

## STUDENT ASSESSMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

### Policy

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

Study Group Australia Pty Ltd (“the Institute”) 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 unit of study and to assist teaching staff to make decisions about the performance of individual students within a unit of study.

### Purpose of Assessment

The purpose of assessment is:

- 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;
- to provide relevant information in order to continuously evaluate and improve the quality of the curriculum and the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process.

### Forms of Assessment

Normally, assessment of a unit of study will involve a number of different forms of assessment. Some 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. The forms of assessment to be utilised for each unit of study will be clearly set out in the documentation given to students at the commencement of each unit of study.

Forms of assessment may include:

- **Written Exams** - may take the form of short answer questions, multiple-choice questions and essays, where appropriate.
- **Written Assignments** - may take the form of essays, reports, case studies and portfolios.
- **Presentations** - normally based around formal discussion groups where students will be delegated particular topics for research and will be required to present their findings.
- **Practical Assignments/Projects** - students may be required to complete a series of practical assignments or a project designed to test students’ abilities under ‘real world’ conditions.

### Notification of Assessment

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. Lecturers will ensure that students are fully informed, in writing, by the end of the first week of the term, about unit objectives and expectations, including the assessment requirements. The details of all assessment tasks will be stated clearly in the unit outline, which will include a statement of the objectives of the unit; its

assessment plan, including weights allocated to each assessable component and the links to the learning outcomes for each assessable component; related submission dates; deadlines, sanctions and penalties in a way that is appropriate to the academic level of the students.

### **Timing and Weight of Assessments**

Students are expected to reach the objectives of a unit of study progressively throughout a term. They will be set tasks during the term that allow their progress to be evaluated against established criteria. Such tasks will contribute to the final assessment in a unit of study.

Assessment tasks will 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 term.

One or more assessment tasks will 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 will be well separated in time so as to give students periods of time for reflective learning that are free from the pressure engendered by a looming deadline.

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, while avoiding the stress of frequent formal appraisal by an examiner.

Apart from examination scripts, all assessed work will be returned to the student, preferably in a class context. The student has the right to seek clarification of the assessment result.

Unit outlines will 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 will make expressly clear:

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

The unit outline will also make clear to students that the aggregated mark for the unit of study will be moderated by Unit Coordinators. 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 will 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 Institute's *Academic Dishonesty Policy and Procedure*.

### **Submission of Assessment Items**

Students are required to submit assessment items at the time and date specified in the unit outline. Assessment items submitted after the due date will be subject to a penalty unless the State Course Coordinator has given prior approval in writing for an extension of time to submit that item or mitigating circumstances apply.

Assessments should be submitted in the form specified in the unit outline or as notified by the Lecturer. Where assessment items are submitted electronically, the date and time the email was received will be considered the date and time of submission. Written papers or other physical submissions are to be time and date stamped as a record of receipt.

### **Penalties for Late Submission**

An assessment item submitted after the assessment due date, without an approved extension or without approved mitigating circumstance, will be penalised. The standard penalty is the reduction of the mark allocated to the assessment item by 5% 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 the relevant campus administration is open).

Extensions to assignment deadlines based on mitigating circumstances shall be at the discretion of the Lecturer or Course Coordinator, and will be granted in writing. Mitigating circumstances are circumstances outside of the student's control that have had an adverse affect on the student's work or ability to work.

### **Assessment Feedback**

Timely feedback to the student throughout the semester is considered an essential component of the teaching and learning process. Feedback will be provided by a variety of methods including informal discussions in lectures and tutorials, review of individual marked coursework and review of marked examination papers on request.

### **Special Consideration**

Students whose ability to submit or attend an assessment item is affected by sickness 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. Students submit a Special Consideration Form (which has been completed by all the relevant parties) to the relevant State Course Coordinator for special consideration within 3 days after the due date of the assessment item or exam.

When considering the special consideration application the Course Coordinator (or nominee) may take into account one or more of the following conditions:

- the student's performance in other assessment in tasks in the unit;
- the circumstances, background, nature and severity of the event;

If an application for special consideration or misadventure is lodged, any one of the following outcomes may ensue:

- 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 will be ignored;
- marks obtained for the completed assessment tasks are aggregated or averaged to achieve a percentage result;
- the deadline for assessment is extended; or
- the student is allowed to discontinue from the unit without failure. This is unlikely to occur after an examination or final assessment has taken place.

The student will be advised in writing of the final decision regarding their application for special consideration at the earliest opportunity. The grade will be recorded as SA if a supplementary assessment is approved. This is a temporary grade only and must be finalised before the end of the following term. The grade awarded after resolution of SA is not limited.

### Additional Assessment/Additional Examination

Where a student marginally fails a unit of study (i.e. usually has achieved a score of 46-49%) the student will be offered the option of completing additional assessable work which, if completed at the prescribed standard, will result in the student passing the unit. 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 resolves to an F.

If the additional assessment task relates to the final examination for a unit the temporary grade awarded will be AE, otherwise it will be entered as AA. All AA and AE grades must be finalised before the end of the following term.

### Grades

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
High Distinction (outstanding performance) Code: HD Mark range: $\geq 85\%$	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 (very high level of performance) Code: D Mark range: $\geq 75$ and $< 85\%$	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 (high level of performance) Code: C Mark range: $\geq 65$ and $< 75\%$	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 (competent level of performance) Code: P Mark range: $\geq 50$ and $< 65\%$	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.
Non-graded Pass Code: NGP	Successful completion of a unit assessed on a pass/fail basis, indicating satisfactory understanding of unit content; satisfactory development of relevant skills; satisfactory interpretive and analytical ability and achievement in all major objectives of the unit.
Fail (unsatisfactory performance) Code: F Mark range: $< 50\%$	Inadequate understanding of the basic unit content; failure to develop relevant skills; insufficient evidence of interpretive and analytical ability; and failure to achieve some or all major and minor objectives of the unit.
Fail - No Assessment Submitted Code: FNS	Did not present any work for assessment, to be counted as failure.

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Supplementary Assessment Code SA	A final grade is yet to be awarded for the unit as a supplementary assessment task or supplementary exam has been approved due to special consideration. This is a temporary grade only and must be finalised before the end of the following term.
Additional Assessment Code AA	A final grade is yet to be awarded for the unit. Student has marginally failed the unit and is offered an additional assessment task.
Additional Examination Code AE	A final grade is yet to be awarded for the unit. Student has marginally failed the unit and is offered an additional examination.
Withdraw With Failure Code: WF	Cancelled enrolment in the unit after the final date for withdrawal without failure.
Withdraw Without Failure Code: AW	This grade may be awarded to students who withdraw from a unit after census date and under special or compassionate circumstances. In these cases the grade is awarded at the discretion of the Assessment Subcommittee.
Advanced Standing Code: AS	Credit has been granted for the unit of study following an application for Advanced Standing.
Grade Pending Code:GP	Grade Pending is used when a substantive grade cannot be awarded because all information to make the final assessment is not yet available. The grade must be resolved by the next meeting of the assessment sub-committee.

### **Rounding of Grades**

Individual assessment results shall be rounded to one decimal place. Aggregate marks for a unit of study shall be rounded to a whole number.

### **Moderation**

Moderation is the process of ensuring that assessment is valid, reliable and fair, and refers to the processes of moderating grades and moderating individual assessment items.

The National Course Coordinators are responsible for the moderation of grades, the appointment of Unit Coordinators and reporting the final outcomes of moderation activity to the Teaching and Learning Committee.

The moderation of grades for each student in a unit of study seeks to ensure that the standard of assessment is uniform. The Unit Coordinator will consider samples from students at all locations studying a particular unit to determine the fairness of the application of the assessment criteria for all students, the appropriateness of the assessment scheme and all summative assessment items for students in a unit of study.

The Unit Coordinator will compile a report to the National Course Coordinator for each set of moderated assessment items covering distribution of marks, highlighting any adjustments to marks, making recommendations for change to assessment tasks and/or relevant feedback to lecturers and markers.

The Unit Coordinator will conduct moderation activities to ensure that:

- the standard of achievement is uniform, particularly for units being delivered to different groups of students by different staff in different locations;
- each assessment task matches the specified outcomes and performance criteria listed in the unit outline;
- where feasible, assessment tasks within units are integrated;
- assessment is consistent through a process such as “double-marking” a sample of submitted tasks;
- all relevant resources required for conduct of assessment are available.

Where the same unit is offered across different courses, unit moderation will be common across all courses to ensure consistency of standards.

As part of the Moderation Process scaling can be applied by the Assessment Committee if the circumstances warrant. Any scaling must be documented in the minutes of the Assessment Sub Committee.

### **Review of Grades**

A student may request a review of a grade. In the first instance, students are encouraged to approach the Lecturer, to discuss their concerns about their grade. A request for a review must be made in writing and lodged with the relevant State Course Coordinator within 10 working days of formal notification of the grade.

The grounds upon which the student may request a review of a grade are that the student believes that:

- an error has occurred in the calculation of the mark;
- the grade is inconsistent with the published assessment requirements or assessment criteria.

The following reasons are **not** appropriate grounds for requesting a review of a grade:

- close proximity of the result to another level of grade;
- a comparison with the performance of another student or students;
- the student's belief that the result is not commensurate with their effort;
- issues relating to the permanent residency status or potential status of the student;
- the visa status of the student;
- financial difficulties experienced by the student;
- issues relating to the employment prospects of the student.

Students should note that each review against a grade is determined on its own merits without reference to other applications.

The State Course Coordinator will normally respond to the request for a review of a grade in writing within 10 working days and may confirm or vary the original decision. All decisions relating to review of grades are sent to the National Academic Director who compiles an annual report for review by the Teaching and Learning Committee.

### **Academic Transcript**

All grades, including grades for repeated subjects, with the exception of AW, will appear on the student's Academic Transcript. AW grades will not appear on the student's Academic Transcript. The student's Academic Transcript will include the approved grade and a final approved mark for each subject.

### Appeals

A student may lodge a formal complaint within 10 working days of the result of review of grade. Formal complaints must be made as prescribed in the appeals process outlined in the *Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure*.

### Credit for Cross Institutional Study

A student enrolled in a Study Group Australia Pty Ltd diploma may apply to study an equivalent subject at another institution (Cross institutional study) provided the subject is not being offered at in Study Group Australia Pty Ltd in that session and provided the subject is approved for study by the relevant Course Coordinator.

### Version Control

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