Higher Education Assessment Procedure

Section 1 - Introduction

(1) The University is committed to providing an effective, high quality-learning environment in which staff, students and external stakeholders have justified confidence in the University's learning and teaching processes and outcomes. The University is committed to developing graduates who effectively meet the challenges of a complex, changing world. Academic assessment is one strategy by which the University can measure its achievement of these goals.

Section 2 - Compliance

(2) This is a compliance requirement under the:

a. Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021; and
b. National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018.

Section 3 - Intent

(3) This document provides consistent, fair and transparent assessment procedures for all students enrolled in a Higher Education program of learning offered by the University. It recognises the complex nature of assessment and encourages ongoing discussion of the elements contributing to the judgement process.

Section 4 - Relevant Definitions

(4) In the context of this document:

a. Appeal means a request to the University Appeals Panel for a review of a decision;
b. Assessment means a process of determining a student's achievement of expected learning outcomes and may include a range of written and oral methods and practice or demonstration;
c. Assessment task, or assignment, means a component of assessment that is normally based on learning undertaken during the semester. Assessment tasks can be formative or summative and can take many forms such as essays, short answer questions;
d. Examination means any assessment task, assignment, written or observed practice, or other written paper which is timetabled within the Central Examination Period and which is taken into account in assessing the final results in a unit;
e. External marker means an independent, appropriately qualified, current or former academic staff member of an Australian university who has substantial expertise in the relevant discipline area and has no conflict of interest in accordance with the Conflicts of Interest Policy;
f. Faculty PVC means the Pro Vice-Chancellor of the Faculty responsible for the unit in which the student is enrolled;
g. Feedback (in the context of assessment) means information returned to students on their progress towards unit/ program learning outcomes. The information can be quantified in the form of marks for assessment tasks,

and/or in qualitative form, for example, comments, model answers, suggestions for reading etc. All assessment should incorporate both formative and summative feedback for students to use as life-long learners (assessment for learning) as well as assessment of learning to date (assessment of learning);

h. Grade (for example Pass, Credit, Distinction etc.) means a symbol that indicates the level of student performance in a unit against specified standards. Grades are awarded for the purposes of summative assessment, to enable the University to provide a final statement for the student and the outside community of the student's achievement of the learning outcomes in that unit;

i. Hurdle assessment means a compulsory assessment item that must be passed, in addition to achieving an overall passing result, in order to receive a passing grade in a unit;

j. Learning outcomes mean the expression of the set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning;

k. Mark means the points awarded for an individual item of assessment;

l. Moderation means a quality assurance process by which an appropriately qualified independent individual or group confirms that assessment is continuously conducted with accuracy, consistency and fairness. Moderation includes the entire assessment event, including the design and post-event analysis of the fitness of the assessment of student learning. Moderation contributes to the continuous improvement of assessment practices and to sharing good practice among colleagues;

m. Punitive assessment means deducting marks for incorrect and/or missing components of the assessment task. Punitive assessment does not include penalties for late submission of an assessment task;

n. Practice-based assessment means an assessment designed to award credit for achievement in work-integrated learning (WIL);

o. Procedural fairness (also called “natural justice”) means the basic principles considered central to fair decision making and which can be summarised as follows:

    i. the opportunity for all parties to be heard;

    ii. the respondent having full knowledge of the nature and substance of the grievance;

    iii. the right to an independent, unbiased decision maker; and

    iv. a decision based solely on evidence provided.

p. Program of learning means a course, curriculum, training package, unit of study or structured workplace learning that leads to the award of a qualification;

q. Reasonable adjustment means the modification of assessment tasks or processes which may be made for students with a verified disability, medical or other condition in accordance with the Disability Standards for Education 2005;

r. Re-mark means an official request for an external marker to provide feedback and assign a mark to a student’s assessment in order to confirm or revise the originally assigned mark;

s. Result means a generic term used to describe a mark;

t. Rubric means a type of matrix that provides scaled levels of achievement or understanding for a set of criteria or dimensions of quality for a given type of performance, for example, a paper, an oral presentation, or use of teamwork skills;

u. SafeAssign means the text matching software used by the University, to compare submitted assessment tasks against a set of academic papers to identify areas of overlap between submitted assessment task and existing work;

v. Special Circumstance means a situation, which is an exception to the general rule, is beyond the student’s control, is not reasonably foreseeable and which prevents the student from engaging in a University activity such as: accepting an international offer of a place, withdrawing from a unit prior to census/cut-off date, completing the requirements for a unit of study or attending a scheduled examination. Examples may include sudden illness or disability; loss of employment; an inability to obtain a student visa; death of the student or a close family member (parent, sibling, spouse or child); natural catastrophe; or a political or civil uprising;

w. Teaching period means the timeframe during which a unit is taught. Higher Education teaching periods are Semester One, Semester Two and Summer Semester, which consist of teaching weeks and an examination period. Assessments other than examinations are normally due within the teaching weeks of a teaching period;
x. Test means a form of assessment using questions, problems or other activities to measure achievement of learning outcomes. Tests are delivered outside the central examination period and their administration, including scheduling, is the responsibility of the School. Tests are not subject to the Examination Policy;
y. Unit means a subject or unit that a person may undertake with a higher education provider as part of a course of study leading to a higher education award;
z. Unit outline is an official statement describing:
    i. the nature of the unit;
    ii. the learning outcomes of the unit;
    iii. how the unit is delivered and assessed;
    iv. the specific requirements students have to meet in order to complete the unit successfully;
    v. information specific to the unit; and
    vi. resources required.
aa. Work-integrated learning (WIL) means a range of approaches that integrate theory with the practice of work within a purposefully designed curriculum. The most common form of WIL involves a student placement or project within a workplace.

Section 5 - Procedures

(5) All unit assessment tasks must be clearly aligned to learning outcomes in accordance with the University's Higher Education Quality Management System and the Higher Education Course Accreditation and Re-accreditation Procedures. Students must be provided with clear explanations of what is required to complete an assessment task successfully.

(6) At a minimum, the Unit Outline must include the following assessment information:

a. A brief outline of what students are expected to do.
b. A succinct statement of the requirements for completion of each assessment task including due dates.
c. Planned dates for return of work and provision of feedback to students.
d. Statements of the assessment process and accompanying criteria that will be used to grade each assessment task.
e. Statements indicating the weighting of the each assessment task.
f. A clear statement indicating if the assessment task will attract a mark or be ungraded, for example, Pass or Fail.
g. Where appropriate, a statement specifying that the assessable task is to be submitted for electronic text matching and the processes involved.

(7) Unless required by a professional or statutory regulator, no unit will be graded only on the basis of a final examination.

(8) Any changes to an assessment task must be in accordance with the University's Higher Education Minor and Major Amendment Procedures.

Hurdle Assessment

(9) Hurdle assessments must be:

a. approved during the unit accreditation process;
b. specified in the Unit Outline; and
c. clearly identified as a hurdle assessment on the unit Learnline website.

(10) Students who fail a hurdle assessment for a unit are deemed to have failed the unit, regardless of the aggregate of marks that the student may achieve. An additional assessment may be granted at the discretion of the Unit Coordinator in special circumstances, if the student has obtained an aggregate mark of 50% or greater.

Practice-Based Assessment

(11) Practice-based assessments are developed by the University in conjunction with students and employers or practice placement staff members by working together to design and create a work-integrated learning experience that benefits all parties. Student progress and learning outcomes are monitored and assessed by the University, with input from the employer or practice placement staff members who conduct assessment of work-integrated learning.

(12) The relevant School, through the Unit Coordinator, will provide relevant training and/or mentoring for workplace assessors that is formally documented and meets the University's quality assurance and external regulatory requirements.

(13) The Unit Coordinator or nominee is responsible for the student's practical experience and the recommendation of a final grade to the HE School Assessment Review Panel.

Referencing

(14) Students will be provided with clear guidelines on the specific referencing system required for each discipline and the source for that referencing style. A statement of the required or preferred referencing style and a link to the preferred style will be included in all Unit Outline and each Learnline site, for example, Students need to comply with the Referencing Guide: Harvard or Students need to comply with the Referencing Guide: APA.

(15) Students who have consistently and accurately utilised a recognised referencing system will not be disadvantaged when a referencing guideline for a specific unit is not specified in the Unit Outline.

Submission of Written Assessment

(16) Students should, where practicable, submit all written assessments through Learnline's SafeAssign for comparison against existing works.

(17) Submission via Learnline provides long-term storage and retrieval if an assessment requires a re-mark or there is an appeal.

(18) SafeAssign assists students to attribute sources properly and identify possible plagiarism. Students should be provided with the opportunity to submit a draft assessment paper to SafeAssign with the report returned to the student for self-evaluation.

(19) SafeAssign reports provide an indicator of what percentage of the submitted assessment matches against existing sources. It is not possible to identify a 'cut-off' matching score that indicates plagiarism as some assessments may return a higher than average matching score such as when students use a cover sheet, quotations or include assessment task requirement text that all students may use. Staff members and students need to review the SafeAssign reports and carefully consider what is shown as matching in order to determine appropriate action.

(20) Unit Coordinators should consider strategies to reduce the potential for plagiarism, when planning and developing assessment tasks, such as regularly changing assessment tasks and/or assessment topics, highlighted statements in online instructions, or randomised questions from large test pools.

Feedback

(21) Assessment feedback is essential to assist students to achieve desired learning outcomes. Feedback on assessment tasks will normally be provided to students within two (2) to three (3) weeks of submission and must be:

a. informative, constructive, timely;
b. provided throughout the learning process;
c. fair, justifiable, reasonable; and
d. in keeping with acceptable workload expectations for both students and staff members.

(22) When developing assessment tasks, staff members must consider both staff and student workloads to ensure that assessment due dates and turn-around times provide students with sufficient time to use the feedback in order to prepare for the next assessment.

(23) Wherever practicable, each unit will have an assessment task, which is weighted less than 25% of the final mark due within the first four (4) weeks of semester in order to provide students with early feedback and guidance.

Substantive Comments

(24) Substantive comments that are encouraging and supportive of a student's efforts and provide detailed individual feedback will enable a student to improve his or her work. These comments may include identifying areas that require further study and any other strategies that may assist the student in the learning process.

(25) Generic comments provided to groups of students may be useful but would not normally substitute for substantive individualised feedback particularly during the early stages of a course. Individualised feedback should give sufficient detail explaining not only what needs improvement but also why and how it can be improved, for example, 'Compare and contrast this example to the literature' rather than 'Issues not sufficiently analysed'.

(26) Students are able to meet with staff members face-to-face, by telephone or other agreed upon method, to discuss students' studies and assessable tasks. Staff members must allocate and notify students through Learnline of reasonable times when they are available to meet.

Marking Schema or Rubric

(27) A marking schema or rubric of pre-established criteria against which each assessment task will be marked will be provided to both students and markers. The marking schema or rubric will note the relative importance of the criteria and should be used to identify areas done well and areas for future improvement.

(28) The marking schema or rubric of pre-established criteria will assist students to achieve the learning outcomes for the unit and assessment; and assist markers in providing appropriate, consistent, reliable feedback to students. The marking schema or rubric will normally address aspects of English language proficiency (see Entry Requirements).

(29) Students will be awarded marks for achieving the required learning outcomes and provided with individualised and substantive comments based on the criteria. Marks will not be deducted for any incorrect or missing answers. A negative mark cannot be awarded for an assessment task.

Timely Submission

(30) Students are expected to meet the due dates for the submission of assessment tasks. Should circumstances prevent a student from meeting a submission date, the student may apply for an extension. Extensions may prevent feedback from being received in time to be used in preparation for the next assessment task.

(31) Decisions on granting of an extension must be based on the principles of procedural fairness. Decisions must be

documented and auditable, for example, in case of a grievance.

Grounds for an Extension

(32) A student may be granted an extension to the submission due date of an assessment task where circumstances beyond the control of the student may prevent the timely submission of the assessment task. This may include, but is not limited to, the following circumstances:

a. Illness of the student or a close relative.
b. Unanticipated personal circumstances.
c. Unanticipated and significant work-related circumstances.
d. External factors such as delayed student placement, late enrolment or delays in receiving textbooks or learning materials.
e. Special circumstances.

(33) Discretionary activities or circumstances within the student's control, for example attendance at sporting events, holidays and other discretionary travel, and/or other foreseeable events will not constitute grounds for an extension.

Applying for an Extension

(34) Applications for an extension must be submitted to the Unit Coordinator by email and contain the following information:

a. Student name and student number.
b. Unit name and code.
c. Assessment task name.
d. Current due date.
e. Proposed adjusted due date.
f. Reason for requesting an extension.
g. Appropriate evidence to support the request, such as a medical certificate, bereavement notice, letter from employer or statutory declaration.

(35) Extensions sought during the teaching period will not be granted after the due date for submission of the assessment except under special circumstances.

(36) Extensions sought beyond the teaching period, must be applied for through the Unit Coordinator before the end of the teaching period, and supported by the HE School Assessment Review Panel.

Outcomes of an Application for Extension

(37) Extensions sought during the teaching period may be approved at the discretion of the Unit Coordinator. The response to the application for extension must be provided in writing to the student in a timely manner.

(38) Extensions sought during the teaching period will not be granted for more than two (2) weeks (fourteen (14) calendar days), except under special circumstances.

(39) Extensions sought past the teaching period, must be approved in writing by the HE Faculty Assessment Review Panel and will be for a maximum of three (3) months. The Faculty PVC may extend this period in special circumstances.

Penalties for Late Submission

(40) Assessment tasks that are submitted after the due date without an approved extension will incur a penalty of 5% of the mark given, per day late. For example, an assessment task awarded 35% that is three (3) days late will have 15% of the final mark (3 days x 5% per day x 35%) deducted (5.25%) and rounded up to a final mark of 30%

Review of a Result

(41) A grade may be reviewed in accordance with the Complaints Policy - Students. Students must be informed before they proceed with a request for Review of a Result, that the outcome of the re-mark will replace the original result, therefore their result may be increased or decreased as an outcome of a review.

(42) A request for a review of a result for an assessment task may only be initiated by a student once and must demonstrate a reasonable case for that review, for example, where:

a. the result for one (1) or more assessment tasks, including the final examination, does not reflect the quality of the work submitted;
b. all parts of the assessment task were not included in the final determination of the result;
c. all results contributing to the final grade have not been correctly weighted and the total accurately obtained;
d. the types of assessment tasks are inconsistent with information published in the Unit Outline or provided on the University's website;
e. the type and/or weighting of assessment tasks differ from information published in the Unit Outline;
f. the content of an assessment task does not reflect the content of the course; or
g. there are special circumstances.

(43) Where no reasonable case is made, the request for review will not be considered.

(44) Where a reasonable case is made, the relevant staff member/s must make every effort to resolve the student's concern. This may include but is not limited to:

a. checking that all required parts of the assessment task were included in the determination of the result; and
b. checking that all marks contributing to the final grade have been correctly weighted and the total accurately obtained.

(45) A written response must be provided to the student that addresses the issues raised.

(46) If the student remains aggrieved following discussion with the relevant staff member/s a written complaint may be submitted in to the University's Student Policy and Complaints.

(47) Where a written complaint has been received, the Student Policy and Complaints will contact the relevant Head of School, who will appoint an academic staff member of the Faculty (not the Unit or Course Coordinator or Head of School) to examine the grievance and report on:

a. whether the type of assessment task/s are inconsistent with those published in the Unit Outline or provided on the University's website;
b. whether the type and/or weighting of the assessment task/s differ from information published in the Unit Outline; and
c. whether the content of the assessment task/s reflects the content of the course.

(48) Where discrepancies are identified the Head of School will appoint an independent, appropriately qualified, external marker to undertake a re-mark of the assessment task/s.

(49) Where a reasonable case has not been demonstrated, the student may be requested to provide further information or the Head of School may recommend that no action be taken.

(50) The timeframe for review of a grade must be in accordance with the Complaints Policy - Students.

Re-mark

(51) In order to complete an independent re-mark, for example during a Review of a grade, the external marker must be provided with the unit outline, the marking schema or rubric for the assessment task/s and a de-identified copy of the original student assessment task/s submission with original marker's comments and any other markings removed. Submitted works must not be altered or added to by the student.

(52) The external marker will make a written recommendation to the individual or organisational unit responsible for arranging the re-mark.

(53) Where practicable the original marker of the assessment task/s will be:

a. informed that a re-mark is being undertaken;
b. involved in discussion with the Course Coordinator; and
c. informed of the result of the re-mark.

(54) Where the outcome of a re-mark is a change of assessment task mark, result and/or unit grade, the individual or organisational unit responsible for arranging the re-mark will notify the student of the result in writing and submit the change of grade information.

(55) Where the outcome of a re-mark is no change to the mark, result and/or grade, the individual or organisational unit responsible for arranging the re-mark will notify the student of the result in writing.

(56) Where the individual or organisational unit responsible for arranging the re-mark determines that there has been a significant error in the assessment processes, the Pro Vice-Chancellor of the Faculty must be notified and determine what remedial action should be taken. For example, if an adjustment of grade is necessary, then the Examinations Team, Academic Liaison Unit (ALU) and other relevant offices will be notified.

(57) The Unit Coordinator will provide a report on all re-marks to the HE School Assessment Review Panel.

Adjustment of Grades

(58) An adjustment of grades within a unit may only be determined by the HE Faculty Assessment Review Panel or the Faculty PVC when the grades for all students in that unit, in that teaching period, are available.

(59) An adjustment of grades will not normally include re-marking all student assessment task/s. Only those students who may be affected will be informed that the process is being undertaken and that original grades may be altered upwards or downwards.

(60) The methods for adjusting grade will be determined by the HE Faculty Assessment Review Panel or Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor and may include:

a. adjusting the range of marks for each grade in a particular unit or assessment task/s for example where the range for a 'C' grade is 65% to <75% and the adjustment is to shift the range to 63% to <73% to compensate for an overly harsh assessment instrument. The mapping of every grade range may be adjusted individually and all decisions must be clearly documented; and
b. exclude the marks from an assessment task with unexplained differences in teaching or assessment prior to determining the final grade. This approach may be appropriate if marks from one assessment task deviate

strikingly from those in other assessment tasks, for example, students achieving greater than 80% on three assessment tasks receive marks of less than 60% on a fourth assessment task. This approach requires careful consideration of the purpose of individual assessments. All decisions must be clearly documented; or

(61) Where an adjustment of grades is undertaken, the Student Administration (SA), in liaison with the School, will provide a report detailing the background, rationale, method and outcomes of the adjustment and actions implemented to avoid any identified problems in the future, to the relevant:

a. Head of School;
b. HE School Assessment Review Panel;
c. HE Faculty Assessment Review Panel;
d. Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor;
e. Faculty Associate Dean Learning and Teaching; and
f. the Student Policy and Complaints.
g. The relevant Faculty Associate Dean, Learning and Teaching is responsible for reporting to the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee, University Learning and Teaching Committees and the Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic.

Publication of Grades

(62) Official final grades will be conveyed to students in accordance with the Grading Policy.

(63) Grades compiled by staff or students or displayed on Learnline are not final. All grades must be reviewed and approved by the relevant HE Faculty Assessment Review Panel prior to determination of the official final grade.

(64) Central examination papers will not be returned to students however, students may discuss the examination with the Unit Coordinator.

Unfinalised Grades

(65) The Academic Administration will notify Unit Coordinators of any unfinalised grades such as Assessment Continuing, three (3) months following the end of the semester. Grades remaining unfinalised four (4) months after the end of the teaching period will be referred to the HE Faculty Assessment Review Panel with a recommendation of awarding a Fail grade.

Past Exam Papers in Library

(66) The Student Administration, Unit Coordinator's and/or relevant Heads of School must ensure that an electronic copy of each examination paper conducted during the Central Examination Period is submitted to the Library. Examination papers must be submitted by the final day of teaching following the final examination for the relevant unit and must not be made available until after the date for completion of Special Examinations.

(67) Multiple-choice sections within examination papers and mid-semester tests may be voluntarily submitted but are not required to be submitted.

(68) Where units have different content for internal and external students, or differ by campus location, examination papers must be submitted with the relevant information clearly identified.

Retention of Assessment

(69) Assessment items not collected by students, other than completed examination papers, may be destroyed in accordance with the University's Records Management – Retention and Disposal Procedure and relevant Records Disposal Schedule.

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	15th January 2022
Review Date	15th January 2022
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Approval Date	14th December 2021
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Responsible Executive	Louise King Provost
Implementation Officer	Louise King Provost
Enquiries Contact	Louise King Provost

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