

Student Assessment Policy and Procedure

1. Policy Statement and Purpose

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 (SGA) 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.

2. Scope

This policy and procedure applies to student assessment in Foundation¹, ELICOS or Higher Education courses delivered and awarded by a SGA College listed in the footer of this document and is for use by students and staff.

This policy outlines the principles of assessment and in this context has also been designed also for use by teachers engaged in the processes of curriculum development and quality review, the development and review of assessment and in marking, moderation and feedback processes.

3. Definitions

Within this document the following meanings apply:

Academic Director means the lead senior academic staff member for the College (or their delegate, e.g. Course Coordinator/Head of Program). May also be referred to as Director Academic Programs, Dean, Program(s) Manager or College program lead.

Assessment is the process of gathering a range of evidence about students' learning and performance that enables judgements to be formed as to whether a student has achieved the specified level of knowledge, skill and/or proficiency of application and/or performance in relation to the learning outcomes appropriate for the level of the course in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) and as specified learning outcomes for the unit of study and course as set out in the course materials/syllabus and unit learning outlines.

Head of College means the most senior staff member for the College (or their delegate). May also be referred to as Centre Director, Principal, or Campus Director.

Moderation is the review of assessment grading to ensure consistency in grading.

Reasonable adjustment is the amendment of assessment procedures or materials to enable their application with students who have specific needs or disabilities.

Special Consideration in Assessment is an equity measure to ensure that the assessment of students may, in permitted circumstances, take account of unforeseeable adverse circumstances that impact negatively on individual students' ability to demonstrate their learning achievements. It is a measure that may be used sparingly and only where genuine need is proven.

Unit means a unit of study in a higher education course or a unit or subject in an ELICOS or Foundation course.

4. Policy

4.1 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.

4.2 Forms of Assessment

Assessment is a central and integrated component of the teaching and learning process. Assessment is carried out for a range of purposes, including:

- Diagnostic – often a form of pre-assessment that allows a teacher to determine students' individual strengths, weaknesses, knowledge, and skills prior to instruction. It is primarily used to diagnose student difficulties and to guide lesson and curriculum planning;
- Formative - intended to assist students to identify weaknesses in their understanding, so that they may improve their understanding and enhance their learning.; and
- Summative – intended to enable 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 can inform teachers and students about the quality of the assessment process and the student learning experience.

Assessment tasks are designed to assess relevant generic skills, such as English proficiency, academic literacy, numeracy and information skills, graduate attributes as well as specific subject/discipline knowledge and skills.¹ Furthermore, critical reflection on the outcomes of assessment tasks can inform teachers and students about the quality of the assessment process and the student learning experience.

Assessment tasks draw upon a diversity of methods, forms and modes in order to address the needs, learning styles and abilities of all students. The key criterion for choice among methods should be appropriateness to the learning outcomes.

Forms of assessment may include:

- **Written Exams** - may take a variety of forms including short answer questions, multiple-choice questions, problem solving 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.

¹ In the case of ELICOS courses which are provided under a direct entry arrangement to a tertiary education course, formal measures must be in place to ensure that assessment outcomes are comparable to other criteria used for admission to the tertiary education course of study, or for admission to other similar courses of study.

4.3 Forming the Learning of Assessment Requirements

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.

The forms of assessment to be utilised for each unit and the requirements for learner success should be made clear should 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.

The assessment tasks should be criteria based rather than norm referenced, and may include individual or collaborative achievement or both as appropriate. The overall strategy should be to develop in students the ability to evaluate the quality of their own work in order to equip them to function as professionals with a commitment to life-long learning.

In summary assessment tasks should be designed to ensure assessment processes are:

Valid and Reliable – Assessment items must be valid and reliable. A valid assessment accurately reflects a student’s knowledge, skills or understanding. A reliable assessment produces stable and consistent results.

Fair – The process of assessment should not discriminate against or disadvantage any student or group of students. Students are not disadvantaged in assessment by the mode of delivery in which they are studying.

Reasonable – Assessment workload is reasonable in the context of work volume and time expectations.

Authentic and Relevant – Where possible, assessment includes real world and relevant application of knowledge and skills.

Aligned – Assessment items must align with learning outcomes and learning activities within the subject/unit of study. Assessment is appropriate for the level of the subject/unit and aligns with the student’s stage of development.

Transparent – All assessment tasks should be clearly reference to criteria or standards against which student work will be assessed. Where possible, descriptors of the various levels of achievement will be included.

Enabling – Where relevant to the aim and timing of assessment tasks students receive feedback that is timely, constructive, specific and respectful feedback, which clearly indicates how they can improve.

Compliant – Assessment practices meet the theory, knowledge and skills requirements associated with the relevant AQF level, all other relevant regulatory frameworks, standards and professional body requirements.

4.4 Timing and Weight of Assessments

Teachers shall ensure students are informed, in writing, by the end of the first week of the term, about unit objectives and expectations, including the assessment requirements.

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, to keep in proportion student time commitment and the weight of the assessment task in the overall assessment, to recognise student learning is gradual and

cumulative, and 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 Integrity Policy and Procedure*. (or equivalent document, e.g. *Academic Dishonesty Policy and Procedure*, *Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure*).

4.5 Student Submission of Assessment Items

Students are required to submit assessment items at the time and date and in the manner specified in the unit outline. Assessment items submitted after the due date will be subject to a penalty unless the relevant Course Coordinator (or delegate) 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 teacher. Where assessment items are submitted electronically, the date and time the email was received or the assessment was lodged via the LMS 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.

When submitting assignments, students are acknowledging that they have read, understood and accepted SGA's policy provisions on academic integrity and misconduct, and that they are fully aware

of the consequences of cheating and plagiarism, including a mark of zero (0) or a reduced mark for this unit or other relevant penalty/ies or educative response(s).

4.6 Plagiarism Detection System

In many units, SGA will also use a plagiarism detection system to electronically scan assessment submitted by students. This tool allows teachers to compare assessment items of students in order to identify instances where work has been copied from another source without appropriate referencing. Students will be advised via their unit outline, through their course notes or by their teacher if they are required to submit their assessment via this mechanism.

4.7 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. Where the assessment item is to be submitted electronically, all days count).

Extensions to assignment deadlines based on mitigating circumstances shall be at the discretion of the relevant teacher or course coordinator (as appropriate), 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.

4.8 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.

4.9 Group Assessments

In certain circumstances, it may be appropriate to set group-based assessment tasks. In such tasks, the criteria for assigning individual/group grades must be clearly documented. Under no circumstances should any group-based unit assessment, counting toward the aggregate mark for the unit, be placed entirely in the hands of the group members. Work prepared by groups and presented as a single entity should be allocated weighting commensurate with the complexity of the task but not count for more than a third or less of the final unit grade unless approved by the most senior academic leader of the course.

4.10 Reasonable Adjustment Provisions in Assessment

Assessment procedures, materials and tools may be subject to reasonable adjustment where a student has a specific disability or special need in accordance with the relevant accessibility policies. In determining the reasonableness of adjustment to assessments, the requirements of the learning outcomes of the unit are taken into account.

4.11 Special Consideration

Special consideration in assessment is an equity measure to ensure that the assessment of students may, in permitted circumstances, take account of unforeseeable adverse circumstances that impact negatively on individual students' ability to demonstrate their learning achievements. It is a measure that is to be used sparingly and only where genuine need is proven.

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 relevant parties) to the relevant Course Coordinator (or delegate) for consideration within 3 days after the due date of the assessment item or exam.

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

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

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.

4.12 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 will be entered as AE, otherwise it will be entered as AA. All AA and AE grades must be finalised before the end of the following term.

4.13 Grading Standards

Assessment is carried out at both the individual task level and at the level of the unit or subject. Assessment tasks within units and subjects are marked and graded according to specific marking criteria to indicate the level(s) of achievement or proficiency. Overall final assessment results reflect the cumulative achievement of students in all assessment tasks. A number of administrative grades may be applied where results are unavailable due to special circumstances and/or the approval of extensions of time.

For Foundation and ELICOS courses results reflect the percentage (0%-100%) results awarded for the unit studied. No letter grades are applied.

The grades awarded for studies in a higher education qualification awarded by SGA are presented in Appendix A.

4.14 Rounding of Grades

The patterns of results, including percentages of students achieving each grade or band of percentage scores in each subject and changes made to the results given by teachers, must be recorded accurately by teaching staff. Individual assessment results shall be rounded to one decimal place. Aggregate marks for a unit of study shall be rounded to a whole number.

4.15 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.

It is the responsibility of all Colleges to ensure that internal and external moderation processes are maintained in order to ensure consistency of assessment feedback, judgments and grading, especially where courses are delivered across campuses. Moderation processes must be consistent with SGA's Assessment Moderation Policy and Procedure.

In summary, the course coordinator (or delegate) is responsible for the moderation of grades, the appointment of unit coordinators (or delegate) and reporting the final outcomes of moderation activity through the College's relevant committee processes applicable to the course (e.g. the College level academic committee for Foundation and ELICOS courses and the Teaching and Learning Committee of SGA's Academic Board for higher education courses).

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 relevant course coordinator (or delegate) 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 teachers 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 may be applied by the authorised committee if the circumstances warrant. Any scaling must be documented in the meeting notes/minutes of the committee.

4.16 Review of Grades

A student may request a review of a grade / result awarded for an assessment or the unit.

In the first instance, students are encouraged to approach the teacher to discuss their concerns about their grade. A request for a review must be made in writing and lodged with the relevant Course Coordinator (or delegate) 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 Course Coordinator (or delegate) 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. A student may appeal a grade review decision through the SGA complaints and appeals Policy and Procedure (see below).

All decisions relating to review of grades are sent to the relevant Academic Director (or delegate) who compiles an annual report for review by the Teaching and Learning Committee (or equivalent committee).

4.17 Appeal of Grades Review decisions

A student may lodge a formal appeal normally within 10 working days of the result of review of grade/assessment result to the teacher and/or course coordinator. Students may appeal a review of grade/result decision as prescribed in the College's complaints/grievances and appeals policy and procedure.

4.18 Academic Record/Transcript

All grades, including grades for repeated subjects, will normally appear on the student's academic record/transcript, except where noted in the grade/result tables appended to this policy document. The student's academic record/transcript will include the approved grade and/or final approved mark for each subject (as applicable for the course).

5. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed at a minimum of once every 5 years by the policy owner (or delegate) to ensure alignment to appropriate strategic direction and its continued relevance to current and planned operations. The next scheduled review of this document is listed in the document history section of this document.

6. Records

Records of individual student's results in examinations and assessed coursework are retained by SGA and provided to the student. All credentials issued by SGA and retained assessment records are kept according to statutory requirements, including assessment results and appeal records, consistent with SGA's Records Management Policy. Confidential documents related to the implementation of the policy will be maintained according to relevant privacy requirements.

7. Related Documents

SGA Student Privacy Policy, SGA Records Management Policy, SGA Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure, SGA Assessment Moderation Policy and Procedure, SGA Student Learning Support Policy and Procedures, SGA Provision of Support for Students with Disabilities Policy and Procedure, SGA Disability Policy and Procedure, SGA Student Support Policy and Procedure, SGA Student Progression Exclusion and Graduation Policy, and for ELICOS and Foundation programs SGA Monitoring Student Attendance Policy and Procedure.

8. Related Regulations

This policy has been developed in line with requirements set out in the: Education Services for Overseas (ESOS) Act 2000 (and its amendments); National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (the National Code) which complements existing national quality assurance frameworks in education and training including the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards, the English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) Standards 2018, the Foundation Standards (operating adjunct to the National Code), the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), and other Commonwealth and State legislation and regulatory frameworks and standards including the Privacy Act 1988.

Document Approval

Document ID	SGA Student Assessment Policy and Procedure		
Policy Owner(s)	Heads of College and Academic Directors (or equivalent) - ANU College, Taylors College Sydney, Taylors College Perth, and Flinders International Study Centre, and Head of Academic Governance and Quality Assurance.		
Approved by	Head of International Study Centres - ANZ	Date Approved	3 September 2018
	Academic Board (West)	Date Approved	3 September 2018
		Date Commencing	15 September 2018

Document History

Commencing Date	Summary of Changes	Next Review Date
31 July 2015	v9.3 Approval by Academic Board (East) and Academic Board (West)	April 2019
15 September 2018	v10.0 Review and amendment to maintain regulatory and business currency	September 2023

¹ References to Foundation courses herein apply only to Foundation courses delivered and awarded by SGA's Taylors College (Perth campus) and Flinders International Student Centre (CRICOS Provider Code 01682E). They do not apply to the University of Sydney Foundation Program (CRICOS Course Code: 022310D) delivered by SGA's Taylors College (Sydney campus) on behalf of the University of Sydney (CRICOS Provider code 00026A).

APPENDIX A: Grade Table - Higher Education qualifications

Grades are used at both the individual assessment task and overall unit final result level except where marked with a caret symbol (^) which are used only at the overall unit final result level.

Grade	Definition
High Distinction (outstanding performance) Code: HD	85% - 100% overall mark. 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. All components of the unit were completed.
Distinction (very high level of performance) Code: D	75% - 84% overall mark. 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. All components of the unit were completed.
Credit (high level of performance) Code: C	65% - 74% overall mark. 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 (satisfactory level of performance) Code: P	50% - 64% overall mark. 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. All components of the unit were completed.
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. Where unit involves professional experience student has met specified performance criteria at an appropriate level within a specified time. All components of the unit were completed.
Fail (unsatisfactory performance) Code: F	0% - 49% overall mark. 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. All or some components of the unit were attempted.
Fail - No Assessment Submitted Code: FNS	Did not present any work for assessment, to be counted as failure.
Advanced Standing Code: AS [^]	Credit has been granted for prior completed formal and/or informal learning and/or experience in recognition of prior acquired knowledge, skills and/or experience
Recognition of Prior Learning Code: RPL [^]	Has the same meaning as Advanced Standing
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.

Grade	Definition
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.
Grade Pending Code: GP^	Grade Pending is used when a substantive grade cannot be awarded for the unit because all information to make the final assessment is not yet available. The grade must be resolved by the next meeting of the assessment su-committee.
Withdrawn Recorded Code: WR^	Enrolment in the unit was administratively withdrawn without failure. A unit with the grade of WR does not normally appear on a student's academic transcript.