applicable. Funding is applicable.
RPL-NOT	Recognition of Prior Learning Not Granted (VET) The process where recognition of prior learning is applied for but not granted. Fees are applicable. Funding is applicable.

Table 11 – Administrative notations – VET

(23) A student may be allocated an administrative notation to signify a non-academic outcome.

Notation	Notation and explanation
W	Withdrawn without Financial Penalty Indicates a student formally withdrew from a unit within fourteen (14) days of commencement of the unit and had valid participation in that unit.
WW	Withdrawn with Financial Penalty Indicates a student formally withdrew from a unit after fourteen (14) days from commencement of the unit and had valid participation in that unit.
WEC	Withdrawn without Financial Penalty Indicates a University-initiated cancellation of enrolment from a unit with no valid participation from which the student did not formally withdraw.
WNP	Withdrawn without Financial Penalty Indicates a student did not validly participate in a unit and formally withdrew.
SW	Special Withdrawal Indicates the unit was enrolled in incorrectly and has been withdrawn.
NS	Never Started Indicates a VET Student Loan (VSL) eligible student in a VSL course did not validly participate in a unit and did not formally withdraw prior to the VET Census Date.
NA	Not Available Indicates that results for a unit are not available. The use of NA will enable a student to re-enrol in a unit previously undertaken, but where no grade has been issued by the unit lecturer.

Publication of vocational education and training results

(24) A student's final result in any unit is available on the "My Student Info" site as soon as it is finalised by the delivery team. For most units this will be within four (4) weeks of the end of training.

(25) The formal notification dates are set no less than eighteen (18) calendar days following the end of the relevant teaching period. Further information is available on the Important dates webpage.

(26) Students may be prevented from accessing their grades if they have a hold on their account, including if they

have unpaid fees or have not completed the Academic Integrity Unit in Learnline.

Review of result

(27) The University is committed to providing a fair and transparent procedure through which students may seek to lodge a complaint against an academic action or appeal an academic decision.

(28) Students who have a concern about their overall result in a unit can apply for a review of their final grade in accordance with the Higher Education Coursework Assessment Policy and Procedure.

Section 5 - Non-Compliance

(29) 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.

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

(31) 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 November 2024
Review Date	12th November 2027
Approval Authority	Vice-President Governance and University Secretary
Approval Date	12th November 2024
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

"**Faculty**" - An organisational and academic unit in the University that delivers courses and conducts research.