

Assessment Policy - Criteria and Standards-Based Assessment

Section 1 - Purpose and Context

(1) This Policy replaces the University's Interim Assessment Policy, from:

- a. 1 January 2009 for all Level 1 and Level 4 level units;
- b. January 2010 for all units.

(2) The Assessment Policy is closely aligned with the [UWS Academic Standards and Assessment Framework](#), which provides an overarching approach to curriculum design, delivery and support. The Framework identifies key principles against which the University plans and measures its success and identifies areas for improvement. The Assessment Policy is an example of how the Framework has been applied to assessment.

(3) UWS uses a criteria and standards-based approach to student assessment. Criteria and standards-based assessment requires that criteria be identified and performance standards be described so that students know the level of performance required for each assessment task.

(4) In addition to the policy, procedures and guidelines, the University has developed a [Teaching and Learning - Fundamental Code](#), which it expects staff and students to uphold.

(5) 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. [Award Courses and Units Approval Policy](#);
- c. [Disability Policy](#);
- d. [Examinations Policy](#);
- e. [Graduate Attributes](#);
- f. [Graduation Policy](#);
- g. [Indigenous Education Policy](#);
- h. [Misconduct - Student Academic Misconduct Policy](#);
- i. [Records Management Policy](#);
- j. [Review of Grade Policy](#); and
- k. [Special Consideration Policy](#).

Section 2 - Definitions

(6) For the purpose of this policy:

- a. Assessment tasks - include, but are not limited to: essays, tests, examinations, laboratory, clinical or field practicum, projects, compilations, productions, presentations, performances, web-based discussion;

- b. Cohort - refers to all students correctly enrolled in a unit of study;
- c. Criteria - are specific performance attributes or characteristics that the assessor takes into account when making a judgement about the student response to the different elements of the assessment task;
- d. Fair assessment - is assessment that is feasible for the students' level of progression through their program, has transparent processes (ie marked according to articulated criteria and standards) and provides timely and constructive feedback;
- e. Mixed cohort unit - involves students being taught together, such as:
 - i. a postgraduate cohort and an undergraduate cohort;
 - ii. an advanced undergraduate program cohort and a standard undergraduate program cohort; or
 - iii. a language unit comprised of both native and non-native speakers.
- f. Moderation - means regulating the marking of individual markers to achieve consistency in the application of unit objectives, performance standards and marking criteria (Dunn, L, Morgan, C, et al., The Student Assessment Handbook: New Directions in Traditional and OnLine Assessment (2004) RoutledgeFalmer, London, 259.);
- g. Standards - are statements describing the level or quality of student performance of criteria, in an assessment task;
- h. Valid assessment - refers to the explicit and clear alignment between intended learning outcomes and the assessment methods used to measure student achievement of those outcomes; and
- i. Threshold requirement - a component of a unit that must be passed in order to pass the unit.

Section 3 - Policy Statement

(7) At UWS assessment is based on established criteria and standards, not ranking, and will:

- a. guide and encourage effective student learning. Assessment tasks will align with learning outcomes which reflect unit objectives and relevant graduate attributes;
- b. fairly, validly and reliably measure student performance of intended learning outcomes; and
- c. define and maintain academic standards.

(8) Each unit will have:

- a. unit learning outcomes that support the relevant course learning outcomes, and have been informed by the UWS graduate attributes in the context of the overall program and the discipline area;
- b. assessable tasks developed to measure student achievement of unit learning outcomes. The logic of the assessment tasks will be explained to the students in the form of a rationale;
- c. standards developed by applying professional judgements about expected levels of student performance on assessment criteria. Standards will be benchmarked against acceptable levels of performance within the University, discipline and/or profession; and
- d. clear criteria and standards of performance developed for each assessment task, based on criteria published in the Learning Guide. These criteria and standards will be described so that students are informed about the level of performance required for each assessment task.

(9) The number and nature of assessment tasks will be consistent with the unit documentation approved through the Courses and Units Approvals process. Variations will only be permitted to the extent that they are permitted by the Courses and Units Approvals process.

(10) Threshold requirements may be set for individual units where they are included in the approved unit documentation. Where threshold requirements are not met and: a) the student has achieved a total mark of 50 or

more for the unit, the appropriate grades are Compulsory Fail or Practicum Fail; b) the student has failed the unit overall, the appropriate grade is Fail.

(11) Where a unit contains a mixed cohort of students, different assessment tasks may be used for the separate groups but they must still align with the unit objectives.

(12) Moderation will occur:

- a. before marking assessment tasks to ensure markers have a shared understanding of standards;
- b. after marking to ensure markers have applied standards consistently. This may include:
 - i. spot checking at random; and
 - ii. reviewing borderline results.

(13) Mathematical scaling of marks for an assessment task is not permitted after students have received marks for that assessment task but in exceptional circumstances the final marks for a unit may be adjusted for the whole cohort (see Clause 66).

(14) Attendance: the University expects academic staff to encourage students to *regularly and actively participate in scheduled educational activities (such as lectures, tutorials, practicals, on line discussions)* [Teaching and Learning - Fundamental Code](#). For assessment purposes:

- a. Marks may not be awarded for attendance alone.
- b. Where attendance is identified as an essential component in the assessment of a unit (for example, for professional accreditation), attendance will be recorded but no marks will be assigned. Attendance will be an ungraded essential component of the unit (a threshold requirement). Where attendance is an ungraded essential component of the unit, attendance records must be retained by the Unit Coordinator and students must be notified of the attendance requirement in the Unit Outline and Learning Guide.
- c. Participation can only contribute to an assessment item provided the item and criteria include participation in a way that is consistent with the principles for assessment. No more than 10% of the marks in any unit may be awarded for general class participation. Explicit criteria for assessment of this participation must be stated in the Learning Guide and explained by the Unit Coordinator at the start of each unit.

Part A - Responsibility for Assessment

Executive Dean and Head of School

(15) It is the responsibility of the Executive Dean, as well as the Head of School, with support from the Associate Dean (Academic), and Heads of Program to ensure that:

- a. assessment methods and practices of all academic staff, including part-time and sessional staff, comply with this Policy and other related University policies and the Teaching and Learning - Fundamental Code;
- b. correct and timely processes are followed by the School Academic Committee /College Education, Assessment and Progression Committee's;
- c. where units are taught across more than one campus/mode the assessment tasks and marking are to be equivalent;
- d. quality processes are implemented to:
 - i. ensure timely and constructive feedback on assessment tasks; and
 - ii. promote consistency in marking standards across units and academic programs;
- e. assessment tasks are aligned with learning outcomes and provide students with a range of experiences in assessment, and are implemented on a whole of program basis; and

- f. assessment tasks are staged so that students are not over-loaded and have sufficient time to absorb and make use of assessment feedback in subsequent assessment tasks in the unit. Ordinarily one assessment task will be administered within the first half of the teaching session.

Academic Staff

(16) Academic staff carry out their teaching responsibilities under the authority of the Executive Dean and Head of School. Academic staff are responsible for:

- a. providing students with a unit outline and learning guide in accordance with the University's [Unit Outline and Learning Guides Policy](#);
- b. ensuring assessment tasks are designed to measure students' achievement of relevant learning outcomes; and
- c. developing clear criteria and standards against which the level of student performance in the assessment task can be measured.

(17) In developing assessment tasks, academic staff are to:

- a. ensure assessment methods are valid for the relevant field of education; and
- b. assess the performance of students' work fairly, objectively and consistently against the criteria and standards.

(18) In providing feedback to students, academic staff are to:

- a. ensure that feedback is timely and:
 - i. justifies the mark given against the stated assessment criteria and standards; and
 - ii. identifies what could have been done to achieve a higher mark;
- b. make every effort to be available to students seeking information regarding the determination of their results for a reasonable period after assessment tasks have been returned and after the final results are released;
- c. ensure adequate records of marks and any relevant comments on individual student assessment tasks are kept in accordance with the University's [Records Management Policy](#);
- d. maintain the principles of the University's [Privacy Policy](#) in relation to students (refer to the section Information Protection Principles);
- e. ensure deadlines for the submission of examination papers to the Academic Registrar are met; and
- f. in instances of suspected student cheating, collusion and/or plagiarism, ensure actions taken are consistent with the University's [Misconduct - Student Academic Misconduct Policy](#).

Students

(19) Students have a responsibility to:

- a. familiarise themselves with the University's policies on Assessment and Examinations;
- b. ensure they read and understand the assessment requirements and note the due dates and methods for submission of assignments provided in the Learning Guide, seeking clarification from the Lecturer or Unit Coordinator if required;
- c. actively engage with the learning activities and resources provided in their units and by the University to help them prepare their assessment tasks;
- d. follow the lecturer's guidelines and instructions for format and submission of assignments; and
- e. when enrolling in a unit after teaching has commenced, to obtain the relevant information on assessments in the unit from the Unit Coordinator.

(20) Students are required to:

- a. inform the lecturer if they have difficulty submitting their assignment electronically;
- b. keep a hard copy of their assessment material; and
- c. notify relevant staff (eg lecturer, Unit Coordinator, Disability Advisor) as soon as possible prior to, or at the beginning of, the teaching session if they wish to have special requirements accommodated.

(21) In relation to assessment tasks, students must:

- a. undertake all assessment tasks ethically, including avoiding any action or behaviour which would unfairly advantage or disadvantage any student, in accordance with the [Misconduct - Student Academic Misconduct Policy](#);
- b. submit, on time, their own individual work;
- c. collect all marked assessment tasks in sufficient time to learn from the feedback provided; and
- d. ensure they understand the requirements, including timetables, for examinations and other assessment tasks.

Part B - Number and Weighting of Assessments

(22) Assessments that carry a weighting towards the final mark for the unit will be advised in the unit outline and Learning Guide and will be consistent with the documentation approved through the Courses and Unit Approvals process.

(23) Determining the amount of assessment given should rely on a balance between effective measurement and effective learning; assignments should be comprehensive enough to measure achievement, but not so excessive as to detract from learning.

(24) Normally there will be more than one assessment task from which the final mark and grade for a unit is derived. A specific weighting for each item of assessment must be nominated (eg: 25%). The weighting will not be expressed as a range (eg: between 20 and 35%). Normally a unit will not have more than one formal examination administered by the Registrar's Office during the official examination period, unless approved by Academic Senate through the Courses and Units Approval process.

(25) 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.

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

(27) The University reserves the right to require a student to pass a particular assessment task or tasks in order to pass a unit (even if the total mark achieved is more than 50%). Where this is the case, it will be clearly stated in the documentation approved by Academic Senate through the Courses and Units Approvals process for the unit and on the information provided to the student in the unit outline and Learning Guide.

Part C - Final Grades

(28) Students will be advised in the Learning Guide how all final marks and grades are to be determined.

(29) Normally a student will receive a final mark and grade in relation to how well they have performed against the assessment criteria and standards (refer Table 1). In some units a student's work may be assessed in relation to how well they have performed against the assessment criteria and standards without a percentage mark being awarded (refer Table 2).

(30) For all grades in Table 1, a final mark in a unit will be determined on the scale of 0 to 100%.

(31) There are some units, including some professional competency units, where individual assessment tasks may receive marks but the final grade will not receive a mark, for example, where components require achievement at a very high level to be deemed "satisfactory". The standards required for the achievement of a "satisfactory" final grade for these units will be included in the Learning Guide.

UWS Exchange Programs

(32) 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.

(33) Performance standards will be allocated in the Learning Guides provided to students. The University uses the following final grades for both undergraduate and postgraduate courses:

Table 1 - Final Grades for Units Receiving a Mark

Grade	Notation	Percentage or Descriptor
High Distinction	H	85 - 100
Distinction	D	75 - 84
Credit	C	65 - 74
Pass	P	50
Fail	F	0 - 49
Compulsory Fail	CF	Student has failed a threshold assessment component(s) of the unit other than the practicum, but has achieved a total mark of 50 or more for the unit.

Table 2 - Final Grades for Units not Receiving a Mark

Grade	Notation	Descriptor
Satisfactory	S	Student has met standards at an appropriate level within a specific time. Only used for ungraded assessments and units taken in approved exchange programs.
Unsatisfactory	U	Student has not met defined standards 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 standards 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 the 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

(34) 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 session.

Table 3 - Administrative Grades

Grade	Notation	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.

(35) Grade Point Average (GPA) - refer to the University's [Graduation Policy](#) - Grade Point Average.

Supplementary Assessment in the Final Unit of a Course

(36) Students who fail the final unit of their undergraduate course, or taught postgraduate course, leaving them with only that unit to pass to complete the course, may apply to undertake a supplementary assessment item (or items) for that unit. This does not apply to Honours programs.

(37) Supplementary assessments 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](#).

(38) To be granted supplementary assessment in the final unit, the student must have:

- a. completed each of the unit's assessment items and either:
 - i. failed only one of those items; or
 - ii. failed assessment items, for which the total marks available comprise 50% or less of the marks available in the unit.

(39) Application must be made in writing to the Head of School or nominee within 10 working days of the official notification of results. The Head of School or nominee will decide whether to grant a supplementary assessment or assessments.

(40) The supplementary assessment item (or items) will take the form, as closely as possible, of the assessment task that was failed. The supplementary assessment task (s) must be approved by the Head of School or nominee. Upon successful completion of a supplementary assessment task (s), the final grade awarded for the unit will be "Pass" with a mark of 50. Where the supplementary assessment task (s) is / are 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.

(41) There can only be one attempt at supplementary assessment in the final unit.

Section 4 - Procedures

Support to Teaching Staff in Developing Assessment Tasks

(42) To assist teaching staff develop criteria and standards-based assessment tasks, the University will provide an assessment guide.

Notification to Students of Assessment Tasks, Due Dates and Feedback

(43) Any variation in the assessment task/s after assessment information has been provided to students in the unit outline or Learning Guide, 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 are to be formally notified in accordance with normal University communication protocols.

(44) Due dates of assessment tasks are not permitted in the study recess (Stuvac) for courses taught in the Autumn and Spring sessions.

(45) Students will be informed of their numerical mark for every component of assessment in the unit unless the component is assessed as satisfactory/unsatisfactory.

(46) The results of the final examination in a unit will be available from the School that teaches the unit after the official grades and marks have been provided to students online by the Office of the Academic Registrar.

Submission and Collection of Assessment Materials

(47) All assessments must be accompanied by a completed assignment cover sheet, which includes a student declaration confirming that the task has been undertaken ethically and that the work does not include plagiarism. For more information on plagiarism (refer to the University's [Misconduct - Student Academic Misconduct Policy](#)).

(48) Students should collect their marked assessment task/s with sufficient time to understand why the mark/grade has been awarded and to learn from the feedback provided by the marker.

(49) Staff who wish to conduct assessment tasks in vUWS should do so in accordance with Teaching Development Unit guidelines.

(50) Unclaimed student work for assessment will be retained for a period of one month after the end of the relevant teaching session. Examination papers and final major assessments are kept for a period of 12 calendar months following the end of the relevant teaching session.

Late Submission of Assessments

(51) Except where an extension has been approved for the submission of an assessment task by the Unit Coordinator, or in line with the University's [Special Consideration Policy](#), the following penalties will apply to the late submission of an assessment task:

- a. a student who submits an assessment task after the due date for submission will be penalised by 10% per calendar day up to 10 days, ie marks equal to 10% of the assignment's worth will be deducted as a 'flat rate' from the mark awarded for each calendar day the assignment is late up to 10 calendar days. Saturday and Sunday each count as one calendar day; and
- b. the assessment will not be accepted after the marked assessment task has been returned to students who submitted the assessment task by the due date.

(52) Guidelines are available for:

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

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

(53) Students will be provided with criteria and standards for each assessment task prior to the task being undertaken. Upon receipt of their marked assessment task, it should be clear to the student, based on their performance against the assessment criteria and standards, why they achieved the mark/grade given, and how they could have achieved a better mark/grade.

(54) A unit may incorporate routine resubmission of work as part of the assessment process to enable students the opportunity to improve their performance against the criteria and standards.

(55) If a student does not receive a passing mark for an assessment task and wishes to discuss their result with the Unit Coordinator, the student should review the quality of their responses against the assessment criteria and standards prior to arranging a meeting with the Unit Coordinator. Normally, a meeting with the unit coordinator should take place no later than one week after the marked assessment task is available for collection by the student.

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

(57) If, at the end of the consultation, the unit coordinator does not agree that a re-mark is justified the student will be advised that the assessment task will not be re-marked. The student is to be made aware of the provisions for a review of grade at the end of the teaching session in the University's [Review of Grade Policy](#).

(58) The outcome of the discussion with the student will be recorded as per the University's [Academic Advising Policy](#).

Part E - Matters Affecting Assessment

Special Consideration

(59) The University recognises that there will be circumstances beyond a student's control that may impact adversely on their performance. Under such circumstances, a student may make application for Special Consideration for the assessment task/s so affected. Definitions of misadventure and extenuating circumstances relevant to special consideration are provided in the University's [Special Consideration Policy](#).

Part F - Official Results

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

Notification of a Final Grade and Provision of Marks to a Student

(61) Students will only be advised online of final grades for a unit and subsequent changes of final grades for a unit. Students will not be provided with final grades for a unit by any other means. A final grade is awarded in relation to

the total number of marks given for assessment tasks in a particular unit.

(62) For grades in Table 1, 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.

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

Circumstances when all Grades in a Unit may be Reviewed

(64) Final grades in a unit are endorsed by the Head of School or nominee and forwarded to the relevant School Academic Committee, which recommends them to the College Education, Assessment and Progression Committee for approval.

(65) Unit Coordinators may be asked to justify final grades allocated to a cohort.

(66) If a significant number of students in a cohort receive extremely high or extremely low grades, or if there are significant inconsistencies between groups undertaking the unit in different locations or by different modes, the relevant College Education, Assessment and Progression Committee may, on the basis of evidence, and in consultation with the school, adjust the final marks.

Review of a Final Grade in a Unit

(67) To seek a review of a final grade in a unit, students must follow the University's [Review of Grade Policy](#).

Part G - Academic Transcripts

(68) An Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement which incorporates academic transcript details will be provided to students at the time of graduation.

(69) 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 online, using Ipay. Details are on the Transcripts web page.

Section 5 - Guidelines

[UWS Assessment Guide](#)

[Students applying for assignment extensions](#)

(70) 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	18th October 2011
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