



Responsible Officer	Pro-Vice Chancellor (Students)		
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Superseded Documents	Assessment Policy, v2.0 (AB08/140)		
Review			
File Number	2012/01091		
Associated Documents	Academic Program Review Procedure (under development) Assessment Procedure		
Version	Authorisation	Approval Date	Effective Date
3.0	Authorised by the Vice-Chancellor	17 April 2012	17 April 2012

1. Preamble

The University of New South Wales (UNSW) recognizes that assessment has a significant influence on teaching and student learning, and is committed to assessment processes that are valid, reliable, efficient, and ethical.

1.1 Purpose

This Assessment Policy outlines the principles and values that form the basis of the UNSW approach to undergraduate, honours and postgraduate assessment. The policy defines assessment and articulates the University's expectations in relation to:

- the role of formative and summative assessment in student learning
- the role of feedback in assessment and student learning
- grading and the certification of student learning
- the administration of assessment
- quality assurance and enhancement of assessment.

2. Scope

This policy applies to assessment in all academic undergraduate, honours and postgraduate programs of the University and has implications for:

- students
- academic staff of the University, and
- others associated or contracted by the University with responsibility for designing, administering and making decisions relating to assessment, by or on behalf of the University.

3. Definitions

3.1 Assessment

Assessment is the process whereby evaluative judgments are made in relation to the quality of students' learning achievements against expected standards.

Assessment serves a range of purposes including:

- Supporting the development of student learning (formative assessment)
- Measuring and certifying the level of student learning achievement (summative assessment)
- Monitoring student learning as a measure of educational effectiveness (evaluative assessment).

3.2 Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements of the capabilities that students must demonstrate in order to pass a course or graduate from a program of study. The learning outcomes are what must be assessed.

3.3 Assessment Criteria

Assessment criteria are statements of performance attributes or qualities that guide students to see what is important in undertaking each component of assessment in a program or course, and that guide assessors when judging students' responses to the assessment component. Assessment criteria are indicators of how assessment will be framed, but they do not prescribe standards of achievement at different levels of performance.

3.4 Standards-Based Assessment

Standards-based assessment depends on a set of pre-defined statements outlining different levels or standards of achievement in a program, course, or assessment component, and normally expressed in terms of the stated assessment criteria. Standards-based assessment involves the awarding of grades to students to reflect the level of performance (or standard) that they have achieved relative to the pre-defined standards. Students' grades, therefore, are not determined in relation to the performance of others, nor to a predetermined distribution of grades.

3.5 Assessment Feedback

Assessment feedback is information to help students understand how their performance has been interpreted. Feedback can include how an assessment grade was derived, specific qualities in the performance of an assessment, recommendations about aspects needing improvement, and guidance on what steps to take to improve future performance.

3.6 Grading

Grading is the process of interpreting student learning products and performance to determine where students stand in relation to an orderly development of competence. Grading informs both student and teacher about not only the current level of students' learning, but also what needs to be done to improve that position.

4. Policy Statement

The processes of design, delivery, governance and administration of assessment of student learning will ensure that assessment practices within UNSW's programs and courses facilitate the achievement of specified learning outcomes including UNSW's Graduate Capabilities.

4.1 Assessment Design

UNSW assessment practices will:

- Play a pivotal role in focusing learning and teaching efforts on intended learning outcomes and the development of designated graduate capabilities
- Promote active student engagement in learning through assessment
- Enable students to develop their knowledge, skills and capabilities in meaningful disciplinary, professional and personal contexts
- Recognize and accommodate student diversity.

4.2 Assessment Feedback

UNSW assessment practices will include providing constructive, timely feedback that has value for students in justifying assessment grades given, identifying the strengths and weaknesses in their performance, guiding their learning performance improvements, and developing their ongoing capability to engage in critical self-monitoring and evaluation.

4.3 Grading

The grading of students' performance on assessments will conform to a standards-based approach comprising explicit articulation of what students are required to learn (learning outcomes), what criteria will be used as indicators of their learning, and what the standards are for assessment at different levels of achievement. Grading procedures will be fair and equitable, and will result in the production of grades and reports of student learning achievement at course and program levels that are valid, reliable, and accurate representations of each student's capabilities in relation to course and program learning outcomes.

4.4 Administration of Assessment

Assessment practices at UNSW will exemplify ethical practice, be efficient and equitable, and will provide all students with information about the standards required for success.

4.5 Quality Assurance

UNSW assessment practices will be regularly reviewed at institutional, faculty, school, program and course levels as part of the University's ongoing quality assurance and improvement processes.

5. Legal & Policy Framework

5.1 Internal to UNSW

- UNSW Code of Conduct
- UNSW Examinations Policy and Procedures
- UNSW Student Plagiarism Policy and Procedure
- UNSW Academic Program Review Policy and Procedures
- UNSW Equal Opportunity in Education Policy Statement

5.2 External to UNSW

- Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)

6. Implementation

6.1 Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this Assessment policy and its associated procedures is vested in the Academic Board.

Responsibility for implementation of specific aspects of this assessment policy is integral to the roles of the:

- Pro-Vice Chancellor (Students) and Registrar
- Deans of Faculties
- Faculty Presiding Members
- Heads of Schools

- Program Directors
- Course Convenors
- Honours and postgraduate project and dissertation supervisors
- Individual academic and sessional teaching staff
- External Associates
- Students.

Specific details of the responsibilities of the individuals in each of these roles are set out in the Assessment Procedures associated with this policy.

6.2 Support & Advice

Support and advice on the implementation of this policy can be obtained from:

- The Office of the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Students) and Registrar
- The Learning and Teaching Unit
- The Learning Centre

7. Review

This policy is due for review three years from its date of effect.

Appendix A: History

Version	Authorised by	Approval Date	Effective Date	Sections modified
1.0	Academic Board AB02/117	5 November 2002	March 2003	
2.0	Academic Board AB08/140	4 November 2008	4 November 2008	Full review, v1.0 rescinded.
3.0	Vice-Chancellor	17 April 2012	17 April 2012	Full review, v2.0 rescinded