

Assessment Policy - Interim

Section 1 - Purpose and Context

(1) From 2010 this policy will be phased out and replaced by the [Assessment Policy - Criteria and Standards-Based Assessment](#). For 2009 only, this policy is applicable for level 2, level 3, level 5, and level 7 units.

(2) The University recognises that assessment is an essential part of the teaching and learning process. Assessment influences approaches to study and helps students to allocate their time appropriately. The University undertakes to provide constructive and timely feedback on assessments, in order to help students gain a sense of achievement and progress, an appreciation of the performance and standards expected in a particular discipline or professional area, and to learn from their endeavours.

(3) This policy must be read and understood in conjunction with the [UWS Assessment Guide](#) and University policies, including, but not limited to the:

- a. Academic Advising Policy;
- b. [Assessment Practice - Fundamental Code](#);
- c. [Courses and Units Approval Policy](#);
- d. [Disability Policy](#);
- e. [Examinations Policy](#);
- f. [Graduate Attributes](#);
- g. [Graduation Policy](#);
- h. [Unit Outline - Information Requirements Policy](#);
- i. [Misconduct - Student Academic Misconduct Policy](#);
- j. [Records Management Policy](#);
- k. [Review of Grade Policy](#); and
- l. [Special Consideration Policy](#).

Section 2 - Definitions

Formative and Summative Assessments

(4) A unit may contain assessment tasks that are formative or summative. Formative assessments are designed to provide students with feedback and might not contribute to the final mark and grade. Summative assessments do contribute to the final mark and grade.

Section 3 - Policy Statement

Part A - Responsibility for Assessment

(5) It is the responsibility of the Executive Dean, as well as the Head of School, with support from the Associate Dean

Academic, Heads of Program, and other key academic staff in the School/College to ensure that:

- a. correct and timely processes are followed by the School Academic Committee /College Education Assessment and Progression Committee;
- b. where units are taught across more than one campus/mode, the formal examination must be the same;
- c. quality processes are implemented to ensure consistency in marking standards; and
- d. the relevant School keeps a copy of required assessment tasks within a key program and makes it available to students or staff on request.

Staff

(6) Academic staff carry out their teaching responsibilities under the authority of the Executive Dean and Head of School. Staff have the following responsibilities:

- a. to assess students' work fairly, objectively and consistently and when in doubt consult with the unit coordinator or Head of Program;
- b. to provide students with appropriate, helpful and explanatory feedback on all work submitted for assessment;
- c. to make reasonable accommodation (e.g. length of time to complete) in assessment tasks and examinations for students with special requirements and to seek assistance from the Disabilities Advisers and Counsellors where appropriate and needed;
- d. to ensure deadlines for the submission of examination papers to the Academic Registrar are met; and
- e. to immediately report to the Head of School/Head of Program any instances of student cheating, collusion and/or plagiarism.

Students

(7) Students have a responsibility to:

- a. familiarise themselves with the University policies on Assessment and Examinations;
- b. ensure they read and understand the assessment requirements and note the submission dates, and seek assistance from the lecturer and/or unit coordinator when needed;
- c. notify relevant staff (e.g. lecturer, unit co-ordinator, disability adviser) as soon as possible prior to, or at the beginning of, the teaching session if they wish to have special requirements accommodated;
- d. submit for assessment their own individual and unassisted work, except as otherwise permitted, and understand that cheating, plagiarism, fabrication or falsification of data will be severely dealt with;
- e. behave ethically and appropriately, avoiding any action or behaviour which would unfairly disadvantage or advantage another student; and
- f. ensure that they understand the requirements, including timetables, for examinations and other assessments tasks.

Part B - Assessment Systems and Grades

Assessment Systems

(8) The assessment of a student's work can be criterion-referenced or norm-referenced.

(9) Criterion-referenced assessment is an assessment where an individual's performance is assessed against a set of clearly stated criteria (specific learning outcomes or performance standards). A student receives a mark and a grade in relation to how well they have performed against the criteria. In some cases, a student's work will be assessed as satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

(10) Norm-referenced assessment is an assessment where a student's performance is compared to a larger group. A student receives a mark and a grade in relation to how well they have performed compared with other students. Norm-referencing may result in marks for a single assessment or marks for a group of assessments for a particular unit being moderated or scaled.

(11) A particular unit may contain both criterion-referenced and norm-referenced assessments. Assessment information for each unit is given to students in the Student Unit Outline in accordance with the University's [Unit Outline - Information Requirements Policy](#). SGSM students undertaking a unit of study in 'block' mode will be provided with assessment requirements in the unit outline by the end of the first day of study.

Grading Standards

(12) This section of the policy is designed to ensure consistency of meaning and application of grades across the University and to ensure quality assurance in regard to assessment standards and grades awarded.

UWS Exchange Programs

(13) Students participating in official and approved exchange programs and enrolled in UWS generic exchange units will be awarded either an "S" (Satisfactory) or "U" (Unsatisfactory) grade, as appropriate, upon presentation of their overseas transcript. No translation of aggregated grades from partner universities to a single UWS grade in the generic exchange unit will be undertaken.

Final Grades

(14) The University draws upon the following grades for both undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

Table 1a - Final Grades for units receiving a mark

Grade	Notation	Percentage	Descriptors
High Distinction	H	85-100	Work of outstanding quality, broadly speaking, which may be demonstrated by means of criticism, logical argument, interpretation of materials or use of methodology. This grade may also be given to recognise particular originality or creativity.
Distinction	D	75-84	Work of superior quality demonstrating a sound grasp of content, together with efficient organisation and selectivity.
Credit	C	65-74	Work of good quality showing more than satisfactory achievement.
Pass	P	50-64	Work showing satisfactory achievement.
Fail	F	0-49	Unsatisfactory performance.
Compulsory Fail	CF		Student has failed an assessment component(s) of the unit that must be passed in order to pass the unit. Irrespective of performance in other assessment components, and the percentage mark for the unit, the student has failed the unit.

Table 1b - Final Grades for units not receiving a mark

Grade	Notation	Percentage	Descriptors
Satisfactory	S		Student has met defined criteria at an appropriate level within a specified time. Only used for ungraded assessments and units taken in approved exchange programs.
Unsatisfactory	U		Student has not met defined criteria at an appropriate level within a specified time. Only used for ungraded assessments and units taken in approved exchange programs.

Practicum Fail	PF		Student has failed to satisfy criteria for practicum assessment and will not progress further in the unit (and course if the unit is compulsory). A PF grade must be approved by Head of School and submitted with supporting documentation.
Withdrawn (without academic penalty)	W		Student provides evidence of serious illness or misadventure experienced after the relevant census date.
Absent - Fail	AF		Student has not officially withdrawn from the unit and has failed to complete one or more of the compulsory assessment requirements for the unit.
Continuing	Y		Unit continues over more than one teaching session (including non standard teaching sessions) and final assessment has not been made.

Temporary Grades

(15) All temporary grades should be finalised before the main census date following the initial application of the grade. Where a result is not finalised within the timeframe, an "AF" grade (Absent-Fail) will be recorded. In certain circumstances an "I" grade or "N" grade may continue past the relevant census date when approved by the Head of School. The outstanding result will be finalised by the end of the next teaching period.

Table 2 - Administrative Grades

Grade	Notation	Percentage	Descriptors
Fail - discontinued	E	-	A student has withdrawn from the unit after the relevant census date without authorisation.
Incomplete	I	-	Assessment tasks incomplete due to illness or misadventure.
Deferred Exam	J	-	Due to illness or misadventure, with formal approval granted for the student to sit an alternative to the formal scheduled exam.
Result Pending	N	-	Grade still to be finalised.
Re-assessable Fail	R	-	Re-assessable fail (with the provision for further assignment or other work), which must be converted to Pass or Fail.
Academic credit - Specified	K	-	Academic credit for specified core or elective units.
Academic credit - unspecified	L	-	Academic credit for non specified core or elective units.
Aegrotat Pass	Z	-	Awarded on compassionate grounds because of inability to complete unit.

(16) GPA (Grade Point Average) - refer to the [Graduation Policy](#) - Grade Point Average.

Part C - Assessment Requirements

Number of Assessments within a Unit

(17) The number of assessment items must be consistent with the accredited documentation submitted through the Courses and Units Approval process. Details of each assessment task must be provided in the unit outline provided to students in accordance with the University's [Unit Outline - Information Requirements Policy](#).

(18) All units at introductory level will contain one formal formative assessment task within the first half of the session that provides constructive feedback to students. Units at advanced level will normally contain one formal formative assessment task within the first half of the session that provides constructive feedback to students.

(19) The assessment workload expected of students should be consistent with the unit's credit point value and

complexity of the subject matter.

Weighting of Assessments

(20) Normally there will be more than one item of assessment from which the final mark and grade for a unit is derived. A specific weighting for each item of assessment must be nominated (e.g. 25%). The weighting will not be expressed as a range (e.g. between 20 and 35%).

(21) Normally a unit will not have more than one formal examination administered by the Office of the Academic Registrar during the official examinations period, unless approved by Academic Senate through the Courses and Units Approval process.

(22) The maximum weighting for any one item of assessment will be 65% unless otherwise approved by Academic Senate through the Courses and Units Approval process.

(23) Group work will carry a maximum weighting of 30% unless otherwise approved by Academic Senate through the Courses and Units Approval process.

(24) In the case of Honours and Postgraduate programs the maximum weighting for an assessment or group work may not apply.

(25) The University reserves the right for it to be necessary for a student to pass a particular assessment task or tasks in order to pass the unit (even if the total mark amounts to more than 50%). Where this is the case, it will be clearly stated in the documentation approved through the Courses and Units Approval process for the unit and on the information provided to the student in the unit outline.

Attendance and Assessment

(26) Attendance requirements will be noted in the unit outlines provided for students. It is the student's responsibility to attend classes and maintain their studies. If a student chooses not to attend classes they should be aware that no additional resources will be made available.

Section 4 - Procedures

Part D - Assessment Procedures

Notification to Students of Assessment Tasks

(27) Students will be provided with a unit outline in accordance with the University's [Unit Outline - Information Requirements Policy](#). The unit outline will contain detailed information on the assessment tasks, submission dates and College/School policies (e.g., the penalties for late submission), and the weighting of each task and the basis for assessment (e.g. the criterion if the task is criterion-referenced, or the basis for scaling/moderating if the task is norm-referenced). Students should also be advised of the documentation required if they need to seek special consideration (refer to [Special Consideration Policy](#)).

(28) Any variation in the assessment task/s after assessment information has been provided to students in the unit outline, and that affects all students within a unit, will only be made in exceptional circumstances. The Head of School is to approve such changes, and all students should be formally notified in writing.

(29) A student who enrolls in a unit after teaching has commenced is responsible for obtaining the relevant information on assessments in the unit outline from the Unit Co-ordinator.

(30) Students will be assessed, examined and given results only for those units in which they have enrolled correctly.

At the end of each teaching session, students are advised by the Academic Registrar of their final grade in each enrolled unit.

(31) Teaching or assessment activities will not be conducted during the study recess (Stuvac) for courses taught in the Autumn and Spring sessions.

Submission and Collection of Assessment Materials

(32) All assessments should be accompanied by a student declaration indicating the work, or any part of the work, does not include plagiarism. The assignment coversheet, including this declaration, is available for students to print from the University's website (see also [Misconduct - Student Academic Misconduct Policy](#) clauses Plagiarism).

(33) Where assessment materials are to be submitted electronically via email or the web, alternative arrangements will be made where a student does not have access to the appropriate hardware or software.

Late Submission of Assessments

(34) A student who submits a late assessment will be penalised by 10% per calendar day up to ten [calendar days](#), i.e. marks equal to 10% of the assignment's worth will be deducted as a 'flat rate' from the mark awarded. For example, for an assignment with a possible highest mark of 50, the student's awarded mark will have five marks deducted per late [calendar day](#). Saturday and Sunday each count as one calendar day. Assessment will not be accepted after the marked assessment task has been returned to students who submitted the task on time except where compulsory items of assessment in a unit must be submitted.

(35) Guidelines are available for:

- a. students applying for assignment extensions; and
- b. academic staff dealing with applications from students, for assignment extensions.

Unclaimed Student Assessments

(36) Unclaimed student work for assessment is retained for a period of four weeks after the end of session. Examination papers and final major assessments are kept for a period of 12 calendar months following the end of the relevant teaching session.

Part E - Procedures to Determine Marks for Assessments and Final Grades for the Unit

Determination of Marks and Grades

(37) Students must be advised in the unit outline how all marks and grades are to be determined.

(38) Students must be informed of their numerical mark for every component of assessment (including examinations) in the unit unless the component is assessed as satisfactory/unsatisfactory. A final grade and mark will be released on-line except in the case of a fail grade, where only the grade will be released. Students must be informed where an assessment item will not contribute to the final mark.

(39) Unless otherwise approved, the final assessment mark for each student in a unit shall be determined on the scale of 0 to 100%. Grades will comply with the Grading Standards, refer clauses (12) to (16).

(40) Students must be informed in the unit outline whether any marks gained in part or all of the assessment will be modified or scaled. For example, a student might achieve high marks but fail the unit if a particular assessment task threshold had not been achieved. Moderation must comply with the moderation of results guidelines, which are

distributed to relevant staff.

Moderation of Results

(41) Part or all of the assessment in a unit may be moderated. The distribution of grades within a unit will be approved by the Head of School or nominee and reported to the School Academic Committee. It is expected that Schools will adhere to the guidelines on the moderation of results. Reasons must be provided if the grading distribution falls outside guidelines. The School Academic Committee will provide a report to the College Education Assessment and Progression Committee following each teaching session.

Notification of Results

(42) Examination grades and marks will be available for students to view and print by accessing the online student record system. Results notices will only be printed for identified off-shore programs.

Part F - Circumstances for Consideration of the Re-marking of an Assessment Task

(43) Students will be provided with clear criteria for each assessment item at the beginning of each teaching session. Upon receipt of their marked assessment item, it should be clear to the student the reasons they received the mark or grade given for that item.

(44) If a student does not receive a passing mark for an assessment item and wishes to discuss their result with their lecturer, the student should review the quality of their responses against the assessment criteria prior to arranging a meeting with their lecturer. Normally a meeting with the lecturer should take place no later than one week after the assessment task has been returned.

(45) If at the end of the meeting with the student, the lecturer agrees that one or more of the student's responses to the assessment criteria require re-marking, the lecturer will inform the unit coordinator that a re-mark will be undertaken and the reasons for the re-mark will be documented. The re-marking of an assessment item should be undertaken by the Unit Coordinator or similar level academic. Where a remark is undertaken all comments from the previous marker should be removed or if possible a copy of the submitted assessment item will be provided. Where the assessment task has been a live performance or the assessment of practical or clinical skills matter should be referred to the Head of Program for approval.

(46) If at the end of the consultation, the lecturer does not agree that a re-mark is justified the student will be advised that the assessment item will not be re-marked. The student should be made aware of the current policy provisions for a review of grade at the end of the teaching session.

(47) The outcome of the discussion with the student will be recorded as per the University's [Records Management Policy](#).

Supplementary Assessment in the Final Unit of a Course

(48) Students who have received a fail grade in the final unit of their undergraduate pass degree or coursework postgraduate degree may apply to the Head of School or nominee to undertake a supplementary assessment task for that unit, if the student has passed all other units within the program. This does not apply to Honours programs.

(49) The final unit is a unit taken in the session when the student would have been able to complete their degree but for failure in that unit.

(50) Granting of a supplementary assessment task is not automatic. A supplementary assessment cannot be granted where the grade awarded is the outcome of a determination under the [Misconduct - Student Academic Misconduct](#)

[Policy](#) or the [Misconduct - Student Non-academic Misconduct Policy](#). The student must have completed all assessment tasks for the final unit and failed only one assessment task. Application must be made in writing to the Head of School or nominee within ten working days of the official notification of results.

(51) The supplementary assessment task will take the form, as closely as possible, of the assessment task that was failed. The supplementary assessment task must be approved by the Head of School or nominee. Upon successful completion of a supplementary assessment task, the final grade awarded for the unit can be no higher than a Pass. Where the supplementary assessment task is poorer, the original mark will stand. The grade for the supplementary assessment must be finalised in accordance with the timeline developed annually by the Office of the Academic Registrar for the processing of grades of potential graduands and for the student to be eligible to graduate with the same cohort.

(52) There can be only one supplementary assessment.

Part G - Matters Affecting Assessment

Special Consideration

(53) The University recognises that there will be circumstances beyond a student's control which may impact adversely on their performance. Under such circumstances, a student may ask that Special Consideration be given to the assessment task (or tasks) so affected. Definitions of misadventure and extenuating circumstances relevant to Special Consideration are provided in the [Special Consideration Policy](#).

Part H - Official Results Policy

(54) Official results will be released at the direction of the Academic Registrar after being officially recommended by School Academic Committees and endorsed by the College Education Assessment and Progression Committee.

Notification of a Final Grade

(55) Students will be advised of a final grade for a unit online.

(56) Students will not be provided with a final grade via the telephone or at the Student Centres.

(57) Subsequent change of grade notification will be made available online only.

Provision of Marks to Students

(58) Marks will be recorded on the student management system and may be viewed by accessing the results notice online and on official transcripts for grades of pass or higher. Marks will not apply to Satisfactory (S) and Unsatisfactory (U) grades. For grades in Table 1a, marks will be recorded on the student management system and may be viewed by accessing the results notice online and on official transcripts. Marks will be provided to the Office of the Academic Registrar by Colleges and will be entered on the student management system.

(59) Marks will only be available for online results notices and official transcripts for units taken from 2002 onwards. Marks for Fail (F) and Compulsory Fail (CF) grades will only be available for online results and official transcripts for units taken from 2009.

Part I - Academic Transcripts

(60) An academic transcript will be provided to students at the time of graduation.

(61) An academic transcript may also be requested on payment of a fee. If the student is identified as eligible and

approved to graduate this will be noted on the transcript. The academic transcript must be ordered and paid for on-line, using Ipay. Details are on the Transcripts web page.

Section 5 - Guidelines

(62) [Students applying for assignment extensions.](#)

(63) Academic staff dealing with applications from students, for assignment extensions.

[Dealing with Students unable to attend a compulsory unit component.](#)

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	5th August 2009
Review Date	31st December 2009
Approval Authority	Academic Senate
Approval Date	30th July 2009
Expiry Date	31st December 2009
Unit Head	Brian Stout Pro Vice-Chancellor, Learning and Teaching b.stout@westernsydney.edu.au
Author	Martin Derby
Enquiries Contact	Brian Stout Pro Vice-Chancellor, Learning and Teaching b.stout@westernsydney.edu.au