



# Assessment Policy and Procedure

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## 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy and procedure is to outline the process of collecting relevant evidence and making informed judgements to evaluate student learning outcomes. Polytechnic Institute Australia ('PIA') has designed this policy and procedure to ensure that all student assessment tasks are appropriately designed to determine the extent to which students have met the learning and skills outcome requirements within a unit of study, and to assist teaching staff to make decisions about the performance of individual students within a unit of study.

## 2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy and procedure applies to all students at PIA, and to all staff involved in the assessment process.

## 3 POLICY STATEMENT

### Rationale for Assessment

- 3.1 Assessment is undertaken:

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- to promote, enhance, and improve the quality of student learning through feedback that is clear, informative, timely, constructive and relevant to the needs of the student;
  - to measure and confirm the standard of student performance and achievement in relation to a unit of study's defined learning objectives;
  - to reward student effort and achievement with an appropriate grade; and
  - to provide relevant information in order to continuously evaluate and improve the quality of the curriculum and the effectiveness of the learning and teaching process.
- 3.2 Criterion-referenced procedure compares the students' performance with a set of standards that are provided to students at the commencement of the semester. Feedback given to students by lecturers using criterion-referenced assessment provides information to students regarding the level of their achievement in relation to their own established goals and helps to focus learning on the intended learning outcomes. Final grades are an expression of how closely students' work has approximated the intended learning outcomes. Where deficiencies exist, students are made aware of the areas of those deficiencies and how to address them, thus making progression to advanced levels possible. Where a unit is of a professional nature and/or is largely evaluated using a criteria-based grading scheme, the Grades Ratification Committee are not obliged to ensure a normal distribution is achieved. In a norm-referenced procedure, the distribution of scores gained from marking student scripts is a relative rather than absolute measure of quality. Students are measured in relation to the achievement of their peers. Norm-referenced assessment is NOT to be used at PIA.

### Forms of Assessment

- 3.3 Some of the assessment is formative; it is specifically intended to assist students to identify weaknesses in their understanding so that they may improve their understanding and enhance their learning. Other assessment is summative; its objective is primarily to pass judgment on the quality of a student's learning, generally in terms of assigned marks and grades. Furthermore, critical reflection on the outcomes of assessment tasks, both formative and summative, can inform lecturers and students, not only about the quality of student learning but also about the effectiveness of teaching

Normally, assessments of a unit of study will:

- 3.3.1 have a minimum of two (2) but no more than four (4) different forms of assessment;
  - 3.3.2 have no single assessment task worth more than 50% of the total mark for the unit of study;
  - 3.3.3 multiple choice, true/false, and short answer questions are limited to 100 level units;
  - 3.3.4 multiple choice questions may be included in 200 and 300 level units as weekly hurdle tasks that must be completed and passed, but which do not count toward the final result of the unit;
  - 3.3.5 include an early formative assessment task within the first four (4) weeks of the study period; and
  - 3.3.6 limit group assessment to no more than 30% of the total of the total mark for the unit of study.
- 3.4 The forms of assessment to be utilised for each unit of study will be clearly set out in the unit outline.
- 3.5 Forms of assessment may include the following:

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- **Written examinations** – may take the form of short answer questions, multiple-choice questions and essays, where appropriate.
- **Written assignments** – may take the form of essays, literature reviews, reports, work logs, portfolios, etc.
- **Seminars/presentations** – normally based around formal discussion groups where students will be delegated particular topics for research and will be required to present their findings at subsequent seminars. Marks are allocated according to the standard of these presentations.
- **Practical assignments** – students may be required to complete a series of practical assignments designed to test students' abilities under "real world" conditions. The use of software and simulations may also be part of learning and teaching and form part of the formal assessment procedures for an unit of study.

### Notification of Assessment

- 3.6 A fundamental aspect of developing a unit of study is the specification of the prescribed assessment tasks in a way that relates them directly to the unit objectives (including expected learning outcomes), the course structure, the teaching methods to be used, and the learning strategies to be fostered.
- 3.7 Lecturers should ensure that students are fully informed, in writing, by the end of the first week of the of the study period, about unit objectives and expectations, including the assessment requirements.
- 3.8 The details of all assessment tasks should be stated clearly in the Unit Outline and include the following: a statement of the objectives of the unit; its assessment plan, including weights allocated to each assessable component and related submission dates; deadlines, sanctions and penalties; and the objectives of the unit. These should all be communicated in a way that is appropriate to the academic level of the students.

### Timing and Weight of Assessment

- 3.9 Students are expected to reach the objectives of a unit of study progressively throughout the course of the unit. They should be set tasks during the study period that allow their progress to be evaluated against established criteria. Such tasks should contribute to the final assessment in a unit of study.
- 3.10 Assessment tasks should be designed carefully, first, to keep in proportion student time commitment and the weight of the assessment task in the overall assessment, and second, to reflect, as far as possible, the importance of each task in determining the effectiveness of students having met the unit objectives. This might mean that an important task, such as a final examination, is weighted heavily. Care should be taken to avoid the imposition of a heavy imbalance of assessment load toward the second half of the study period. Assessment should reflect scaffolding of learning within the unit and the level of the unit (100, 200, 300).
- 3.11 Usually, one or more assessment tasks should be set, submitted, marked and returned to students by the mid-point of a unit. Although students need regular feedback on their progress, set assessment tasks should be kept to the minimum that is sufficient to enable students to make judgements about their progress. Due dates for assessment tasks should be well separated in time so as to give students periods of time for reflective learning.
- 3.12 In some disciplines, students are expected to practise skill development continuously. To evaluate students' ability to perform such on-going tasks, consideration should be given to strategies for self-assessment. In this way, students can obtain evidence concerning their level of understanding of the work.

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- 3.13 Apart from final examination scripts, all assessed work should be returned to the student, preferably in a class context where the student has the right to query the assessment result for clarification, either then or at a later time.
- 3.14 Lecturers are encouraged to provide feedback to students on all assessment events, including final examinations.
- 3.15 Unit Outlines must advise students at the beginning of a unit of study how all assessment results are to be combined to produce an overall mark for the unit. In particular, the unit outline should make expressly clear:
- the weight of each task in contributing to the overall mark;
  - the formulas or rules used to determine the overall mark;
  - the minimum standards that are applied to specific assessment tasks, and the consequences if such standards are not met (including failure to submit particular tasks);
  - the rules regarding penalties applied to late submissions; and
  - the precise details of what is expected in terms of presentation of work for assessment.
- 3.16 The Unit Outline will make clear to students that the aggregated mark for the unit of study may be moderated. Moderation may result, in some cases, in a variation of the final grade awarded to the student for the unit of study which is inconsistent with the individual marks awarded to the student for individual assessment items. Emphasis should be placed on appropriate referencing conventions and requirements, the degree of cooperation permitted between students, what constitutes academic dishonesty, and the consequences of engaging in academic dishonesty, as outlined in the *Student Academic Integrity and Honesty Policy and Procedure*.

### Requirements to Pass an Unit

- 3.17 To Pass an unit the following need to be met:
- All assessment tasks MUST be attempted (you must submitted an attempt); and
  - In units that have a final examination, a minimum mark of 40% must be achieved.
- Units where assessment tasks are not attempted and/or a mark of less than 40% will be given a Fail (F) grade.

## 4 PROCEDURES

### Submission of Assessment Items

- 4.1 Students are required to submit all papers in electronic format to Turnitin to assess the level of similarity. Details of the approved formats must be detailed in the unit outline. Submission of unapproved formats will result in the assessment item being given a zero (0) mark and a Fail grade.
- 4.2 Students will have the ability to make multiple submissions to Turnitin and access to the similarity reports generated.
- 4.3 Students are required to submit the similarity report generated with their assessment item via Moodle.

### Penalties for Late Submission and Extensions

- 4.4 An assessment item submitted after the assessment due date, without an approved extension or without approved mitigating circumstance, will be penalised.
- 4.5 The standard penalty is the reduction of the mark allocated to the assessment item by 10% of the total mark applicable for the assessment item, for each day or part day that the item is late (a "day" for this purpose is

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defined as any day on which campus administration is open). Assessment items submitted more than ten (10) days after the assessment due date are awarded zero marks.

- 4.6 Extensions to assignment deadlines based on mitigating circumstances shall be at the discretion of the Discipline Head, and will be granted in writing. Mitigating circumstances are circumstances outside of the student's control that have had an adverse effect on the student's work or ability to work. Applications for extensions must be made before the assignment is due.

### Special Consideration

- 4.7 This section does not apply to final examinations, see the Supplementary Examination Policy and Procedure.
- 4.8 Students whose ability to submit or attend an assessment item is affected by sickness, misadventure or other circumstances beyond their control, may be eligible for special consideration. No consideration is given when the condition or event is unrelated to the student's performance in a component of the assessment, or when it is considered not to be serious.
- 4.9 Students must apply in writing to Discipline Head/Student Services for special consideration within three (3) days of the due date of the assessment item or examination. When considering the application for special consideration, the Discipline Head may take into account one or more of the following:
- the severity of the event;
  - attendance in the unit;; and
  - any history of previous applications for special consideration, especially where they indicate a chronic problem.
- 4.10 If an application for special consideration is accepted, any one of the following outcomes may be appropriate:
- no action is taken;
  - additional assessment or a supplementary examination is undertaken. Additional assessment may take a different form from the original assessment. If a student is granted additional assessment, the original assessment may be ignored at the discretion of the Unit Coordinator. Consequently, a revised mark based on additional assessment may be greater or less than the original mark;
  - marks obtained for the completed assessment tasks are pro-rated to achieve a final percentage result;
  - the deadline for assessment is extended; or
  - the student is allowed to discontinue from the unit of study without failure, provided it is prior to the Census Date.
- 4.11 PIA will provide alternative assessment tools for those students who require a different method of assessment to demonstrate their knowledge and abilities.

### Assessment Feedback

- 4.12 Assessment feedback is to be provided within 14 calendar days (2 weeks) of the due date for the submission of the assessment task. For final examinations, if the unit has one, the lecturer must be available for a period of time for scheduled student consultation, to go over their final examination paper for feedback after the final results for the unit are released.

### Reasonable Adjustment

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- 4.13 Students with a disability may request reasonable adjustment to an assessment task to accommodate their disability, in accordance with the *Disability Policy and Procedure*. Adjustments to assessment must take into account the special characteristics of the student. Any adjustments made must be “reasonable” so that they do not impose an unjustifiable hardship upon PIA. A request for reasonable adjustment is made by the student in writing to the Dean.

### Requirements for Successful Completion of an Unit of Study

- 4.14 To pass a unit of study, students must achieve 50% overall in the unit and where there is a final exam the final exam must be passed at 40%.

### Grades

- 4.15 During each unit of study, students will be provided with an evaluation of their individual performance with reference to the criteria for each assessment task. Student performance in individual units of study shall be graded in accordance with the following guidelines:

Grade	Definition
Advance Standing Granted Code: AS	Credit has been granted for the unit of study following an application and its approval.
High Distinction Code: HD Mark range: 85% and above	Complete and comprehensive understanding of the unit content; development of relevant skills to an outstanding level; demonstration of an extremely high level of interpretive and analytical ability and intellectual initiative; and excellent achievement of all major and minor objectives of the unit.
Distinction Code: D Mark range: 75-84%	Very high level of understanding of the unit content; development of relevant skills to a very high level; demonstration of a very high level of interpretive and analytical ability and intellectual initiative; and comprehensive achievement of all major and minor objectives of the unit.
Credit Code: C Mark range: 65-74%	High level of understanding of the unit content; development of relevant skills to a high level; demonstration of a high level of interpretive and analytical ability and achievement of all major objectives of the unit; some minor objectives not fully achieved.
Pass Code: P Mark range: 50-64%	Adequate understanding of most of the basic unit content; development of relevant skills to a satisfactory level; adequate interpretive and analytical ability and achievement of all major objectives of the unit; some minor objectives not achieved.
Fail Code: F Mark range: below 50%	Unsatisfactory performance, below the minimum expected level. This grade characterises work which shows a significant lack of understanding of the topic or its context, and is therefore unsatisfactory.

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Fail Non-Engaged Code: FNE Mark range: <15%	Unsatisfactory performance, overall mark of less than 15% demonstrates no engagement with their studies during the teaching period.
Withdrawal (Failure) Code: WF	Withdrew from the unit after the census date.

### Publication of Results

- 4.16 All results must be reviewed and properly approved before publication. The will sit at the end of each study period to approve the results prior to publication.
- 4.17 Once results have been approved, the Dean will ensure that the approved mark and grade is recorded in the student database against the relevant unit of study and students are notified of their results. The Dean will compile a report of the results and table these at the next meeting of the Academic Board. Should any major concerns be raised by the Learning and Teaching Committee regarding a mark or marks in any unit, the results will be shown as WU (result unavailable) until the matter has been resolved.

### Review of an Assessment Decision

- 4.18 A student may request a review of an assessment decision. In the first instance, students should approach the lecturer, where appropriate, to discuss their concerns about the assessment decision.
- 4.19 Where the issue regarding the assessment decision is unable to be resolved at this level, a request for a review may be made in writing on the *Review of Results Application Information* and the *Grade Appeal Request Form* and lodged with the Discipline Head within five (5) working days of formal notification of the assessment result. This review constitutes a formal academic appeal and review of the grade for the unit.
- 4.20 The seven (7) grounds upon which the student may request a review of an assessment decision are detailed on the *Review of Results Application Information* and the *Grade Appeal Request Form*. Grounds outside these will not be considered.
- 4.21 Students should note that each review against an assessment decision is determined on its own merits without reference to other applications.
- 4.22 Students should note that the new grade as a result of the review is the final grade they will receive.
- 4.23 The Discipline Head Student Services will normally respond to the request for a review of an assessment decision in writing within ten (10) working days and may confirm or vary the original decision.
- 4.24 All decisions relating to reviews of assessment decisions are sent to the Dean, who compiles an annual report for review by the Learning and Teaching Committee.

## 5 DEFINITIONS

- 5.1 Terms not defined in this document may be in the PIA glossary.

## 6 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

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## Documents

Disability Policy and Procedure  
Grade Appeal Request Form  
Monitoring and Moderation of Grades Policy and Procedure  
Student Academic Integrity and Honesty Policy and Procedure  
Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure  
Unit Outlines

## Higher Education Standards Framework

- 6.1 This policy and procedure complies with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015, Standard 1.3, which states:
3. Methods of assessment or monitoring that determine progress within or between units of study or in research training validly assess progress and, in the case of formative assessment, provide students with timely feedback that assists in their achievement of learning outcomes.
- 6.2 This policy and procedure also complies with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015, Standard 1.4, which states:
2. The specified learning outcomes for each course of study encompass discipline-related and generic outcomes, including:
    - a) specific knowledge and skills and their application that characterise the field(s) of education or disciplines involved;
    - b) generic skills and their application in the context of the field(s) of education or disciplines involved;
    - c) knowledge and skills required for employment and further study related to the course of study, including those required to be eligible to seek registration to practise where applicable; and
    - d) skills in independent and critical thinking suitable for life-long learning.
  3. Methods of assessment are consistent with the learning outcomes being assessed, are capable of confirming that all specified learning outcomes are achieved and that grades awarded reflect the level of student attainment.
  4. On completion of a course of study, students have demonstrated the learning outcomes specified for the course of study, whether assessed at unit level, course level, or in combination.

## National Code 2018

- 6.3 The National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018, Standard 10 states that:
- 10.2 The registered provider's internal complaints handling and appeals process must:
    - 10.2.1 include a process for the overseas student to lodge a formal complaint or appeal if a matter cannot be resolved informally

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- 10.2.2 include that the provider will respond to any complaint or appeal the overseas student makes regarding his or her dealings with the registered provider, the registered provider's education agents or any related party the registered provider has an arrangement with to deliver the overseas student's course or related services
- 10.2.3 commence assessment of the complaint or appeal within 10 working days of it being made in accordance with the registered provider's complaints handling and appeals process and policy, and finalise the outcome as soon as practicable
- 10.2.4 ensure the overseas student is given an opportunity to formally present his or her case at minimal or no cost and be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings
- 10.2.5 conduct the assessment of the complaint or appeal in a professional, fair and transparent manner
- 10.2.6 ensure the overseas student is given a written statement of the outcome of the internal appeal, including detailed reasons for the outcome
- 10.2.7 keep a written record of the complaint or appeal, including a statement of the outcome and reasons for the outcome.
- 10.3 If the overseas student is not successful in the registered provider's internal complaints handling and appeals process, the registered provider must advise the overseas student within 10 working days of concluding the internal review of the overseas student's right to access an external complaints handling and appeals process at minimal or no cost. The registered provider must give the overseas student the contact details of the appropriate complaints handling and external appeals body.
- 10.4 If the internal or any external complaints handling or appeal process results in a decision or recommendation in favour of the overseas student, the registered provider must immediately implement the decision or recommendation and/or take the preventive or corrective action required by the decision, and advise the overseas student of that action.

## 7 FEEDBACK

- 7.1 PIA staff and students may provide feedback about this document by emailing [policy@pia.edu.au](mailto:policy@pia.edu.au).

## 8 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Administrator	Dean

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