



STUDENT ASSESSMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. Overview

The purpose of this policy is to outline the process of collecting relevant evidence and making informed judgements to evaluate student learning outcomes.

Skyline Higher Education Australia (“SHEA”) has designed this policy 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 subject and to assist teaching staff to make decisions about the performance of individual students within a subject.

2. Rationale for assessment

The rationale for assessment is to:

1. Promote, enhance, and improve the quality of student learning through feedback that is clear, informative, timely, constructive and relevant to the learning needs of the student;
2. Measure and confirm the standard of student performance and achievement in relation to a subject’s defined learning outcomes;
3. Reward student effort and achievement with an appropriate grade;
4. Provide relevant information in order to continuously evaluate and improve the quality of the curriculum and the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process.

3. Forms of assessment

Some assessment is formative; it is specifically intended to monitor student learning to provide ongoing feedback that can be used by students to improve their learning, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and target areas that need work. It can also help educators and other support staff to recognise where students are struggling, and address problems immediately. Formative assessment has some marks associated with the task to encourage students to participate. The early assessment tasks in subjects, such as quizzes, will be completed in the tutorial. Other assessment is summative; its objective is primarily to evaluate student learning by comparing ‘high stakes’ assessment tasks against specific standards or rubrics to evaluate and measure progress towards achievement of learning outcomes. Summative assessment results are recorded as marks or grades that are then factored into a student’s permanent academic record. Educators also provide constructive and timely feedback on summative assessment tasks to help students improve their learning and achieve the required learning outcomes. Furthermore, critical reflection on the outcomes of assessment tasks, both formative and summative, can inform educators and students, not only about the quality of student learning and achievement but also about the effectiveness of teaching.

Normally, the assessment of a subject will:

1. Have a minimum of two but no more than four different forms of assessment;
2. Have no single assessment task worth more than 50% of the total mark for the subject (except for capstone subjects);
3. Include an early formative assessment task within the first study period to identify the need for additional support for individual students¹ (except for capstone subjects);
4. Limit group assessment to 30% (contribution and participation) of the total mark for the subject.

¹ Refer also section 4 of the *Student Progression and Exclusion Policy and Procedure*

The forms of assessment to be utilised for each subject will be clearly set out in the learning management systems (LMS) at the commencement of each subject.

Types of assessment may include:

- a. Problem-based tasks (either individually or team)
- b. Case studies
- c. Presentations
- d. Report
- e. Peer and self-assessment
- f. Quizzes
- g. Project (individual and in teams)

For guidelines on assessment word count weightings and equivalencies refer to Appendix 1.

4. Notification of assessment

A fundamental aspect of developing a subject is the specification of the prescribed assessment tasks in a way that relates them directly to the subject objectives and learning outcomes, the course structure, the teaching methods to be used, and the learning strategies to be fostered. Educators should ensure that students are fully informed by the end of the first week of the study period, about subject objectives and learning outcomes, study expectations, and assessment requirements.

The details of all assessment tasks should be stated clearly in the *Subject Outline* including the subject's assessment plan, the weighting of each assessable component, its marking criteria or rubrics, and submission dates.

5. Timing and weight of assessments

5.1 Students are expected to achieve the learning outcomes of a subject progressively throughout the duration of the subject. 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 subject.

5.2 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 subject learning outcomes. This might mean that an important task, such as a final assessment, 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 both the level of the subject and the credit points assigned. Academic integrity should include designing assessments to avoid contract cheating (see Student Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure)²

5.3 Normally, one or more assessment tasks should be set, submitted, marked, and returned to students by the mid-point of a subject. Although students need regular feedback on their progress, set assessment tasks should be kept to a minimum that is sufficient to enable students to make judgements about their progress. Due dates for assessment tasks should be well separated in time to give students periods of time for reflective learning that are free from the pressure engendered by a looming deadline.

² Good Practice Note: Addressing contract cheating to safeguard academic integrity
<https://www.tegqa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/good-practice-note-addressing-contract-cheating-safeguard-academic>

5.4 In some courses, depending on the discipline, students are expected to practise skill development continuously. To evaluate students' ability to perform such as 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 and skill development, while avoiding the stress of frequent formal appraisal by an assessor.

5.5 Apart from examination scripts, all assessed work should be returned to the student giving the opportunity for the student to query the assessment result for clarification either then or at a later time before the finalisation of grades. Educators are encouraged to provide constructive and timely feedback to students on all assessment events including final examinations.

5.6 *Subject Outlines* should advise students at the beginning of a study period how all assessment results are to be combined to produce an overall mark for the subject. In particular, the subject outline should make expressly clear:

- a) the weight of each task in contributing to the overall mark;
- b) the marking criteria or rubrics used to determine the overall mark;
- c) minimum standards that are applied to specific assessment tasks, and the consequences if such standards are not met (including failure to submit particular tasks);
- d) rules regarding penalties applied to late submissions; and
- e) precise details of what is expected in terms of presentation of work for assessment.

The *Subject Outline* should also make clear to students that the aggregated mark for the subject will be moderated. Moderation may result, in some cases, in a variation of the final grade awarded to the student for the subject which is inconsistent with the individual marks awarded to the student for individual assessment items.

5.7 Emphasis should be placed on appropriate referencing conventions and requirements, on the degree of cooperation permitted between students, and on what constitutes academic dishonesty and the consequences of committing it as outlined in the *Student Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure*.

6. Submission of assessment items

Students are required to submit assessment items at the time and date specified in the *Subject Outline*. Assessment items submitted after the due date will be subject to a penalty unless the student has been given prior approval in writing for an extension of time to submit that item.

Assessments should be submitted by the due date using the methods (for example, the LMS) specified in the *Subject Outline*.

7. Penalties for late submission

An assessment item submitted after the assessment due date, without an approved extension or without approved mitigating circumstances, will be penalised. 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 defined as any day on which campus administration is open). Assessment items submitted more than ten days after the assessment due date are awarded zero marks.

Extensions to assessment deadlines based on mitigating circumstances shall be at the discretion of the educator and must be granted in writing. Mitigating circumstances are those outside of the student's control that have had an adverse effect on the student's work or ability to work.

8. Special consideration

Students whose ability to submit or undertake 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 there is a lack of evidence.

Students must apply in writing to the Course Coordinator for special consideration within three days of the due date of the assessment item or exam with supporting evidence.

When considering the application for special consideration, the Course Coordinator may take into account one or more of the following:

- a) the student's performance in other assessment tasks in the subject;
- b) the severity of the event by examining the supporting evidence;
- c) the student's academic standing in other subjects and in the course; and
- d) any history of previous applications for special consideration, especially where they indicate a chronic problem.

If an application for special consideration is accepted, any one of the following outcomes may be appropriate:

- a) no action is taken;
- b) 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 Course Coordinator. Consequently, a revised mark based on additional assessment may be greater or less than the original mark;
- c) marks obtained for the completed assessment tasks are pro-rated to achieve a final percentage result;
- d) the deadline for assessment is extended;
- e) the student is allowed to discontinue the subject without failure. This is unlikely to occur after a final assessment has taken place.

When reviewing requests for special consideration, particular attention will be given to the progression and completion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Other students at risk may come from disadvantaged and low socio-economic groups such as refugees, neurodiverse students and those with a disability who may need more targeted support.

9. Assessment feedback

To minimise the number of requests for reviews of an assessment decision and to provide feedback on formative assessment that assists students to achieve the learning outcomes for a subject, SHEA will ensure that students are provided with constructive and timely feedback from educators that enables them to understand the reason for their results for each assessment. Students will receive feedback within two weeks of assessment submission.

10. Reasonable adjustment

Students with a physical or mental disability may request reasonable adjustment to an assessment task to accommodate their disability. Adjustments to an assessment must consider the special characteristics of the student. Any adjustments made must be 'reasonable' so that they do not impose an unjustifiable hardship upon SHEA.

A request for reasonable adjustment is made by the student in writing to the educator for the subject affected.

Making a reasonable adjustment will involve varying the procedures for conducting an assessment, for example:

- a) allowing additional time for the completion of an assessment;
- b) extending deadlines for an assessment;
- c) varying question and response modalities for an assessment;
- d) providing or allowing additional resources in examinations.

11. Requirements for successful completion of a subject

Students must make a serious attempt at all assessment tasks and achieve at least 50% of the total marks to pass the subject. Students must achieve a mark of at least 50% in their final assessment.

12. Resubmission

Where a student has completed all assessment tasks and marginally fails a subject (i.e., has achieved an overall score of 46-49%) the Course Coordinator may recommend that the student be offered the option of completing additional assessable work which, if completed at the prescribed standard as outlined in section 11, will result in the student passing the subject. The grade awarded after the additional assessment is finalised is limited to P or F. If the student does not take up the opportunity to complete additional assessment work the grade remains as an F.

13. Grades

Students will receive a grade for each subject in which they are enrolled. The final grade will be a moderation of the marks awarded for each assessment item.

During each subject, students will be provided with an evaluation of their individual performance with reference to the marking criteria or rubric for each assessment task. Student performance in individual subjects shall be graded in accordance with the following grading definitions:

Grade	Definition
High Distinction (outstanding performance) Code: HD Mark range: 85% and above	Comprehensive understanding of the subject 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 learning outcomes of the subject.
Distinction (very high level of performance) Code: D Mark range: 75-84%	Very high level of understanding of the subject 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 learning outcomes of the subject.

Grade	Definition
Credit (high level of performance) Code: C Mark range: 65-74%	High level of understanding of the subject content; development of relevant skills to a high level; demonstration of a high level of interpretive and analytical ability and achievement of all learning outcomes of the subject.
Pass (competent level of performance) Code: P Mark range: 50-64%	Adequate understanding of most of the basic subject content; development of relevant skills to a satisfactory level; adequate interpretive and analytical ability and achievement of all learning outcomes of the subject.
Non-graded Pass Code: NGP	Successful completion of a subject assessed on a pass/fail basis, indicating a satisfactory understanding of subject content; satisfactory development of relevant skills; satisfactory interpretive and analytical ability and achievement of all learning outcomes of the subject.
Fail (not meet academic standards) (attempted all assessments but did not achieve 50%) Code: F Mark range: below 50%	Inadequate understanding of the basic subject content; failure to develop relevant skills; insufficient evidence of interpretive and analytical ability; and failure to achieve some or all learning outcomes of the subject.
Fail (non-submission) (did not attempt all assessments and did not achieve 50%) Code: FN Mark range: below 50%	Inadequate understanding of the basic subject content; failure to develop relevant skills; insufficient evidence of interpretive and analytical ability; and failure to achieve some or all learning outcomes of the subject.
Withdraw with Failure Code: WF	Withdrawn from the subject after the census date.
Withdraw without Failure Code: WO	Withdrawn from the subject before the census date or after the census date with special circumstances.
Credit Granted Code: RPL	Credit has been granted for the subject following an application and its approval.

14. Publication of results

All results must be reviewed and properly approved before publication. The Learning and Teaching Committee will nominate three of its members (but not any student representative) to meet at the end of each study period as the Results Review Committee to approve results prior to publication. At least one of the members will be an independent member of the Learning and Teaching Committee.

Once results have been approved the Dean will ensure that the approved mark and grade are recorded in the student management system against the relevant subject and students notified of their results by text message.

15. Review of an assessment decision

A student may request a review of an assessment decision. A request for a review may relate to the decision regarding an individual assessment item or a final grade for a subject.

In the first instance, students should approach the educator, where appropriate, to discuss their concerns about the assessment decision prior to the final grading of results. 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 prescribed form and lodged with the Course Coordinator within five working days of formal notification of the assessment result.

The grounds upon which the student may request a review of an assessment decision are:

- a) that the student believes that an error has occurred in the calculation of the grade; and
/or
- b) a demonstration that the assessment decision is inconsistent with the published assessment requirements or assessment marking criteria.

Students should note that each review against an assessment decision is determined on its own merits without reference to other applications.

The Course Coordinator will normally respond to the request for a review of an assessment decision in writing within ten working days and may confirm or vary the original decision. 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.

If a student remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the review of an assessment decision they may utilise SHEA's grievance handling procedures.

16. Related documents

- Subject Outlines

17. Version history

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Sections modified
1.0	Academic Board	12 July 2022	Document creation and initial approval
1.1	Dean	17 November 2022	Updated Section 3 <i>Forms of Assessment</i> to clarify formative assessment and Section 9 with 2 weeks to provide feedback on assessment. Section 11 updated to include a serious attempt for each assessment task. Added Appendix 1 "Guidelines on Assessment Word Count Weightings and Equivalencies"
2	Academic Board	21 February 2024	Addition of Appendix 2 Grade Point Average (GPA) Calculation Guideline including benchmarking

Document owner: Dean

Appendix 1

Guidelines for Assessment Word Count Weightings and Equivalencies

The purpose of this document is to specify the 'workload' or 'word count' equivalency for assessment tasks that carry the same percentage of total marks in a subject.

For example, a **Report** and a **Case Study Analysis and Presentation** are both worth **30%** and should therefore reflect the same 'volume of work' such that:

- The word count for the **Report** is 3,000 words which equates to 30% of the total mark.
- The word count for the **Analysis of a Case Study** is 2,000 words which equates to 20% of the total mark while the 5-minute **Presentation** equates to 10% of the total mark (or an equivalence of 1,000 words).
- Therefore, each **30%** assessment has an equivalent word count of **3,000 words**.

Wordcount guidelines	Weighting
500 words (or equivalent e.g., short quiz, blog, short answer questions)	5%
1,000 words (or equivalent e.g., 5-minute presentation)	10%
1,500 words (or equivalent e.g., 10-minute presentation)	15%
2,000 words (or equivalent)	20%
2,500 words (or equivalent)	25%
3,000 words (or equivalent)	30%
3,500 words (or equivalent)	40%
4,000 words (or equivalent)	45%

Appendix 2

Grade Point Average (GPA) Calculation Guideline

The Grade Point Average (GPA) is an internationally recognised calculation for the average result of all grades achieved throughout a student's course. The GPA is a numerical calculation, weighted by credit points, of the mean grades received over a defined study period (trimester/year) or course and is calculated by dividing the Grade Points achieved by the Credit Points achieved for each trimester/year/course.

All grades, including fail grades and grades from repeated units, are given a numerical value, and then those values are averaged, which calculates the student's GPA.

The SHEA GPA is calculated on a seven-point grading scale where 7.0 is the highest and 0.0 is the lowest achievement.

Grade	Grade Points	Result Range
HD	7	85-100%
D	6	75-84%
C	5	65-74%
P	4	50-64%
F, FN, WF	0	below 50%

The GPA calculation adds the grade points of all the subjects completed in one trimester/course and then divides it by the number of subjects completed in that same degree. The GPA includes all subjects, as well as passed and failed results.

Withdraw without Failure (WO) and Credit Granted (RPL) are omitted and do not affect the GPA.

The maximum GPA any student can achieve is a 7.

Example:

If a student has completed three subjects (one trimester) in one degree, with one pass (4), one fail (0), and one distinction (6), their GPA would be calculated as:

$$4 + 0 + 6 = 10.$$

Then, divide the ten by the three subjects studied, giving the student a GPA of **3.3**.

Benchmarking

There are different calculations for the GPA used in higher education institutions globally. In Australia, generally, institutions calculate a GPA out of 4 or 7. The calculation out of 4 can disadvantage students because a 4 is the grade for both an HD and a D. A grade calculated out of 7 provides a more accurate calculation. For example, a 7 is for an HD and a 6 is for a D. Some institutions use a weighted average mark (WAM), including all marks, including those from a fail grade (whereas GPA calculates zero for any fail grades).

A GPA may be necessary if a student wishes to study a higher education course in Australia or another country³. A strong GPA can assist students in obtaining employment, particularly entry-level jobs, where a GPA may be used as a criterion in screening applicants. A strong GPA is important for entry into graduate programs⁴.

³ See an explanation here: <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/advice/what-gpa>

⁴ See here: <https://kosmate.com.au/what-is-a-good-gpa-in-australian-university/>

The University Admissions Centre (UAC) assesses applications for admission to undergraduate and postgraduate (coursework) study for domestic students. The GPA calculation is out of 7, and UAC assigns a numeric value of 0 to all academic fail grades⁵. The University of Newcastle uses the same approach, with an online tool to calculate a GPA out of 7.⁶ The Australian Catholic University (ACU)⁷ and ANU⁸ use the same calculation. These institutions form the basis of SHEA's GPA calculation.

⁵ See <https://www.uac.edu.au/future-applicants/admission-criteria/tertiary-qualifications>

⁶ See [GPA calculator / Results / Assessment and exams / Study Essentials / Current Students / The University of Newcastle, Australia](#)

⁷ See <https://www.acu.edu.au/handbook/handbook-2021/policies-and-general-information/2021-academic-regulations>

⁸ See <https://www.anu.edu.au/students/program-administration/assessments-exams/grade-point-average-gpa>