

## Definitions

Please refer to the University's Glossary of terms for policy and procedures. Terms and definitions identified below are specific to these procedures and are critical to the effectiveness of it:

Dual mode refers to when a course has a standard offering that is blended and a second offering in the semester, trimester or session that is fully online.

Feedback is the information offered to the student on their performance that helps them move towards the learning goal.

Formative assessment is designed to identify, for both the student and assessor, the student's strengths, and any potential gaps in the knowledge, understanding and skills expected for successful completion of a course; is "low stakes" in terms of the marks associated if any to assist students to learn more effectively, for example, through provision of feedback on the student's performance and advice as to how it can be improved or maintained; and to inform teaching decisions in the next phase of learning.

Moderation is a rigorous quality review and assurance process that confirms or modifies the task's fitness for purpose, the consistency of the marker's judgments and the validity, reliability and fairness of the outcome and ultimately ensures academic standards are met.

Substantial assessment task is a task that contributes greater than 30 percent of a course's total assessment.

Standards referenced assessment is the approach taken to assessment at the University of the Sunshine Coast where the achievement of students is assessed and reported in relation to a predetermined standard established for the course.

Summative assessment is designed to indicate the extent of a student's success in achieving specified learning outcomes for a course or coursework program; and it contributes to the student's final grade in a course or the final grade for the coursework program as a whole.

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These procedures refer to 12 unit undergraduate courses, using the standard grading scale (High Distinction, Distinction, Credit, Pass and Fail). Courses that have a different unit value, grading scale, or are postgraduate courses may have different assessment requirements; these differences are identified in sections 3.7 - 3.10.

## Part A: Designing Assessment

### 1. Approach to assessment design

#### 1.1 Principles of curriculum design

1.1.1 The curriculum at the University is based on four principles. The curriculum design principles inform assessment within courses and coursework programs at USC (Coursework Curriculum Design – Academic Policy):

- learning-centred
- standards-based
- constructively aligned
- career and future focussed.

#### 1.2 Using the curriculum design principles to develop assessment

1.2.1 The curriculum design principles inform the design of the University's curriculum which includes assessment.

1.2.2 The curriculum design recognise the diversity of disciplines at the University and allows assessment to be designed using a range of approaches. Course Coordinators use the principles to inform their approach to assessment design and to demonstrate its quality.

#### APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

#### RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

#### DESIGNATED OFFICER

Director, Centre for Support and Advancement of Learning and Teaching

#### FIRST APPROVED

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#### STATUS

Active

1.2.3 Planning backwards from the program learning outcomes, program development teams detail the suite of aligned learning outcomes for study components and courses. This leads to a process of selecting or designing and sequencing courses, assessment and learning activities that will support student achievement of the learning outcomes.

1.2.4 The bodies responsible for curriculum accreditation and approval evaluate the quality of the assessment using the curriculum design principles as a basis and provide feedback to the Course Coordinator.

### 1.3 Request for a variation to these procedures

1.3.1 A request for a variation from any element of these procedures can be made on the basis of pedagogically sound arguments consistent with the curriculum design principles.

1.3.2 A request for a variation is endorsed by the relevant Head of School and referred for approval to the next meeting of the Program and Course Committee.

## 2. Assessment at program level

2.1 In a coursework program, there will be a clear progression in the expectations of performance required in assessment tasks in courses at the undergraduate level from Introductory, through Developing to Graduate and at postgraduate level – from Advanced to Specialised (refer to the Coursework Curriculum Design - Procedures for details).

2.2 There is evidence of constructive alignment of the assessment tasks, in required courses, with the relevant program's learning outcomes, manifest through the course learning outcomes.

2.3 A coursework program contains courses that provide students opportunities to engage with multiple types of assessment tasks.

2.4 The spread of assessment tasks across required courses in a program is monitored to prevent students in the program being exposed to an unreasonably high workload.

## 3. At course level

3.1 Each assessment task and marking criterion aligns with course specific learning outcomes which in turn align with the appropriate program learning outcomes.

3.2 Assessment tasks normally assess the valued knowledge, skills and application of knowledge and skills that students have had the opportunity to learn within the course. Tasks can also build on knowledge, skills and application of knowledge and skills that are designated as prerequisites or assumed knowledge for the course.

3.3 In first year courses, the assessment should aid students' transition to higher education and provide early feedback on progress to students and staff.

3.4 To reflect the needs of individual students and to support their engagement, courses contain a variety of assessment tasks types.

### 3.5 Number and weighting of assessment tasks

3.5.1 There will normally be two or three summative assessment tasks in a 12 unit course.

3.5.2 Each course will include early assessment (not a Substantial Assessment Task) or review that provides formative feedback on academic progress, including identifying the need for additional support. This feedback will be provided in the first third of the teaching weeks for the semester, trimester or session of the course. Examples of early assessment or review that provide formative feedback to inform students' academic progress are provided in section 5.3.

3.5.3 Up to 12 periodic assessment exercises can be included in a course as either formative assessment or as one of the course's summative tasks.

3.5.4 Each summative assessment task is allocated a weighting reflecting its relative value in measuring the learning outcomes and the student workload to successfully complete the task.

3.5.5 No assessment task in an undergraduate course of 12 unit value will be weighted at more than 50 percent of the total assessment value for the course.

### 3.6 Distribution of assessment tasks

3.6.1 Assessment tasks in each course will be distributed across the teaching weeks to facilitate student learning, maximise opportunities for students to benefit by receiving feedback from earlier assessment tasks prior to submitting subsequent tasks, and manage workloads for students and staff.

3.6.2 No course will include both a central examination and another assessment task that is due outside the teaching weeks.

3.6.3 No assessment tasks are to be due during the University's identified exam preparation period or on a weekend or public holiday, unless attendance on a weekend or public holiday is a requirement of the course.

### 3.7 Courses assessed using Limited Grades

3.7.1 The use of Limited Grades – Pass (PU) and Fail (UF) – is restricted to courses where there is either:

- a work integrated learning (WIL) activity categorised as a workplace and industry 'placement' (refer to the Work Integrated Learning - Academic Policy); or
- extensive project work/coursework assessed in diverse settings external to the University; or
- a professional competency task is included in the course.

3.7.2 In a course eligible to use Limited Grades, all assessment items in that course are marked on a Pass/Fail basis and all assessment tasks are required to be passed for a student to successfully complete the course.

3.7.3 Supplementary assessment is not available in courses using Limited Grades (refer to the Supplementary Assessment – Procedures).

3.7.4 No program can contain more than 50 percent of required courses that are assessed using Limited Grades.

3.7.5 In a course using Limited Grades, there is no requirement that each summative assessment task is allocated a weighting reflecting its relative value in measuring the learning outcomes.

### 3.8 Assessment in multi-site, dual mode and on-line courses

3.8.1 When a course is offered in multiple modes and sites, the assessment tasks should be designed so that all students have an equal opportunity to engage with them. All offerings of the course will have assessment requirements designed to enable equivalent opportunities for student academic success through achievement of the course's expected learning outcomes.

3.8.2. The use of different assessment items for courses offered in the same mode at different locations in the same teaching period must be approved by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) or delegate.

3.8.3 In the case of a course offered in a dual mode (e.g. blended and online), students will be restricted to undertake the assessment tasks (where there is a difference) that relate to the delivery mode selected by the student on enrolment.

### 3.9 Assessment in postgraduate courses

3.9.1 A postgraduate course is normally one coded at 500, 600 or 700 level and offered in a postgraduate coursework program or a Higher Degree by Research.

3.9.2 In a postgraduate course, an early assessment task is not required but students still receive developmental feedback on their progress in the early part of the course.

3.9.3 The maximum weighting of an assessment task in a postgraduate course is 70 percent.

3.9.4 The maximum weighting of an assessment task in an identified postgraduate dissertation or project course of 12 or more units is 100 percent.

3.9.5 For postgraduate courses the word length is a maximum of 7000 or equivalent, taking all assessment tasks into consideration.

3.9.6 In a postgraduate research course of 36 units or greater, the assessment of that course be consistent with the arrangements for supervision and examination of the artefact as identified in the Bachelor Honours Degree – Academic Policy and related procedures.

### 3.10 Assessment in courses with a unit value other than 12 units

3.10.1 The maximum weighting of an assessment task for a six unit course is 70 percent.

3.10.2 The maximum weighting of an assessment task in an identified dissertation/thesis/project course of 24 or more units is 100 percent. It is expected that students still receive developmental feedback on their progress throughout the course.

### 3.11 Maximum total word count per course

3.11.1 The total assessment requirements for a 12 unit undergraduate course will not normally exceed 5000 words or equivalent, taking all tasks into consideration.

3.11.2 The word count for courses of greater value than 12 units is not necessarily increased on a pro rata basis.

3.11.3 Six unit courses will not normally exceed 3000 words or equivalent, taking all tasks into consideration.

## 4. At assessment task level

4.1 In designing the assessment tasks for a course, consideration is given to:

- a) the University's curriculum design principles;
- b) the level of the course (introductory, developing, graduate, advanced or specialised);
- c) linking the formative and summative assessment;
- d) the amount of assessment required to generate evidence that enables reliable and valid judgments of student performance to be made about the degree to which the student has met the learning outcomes;
- e) the workload that the assessment requires of both students and markers and the sustainability of those approaches to assessment; and

f) professional accreditation requirements.

4.2 In addition, the Course Coordinator considers the principles informing assessment designated in the Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs – Academic Policy and the Coursework Curriculum Design – Academic Policy and related procedures.

### 4.3 Class participation and attendance

4.3.1 Class participation can be an assessment task. It means assessing students on the quality of their contribution in an active and cooperative learning process either face to face or online.

4.3.2 If participation is included as an assessment task, it will not be weighted at more than 10 percent of the total assessment for the course. Like all assessment tasks, participation will be assessed on an evidence basis through the application of criteria.

4.3.3 No result can be allocated for attendance (either on-campus or online).

4.3.4 A minimum level of participation may be required in order to pass a course provided that one or more of the following circumstances are met:

- a) professional accreditation specifies requirements for particular activities or to achieve particular competencies;
- b) the course is a WIL placement;
- c) the course contains professional competencies required as a prerequisite for a WIL placement course; or
- d) there are statutory requirements such as occupational health and safety training.

4.3.5 In the exceptional circumstance where attendance is mandated by a professional accreditation authority, this will be specified in the program requirements and the specific Course Outlines and reasonable alternatives will be provided for students who cannot attend because of circumstances beyond their control.

### 4.4 Group work assessment task

4.4.1 Where group work is an assessment task, the Course Coordinator will design the curriculum to include procedures and learning activities to facilitate effective management of, and learning through, group work.

4.4.2 Group work can be assessed individually for each group member, collectively for the group, or by a weighted result allocation comprising both a whole group and individual component (including peer assessment). Students must be made aware of the criteria and any weighting associated with each criterion in the Course Outline.

4.4.3 The assessment criteria will make it possible for students to be marked separately, should exceptional circumstances necessitate separate results.

### 4.5 Peer assessment

4.5.1 Where peer assessment is utilised as a summative assessment task, it can be weighted at a maximum of 10 percent of the total assessment for the course. Peer assessment can also be utilised formatively to enable students to actively improve their learning.

4.5.2 Processes for peer assessment will be designed to ensure that students are treated with fairness, consistency and respect. The Course Coordinator will provide written guidelines and criteria for students undertaking peer assessment.

4.5.3 The Course Coordinator will moderate the results of peer assessment as appropriate for formative tasks and as a requirement for summative tasks.

### 4.6 Self-assessment

Self-assessment can be included in an assessment schedule as a formative activity but no summative results can be awarded as the focus of self-assessment is to reflect on and improve the learning as demonstrated through summative tasks.

### 4.7 Negotiated assessment

4.7.1 In some instances, the Course Coordinator may want to negotiate aspects of the assessment task(s) with students during the teaching period as part of the learning experience. When this occurs, all students in the course must be given an opportunity to participate.

4.7.2 Negotiated assessment opportunities are represented in the Course Outline through a broad description of the purpose and process. If required, the learning outcomes that will be addressed in the task are identified as a proxy for criteria, until specific criteria are designed. All other assessment procedures still apply in a negotiated task.

4.7.3 The weighting of an assessment task or the number of assessment tasks cannot be altered through the process of negotiated assessment.

### 4.8 Assessment criteria and standards

4.8.1 Assessment criteria are the elements the assessor will focus on when making a judgement about the task. The Course Coordinator identifies criteria for each assessment task in the Course Outline.

4.8.2 Criteria must be based on the learning outcomes of the course and thus assess those learning outcomes.

4.8.3 All assessment tasks must have criteria. These criteria must be specified in the Course Outline.

4.8.4 An assessment task normally will have no more than six criteria.

4.8.5 Any grading tools such as criterion-referenced assessment rubrics or marking guides must be made available to students preferably at the beginning of the teaching period when the course site on the learning management system is made available or simultaneously with the release of the assessment task to students. Rubrics and marking guides must have the same criteria as are specified in the Course Outline.

4.8.6 Rubrics and marking guides typically include three elements: the criteria, the standards (for example High Distinction (HD) to Fail (FL)) and the standards descriptors, which succinctly describe the levels of achievement required for each criteria at each standard. (Refer to the Grades and Grade Point Average (GPA) - Academic Policy for generic descriptions of each standard).

#### 4.9 WIL student placement code of conduct assessment task

4.9.1 In courses identified as a workplace and industry placement course, under the University's Work Integrated Learning - Academic Policy and refer to section 3.7 above, an assessment task must be included to assess a student's performance against a discipline specific code of conduct, or a set guidelines for professional conduct, or another suitable instrument, which is informed by the professional standards or code of conduct for the relevant profession.

4.9.2 The student placement code of conduct assessment task is assessed on a Pass/Fail basis.

4.9.3 The student placement code of conduct assessment task is not included in the count of maximum number of summative assessment tasks in a course as identified in section 3.5 above.

#### 4.10 Ensuring academic integrity through assessment task design

In designing assessment tasks, strategies should be considered to assist students to maintain their academic integrity, these include:

- Regular changes to assessment topics;
- Designing assessment tasks/topics around authentic activities relating to a work context or recent or current events;
- Personalising the assessment topics, by inviting students to draw on their own experiences;
- Designing assessment tasks that assess the student's process to complete the task; and
- In group assessment tasks, clarifying to the students the boundaries between collaboration and collusion.

## Part B: Feedback and Marking

### 5. Feedback

5.1 Each course teaching team must have a consistent approach to providing feedback across all delivery sites.

5.2 The result a student receives for an assessment task is provided to the student in a numeric form, except for courses using limited grades. Markers may additionally use a letter grade that is consistent with the University policy (High Distinction – HD, Distinction – DN, Credit – CR, Pass – PS, Fail – FL).

#### 5.3 Formative Assessment

Feedback on formative assessment tasks will include information that helps a student progress from their current practice to more effectively achieve the learning goals of the course. Examples of formative feedback to inform students' academic progress include:

- Model answers or explanations to questions e.g multiple choice quizzes;
- Discussion of essay topics in class or online;
- Verbal comments to individuals or to the class about academic progress relevant to the assessment;
- Feedback or feedforward shared with student e.g. via online forums;
- Ongoing dialogue with learners to help develop the process of self-regulation and reflection
- Comments on presentations;
- Practice quizzes or student-generated test questions
- Written feedback on drafts or outlines of a task;
- Peer feedback on a draft assessment item facilitated in class or online;
- Activities that ask students to self-assess and reflect on their learning; and
- Low weighted assessment task

## 5.4 Summative feedback

5.4.1 Feedback on all summative assessment tasks will include:

- a) A result for the task in response to stated assessment criteria;
- b) an indication or explanation of student performance in relation to the assessment criteria and the standards to which each is met; and
- c) summary comments, including what aspects of the task have been done well and how students could improve their performance.

5.4.2 All students receive feedback on all summative assessment. Feedback on final examinations is only required to be provided on the request of the student.

## 5.5 Timing of feedback

5.5.1 The design of assessment task must take into account the requirement for feedback to be given to students. Students must receive feedback on submitted work before the next assessment task when the tasks are related.

5.5.2 Feedback on assessment tasks will normally be provided within ten working days and must be provided within fifteen working days from the due date for the assessment task or the date when the task was submitted, whichever is the later. In the case of a final assessment task, where feedback will not inform the submission of another task in the course, feedback on the assessment must be provided no later than with the submission of final grades.

## 6. Marking

### 6.1 Making judgements about student performance

Results for all assessment tasks and the overall grade for a course are decided only by reference to predetermined criteria and standards. Results are neither determined by the comparative performance of other students in the course nor allocated to fit a predetermined distribution.

### 6.2 Appropriate markers

6.2.1 Where academic judgement is required to assess, the marker must have an appropriate level of discipline knowledge and assessment capacity, understanding of the course and the tasks' role within it, and an understanding of the University's policies and procedures relating to assessment.

6.2.2 It is the responsibility of the Course Coordinator to ensure that persons appointed as markers satisfy these requirements.

### 6.3 Conflict of interest

6.3.1 Staff who mark assessment tasks have a responsibility to assess student work fairly, objectively and consistently for all students enrolled in a course.

6.3.2 An academic staff member involved in assessing a student who is a relative, family or personal friend must disclose the relationship as this may create an actual or perceived conflict of interest.

6.3.3 The staff member must disclose the actual or perceived conflict of interest to their Head of School as soon as is reasonably practicable after becoming aware of it. Conflict of interest disclosures will be recorded and managed by the Head of School. Heads of School, when notified of a conflict of interest, will deal promptly with the conflict and will implement an appropriate procedure to manage the conflict of interest in accordance with the Staff Code of Conduct – Governing Policy.

### 6.4 Marking non-replicable assessment tasks

6.4.1 When students are required to complete a substantial (greater than 30 percent of a course's total assessment) assessment task, that cannot be preserved or replicated, for example making an oral presentation or organising an event, the assessment task should be either video recorded or assessed in real time by more than one marker.

6.4.2 Work integrated learning placements are exempt from this clause. Refer to the Work Integrated Learning - Academic Policy.

### 6.5 Negative marking

Negative marking, in which a result less than zero is allocated to any part of any component of an assessment task, is not permitted.

## Part C: Administration of assessment

### 7. Notification of assessment requirements

7.1 The Course Outline must include the following for each assessment task:

In the assessment table:

- Product name and number of the task
- Individual or Group

- Weighting (normally expressed as a percentage; not required for limited grade courses)
- Duration / length
- Week due
- Method of submission (only one method is permissible for each assessment item).

7.2 The assessment as identified in the Course Outline is that required to be undertaken by an enrolled student, unless a variation as identified under section 7.6 has been approved.

7.3 In each task description:

Goal: The goal of the task explains why a student is doing the task and its purpose in the learning.

Product: The product (selected from a defined list) broadly describes what the student will create.

Product name: The product name details what the student will create.

Format: The format details how the product is to be presented, what the context is, what the student's role is or who the anticipated audience is. It should also explain whether it is a group or individual task, the mode, the medium and the length/duration of the task.

Criteria: The criteria are the elements that the assessor will focus on when making a judgement about the task. As each task is designed to assess how well the student has achieved the relevant learning outcomes, the criteria should reflect the language in the learning outcomes and the demands of the task.

7.4 Additional information, such as details of the task process, specific topics for individual assessment tasks, criterion-referenced assessment rubrics or any other grading tool must be provided through the Learning Management System (Blackboard). Assessment tasks that students should not have prior access to, such as unseen examination essay topics, are exempt from this requirement.

7.5 The Course Outline also contains any additional information and a statement on penalties associated with the assessment in the course. Any penalties must be consistent with USC policy and procedures.

7.6 Any changes to the assessment tasks made after the Course Outline has been made available to students should be in exceptional circumstances only, and must be approved by the relevant Head of School (or nominee). All changes must be communicated to students through an appropriate combination of communication channels which could include: class announcements, social media, email and use of the Learning Management System (Blackboard).

## 7.7 Due dates and submission of assessment tasks

7.7.1 A single submission method is required per assessment task.

7.7.2 Normally, the required method of submission of assessment tasks is electronically through the Learning Management System (Blackboard), Eportfolio (Pebblepad) or Work Integrated Learning System (SONIA). If an alternative submission method is required this is identified in the Course Outline.

7.7.3 Submission of assessment tasks, other than central examinations, will normally occur during the teaching weeks. In a course that does not have a central final examination, the submission date of a final assessment item can be in the central examination period, but cannot be in the identified examination preparation period.

7.7.4 A submission date may be extended by the Course Coordinator. Any extension to the submission date for an assessment task must be communicated to all students through an appropriate combination of communication channels which could include: class announcements, social media, email and use of the Learning Management System (Blackboard).

## 7.8 Penalties for late submission of assessment tasks

7.8.1 The University provides for the Course Coordinator to apply a range of penalties for late submission of an assessment task. The penalties range from no penalty to the maximum identified in section 7.8.2 below. In all cases the penalties for late submission of an assessment task must be applied consistently across all enrolled students and be identified in the approved Course Outline.

7.8.2 Late submission of assessment tasks will be penalised at the following maximum rate (the rates are cumulative):

- Five percent (of the assessment task's identified value) per day for the first two days from the date identified as the due date for the assessment task
- 10 percent (of the assessment task's identified value) for the third day
- 20 percent (of the assessment task's identified value) for the fourth day and subsequent days up to and including seven days from the date identified as the due date for the assessment task
- A result of zero is awarded for an assessment task submitted seven days from the date identified as the due date for the assessment task.

7.8.3 Weekdays and weekends are included in the calculation of days late.

7.8.4 If more severe penalties for late submission than those identified in these procedures are required, a request for a variation including a justification can be made to the relevant Head of School prior to the course being offered.

## 7.9 Exemption from penalties for late submission of assessment tasks

7.9.1 The following specific grounds for applying for an exemption from penalties for late submission of assessment tasks have been identified:

- a) illness or serious health problem;
- b) serious personal trauma;
- c) a cultural or sporting commitment at state, national or international representative level
- d) unavoidable community or public service commitments (including jury service, or for a recognised emergency management body such as the Queensland State Emergency Services (SES) or Country Fire Authority (CFA);
- e) Defence Forces Reserve commitment;
- f) commitments as a member of the USC High Performance Sport program;
- g) religious or cultural grounds;
- h) being a victim of crime; or
- i) unexpected family, employment or personal circumstances.

### 7.9.2 Supporting Evidence Required

A request for an exemption from penalties for late submission of assessment tasks is required to be supported by independent evidence as outlined below.

The independent evidence should include an indication of the number of days the student is unable to undertake assessment tasks.

Examples of independent evidence include:

GROUNDS	SUGGESTED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION
a) illness or serious health problem	A completed USC Medical Certificate form from a registered Medical Practitioner.
b) significant personal trauma	at least one of the following documents: A completed USC Medical Certificate form from a registered Medical Practitioner accompanied by relevant supporting documentation, or Written verification from a USC counsellor.
c) a cultural or sporting commitment at State, national or international representative level	A signed and dated letter (on the organisation's letterhead) that includes the student's name, details about the event, and details of the student's participation in the event.
d) unavoidable community or public service commitments (including legal commitment or a recognised emergency management body such as the SES or CFA)	Legal Commitment - a copy of the summons, subpoena, court order or notice of selection for jury duty stating: student's name; and the reason for the commitment; and date/s of attendance required. Emergency Management body - a signed and dated letter (on the organisation's letterhead) that includes the student's name.
e) Defence Forces Reserve commitments	-A signed and dated letter (on the organisation's letterhead) that includes the student's name.
f) commitments as a member of the USC High Performance Sport program	-A signed and dated letter (on the organisation's letterhead) that includes the student's name; or written verification from the Coordinator, High Performance Sport Program.
g) religious or cultural grounds	A signed and dated statement (on the organisation's letterhead) that includes the student's name, indicating that the student is a regular attendee or participant from an imam, pastor, rabbi or equivalent spiritual or community leader.
h) Being a victim of crime	at least one of the following documents: Police report; Safer Community Unit report; or written verification from a USC counsellor.
i) exceptional family, employment or personal circumstances which are	Attendance at a funeral of a family member or close friend at least one of the following documents: a Statuary declaration & an obituary, funeral notice or funeral program; or written verification from a USC counsellor. Death of family member or close friend at least one of the following documents: written evidence



outside of the control of the student. of the situation such as an obituary, funeral notice, or hospital/medical certificate; a Death Certificate; Statutory declaration; or written verification from a USC counsellor. Unexpected primary carer responsibilities at least one of the following documents: a completed USC Medical Certificate form indicating the student's primary carer responsibilities; a statutory declaration indicating how primary carer responsibilities have impacted the student's ability to study accompanied by relevant supporting documents; or or written verification from a USC counsellor. Natural disaster at least one of the following documents: a statutory declaration and a copy of a public record such as a weather report or media coverage; or or written verification from a USC counsellor.

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7.9.3 The student must follow the process identified by the relevant School for applying for an exemption from penalties for late submission of assessment tasks.

7.9.4 If a student requests a change to the due date for an assessment item and provides the required supporting documentation at least 48 hours prior to the advertised due date and time and the Course Coordinator does not respond prior to the due date then the exemption from late penalties is granted for that particular assessment item.

## 7.10 Renegotiation of assessment due dates

7.10.1 Refer to the grounds identified in 7.9 for the accepted grounds for applying for a change to the published assessment due date and must be accompanied by the identified supporting documentation.

7.10.2 Depending of the nature of the assessment item, the request may result in a change to the due dates, either earlier or later, or the student being required to undertake an alternative assessment task (7.11).

## 7.11 Alternative assessment tasks

An alternative assessment task may be set when circumstances prevent a student from completing an assessment task and it is not feasible to re-create the required circumstances for that assessment task. A Course Coordinator may then vary the details of that assessment task provided that the alternative enables an equitable assessment to be made and does not compromise an essential requirement of the course.

## 7.12 Variation to assessment for students with disabilities

7.12.1 USC recognises the legal definition of disability, as defined in the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992, or impairment, as described in the Qld Anti-Discrimination Act 1991. In both instruments, this encompasses temporary or permanent physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, and neurological and learning disabilities and the presence in the body of organisms causing, or capable of causing, disease. It also includes a disability that presently exists, existed in the past, or may exist in the future, as well as a disability that is imputed or presumed to a person.

7.12.2 Adjustments and variations for a student on the basis of the impact of a disability are made in accordance with the Students with a Disability - Operational Policy.

7.12.3 A student who has experienced a temporary disability or traumatic event that will affect their ability to complete an assessment task(s) should contact AccessAbility Services.

7.12.4 A Learning Access Plan (LAP) outlining the determined Reasonable Adjustment is provided to the student, based on recommendations from the treating Health Professional. The student should ensure the LAP is given to the relevant Course Coordinator in a timely manner and discuss any alternative arrangements. If the Course Coordinator has any concerns that recommendations will compromise any inherent requirements, they should contact AccessAbility Services to discuss.

7.12.5 Any alternate arrangements for students with disabilities relating to central examinations are arranged by Student Services and Engagement.

## 7.13 Resubmission of an assessment task

7.13.1 At the discretion of the Course Coordinator, students who have failed an assessment task may be invited or permitted to revise and re-submit a specific assessment task for marking. This is not available if:

- the assessment item is a final examination; or
- the assessment task is related to professional competencies in a Limited Graded course.

7.13.2 In courses that use the standard grading scale, the maximum result that can be attained under such circumstances is 50 percent of the value of the assessment task. In courses with limited grading, the resubmitted task can only be assessed as pass or fail.

7.13.3 If a resubmission is approved by the Course Coordinator, the option must be available to all students with the equivalent circumstances.

## 7.14 Supplementary assessment

Supplementary assessment must be offered to a student who has achieved a final grade for a course in the range of 47 percent to 49.4 percent. This is not available in courses with Limited Grades. Refer to the Supplementary Assessment - Procedures.

### 7.15 Lost, stolen or damaged assessment tasks

To minimise the impact of lost, stolen or damaged assessment tasks when hard copies are submitted, students must keep a copy or record of all assessment tasks. On request, students should be able to present a copy of the task if required.

### 7.16 Aggregation of results

7.16.1 In a course using the standard grading scale, a student's final mark in a course will be the aggregate of the results from all assessment tasks according to the percentage weighting of the assessment tasks, leading to the award of a grade except in the case of limited grade courses.

7.16.2 In a course using the limited grade scale, a student's final result will be determined by their success or otherwise in passing the assessment tasks as detailed in the Course Outline.

### 7.17 Release of results to students

Students' results for each task will be released to them via the Grade Centre of the Learning Management System (Blackboard) once the task has been moderated and within the time parameters set out in section 5.5.2 of these procedures.

### 7.18 Transfer of results across enrolments

The 'carrying over' of a result from an assessment task undertaken during a previous enrolment in a course to a subsequent enrolment in the same course is not permitted.

## Part D: Assuring Standards

### 8. Assuring Grade Standards

8.1 Assuring grade standards has three processes:

- Moderation
- Verification; and
- Ratification.

A course goes through all three processes each time it is offered.

#### 8.2 Moderation

Moderation is a rigorous quality review and assurance process to confirm the task's fitness for purpose and the validity, reliability and fairness of the outcome that ultimately ensures academic standards are met.

#### 8.3 Appointment of moderators

8.3.1 A moderator is appointed for each course by the Head of School (or nominee) prior to the commencement of the teaching session.

8.3.2 The person identified for this role must have a combination of discipline knowledge and assessment experience so that they are capable of making judgements about the assessment processes proposed and undertaken.

8.3.3 The moderator's role is to review and endorse the planned assessment scheme prior to the course's commencement, ensure that academic standards are being judged correctly, and to verify that the assessment scheme took place as planned.

#### 8.4 Forms of moderation

The University requires three forms of moderation which are consistent across multi-sites, dual mode and on-line courses:

- Pre-assessment moderation: assures the quality of specific assessment elements before they are used for assessment (for example, specific topics for an essay, exam questions)
- Point of assessment moderation: ensures that academic standards are being judged correctly, for example by moderating student work to ensure that markers are making consistent and accurate assessment decisions in accordance with the assessment criteria.
- Post-assessment moderation: confirms that the results awarded for each task and that the student's final mark and grade for the course overall reflect the performance descriptors in the Grades and Grade Point Average (GPA) - Academic Policy.

#### 8.5 Pre-assessment moderation

The aim of pre-assessment moderation is to ensure that assessment tasks are fit for their purpose and are likely to provide valid and reliable evidence of student learning and compliant with relevant policies and procedures. Forms of pre-assessment moderation include:

- All markers become familiar with the marking tools to be used in the course and agree on marking processes;
- The Course Moderator evaluates examinations for an appropriate match between the exam requirements and duration, the course content and alignment between questions and criteria; and the completeness, clarity and accuracy of the questions or problems;
- The Course Moderator evaluates assignment questions/topics for their appropriateness for that course including consistency with the curriculum design principles

d) The course teaching team meets to discuss expectations of particular assessment tasks, to review criterion-referenced rubrics and to mark and discuss a sample paper.

## 8.6 Point of assessment moderation

8.6.1 The aim of moderation at the point of assessment is to ensure quality of judgements and to confirm correct and consistent application of assessment criteria and standards for all tasks in the course. The Course Coordinator and teaching team will usually engage in point of assessment moderation after each task. For courses where the Course Coordinator is the sole assessor, the Course Moderator will engage in the moderation process with the Course Coordinator.

8.6.2 Point of assessment moderation is an opportunity for a professional dialogue between at least two colleagues about the quality of student work and the application of standards to that work. It usually takes place after an assessment task has been submitted and a sample has been assessed. A number of moderation strategies may be utilised, including:

a) expert moderation: an external person with marking expertise in the discipline area marks and comments on a sample – possibly difficult or borderline cases and provides feedback to the Course Coordinator;

b) blind re-marking: a selection of clean scripts are given to a second marker. Where significant differences between markers are identified, discussion takes place to resolve the differences, identify consensus driven assessment principles and reach agreement;

c) selecting scripts for review: the Course Coordinator marks a small sample and provides it to the Course Moderator for review; a small sample of student work is marked and submitted to the Course Coordinator who moderates it and gives feedback to the course teaching team; or

d) consensus moderation: the course teaching team meets to review marked samples of student work and reach consensus about the standard of the work and the mark and grade applied to it.

8.6.3 The sampling of scripts for review should be at each grade level and also include student work from all modes/sites where the course is being offered. In the case of a University course being offered by a third party the level of sampling of the marking of assessment tasks should be of at least 10% of the student cohort

8.6.4 The Course Coordinator also monitors and samples the marking of individual members of the course teaching team to establish inter-rater reliability. Individual markers are encouraged to also review a sample of assessments made over several marking sessions to ensure intra-rater reliability.

8.6.5 Moderation must occur before the task results are released to students.

8.6.6 All task results must be recorded in the Grade Centre of the Learning Management System (Blackboard).

8.6.7 Multiple-choice examinations do not need to be moderated at the point of assessment.

## 8.7 Post-assessment moderation

8.7.1 For post-assessment moderation, when the Course Moderator and Course Coordinator are satisfied with the moderation process of all tasks within the course, it is complete and the results, final marks and grades move into the verification stage of the process.

8.7.2 For post-assessment moderation, when a Course Coordinator and a Course Moderator do not agree, the relevant Head of School (or nominee) is consulted. The Head of School (or nominee) determines the action, if any, that the Course Coordinator is required to take and informs both parties of that decision.

8.7.3 Results and final marks for all courses must be uploaded to the Grade Centre within the University's Learning Management System (Blackboard) with the exception of the following types of courses for which the verification and ratification processes are completed manually:

- Study Overseas program
- Honours Dissertation
- Progressive Courses (non-examinable components)
- Fee for service/short courses

8.7.4 The Course Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that the task results are correctly entered and that the associated marks and grades are correctly calculated in the Grade Centre of the Learning Management System (Blackboard) and correctly submitted to the Interim Result Module for verification.

## 8.8 Issues arising out of moderation

8.8.1 When moderation indicates a problem with the marking of tasks/s, an investigation is initiated by the Head of School (or nominee) as soon as possible to establish whether a problem exists.

8.8.2 When post-assessment moderation identifies that a problem has occurred that affects student grades, then corrections must be undertaken as soon as possible under the direction of the Chair, School Assessment Moderation and Results Committee.

## 8.9 Verification

8.9.1 Once all moderation tasks are completed, the Course Coordinator and the Course Moderator engage in the process of verification. In this process, the Course Coordinator and the Course Moderator verify that the assessment tasks were undertaken as advised in the Course Outline and that the moderation process has been completed.

8.9.2 The Course Coordinator determines students' eligibility for supplementary assessment based on the student's final mark for the course (see Supplementary Assessment - Procedures) and notes this for ratification at the School Assessment Moderation and Results Committee

8.9.3 The Course Coordinator provides a commentary on the moderation process undertaken and the grades awarded in that instance of the course in relation to previous instances. A commentary on the outcomes for the student cohort is also required if there are 20 students or more in the course. The Course Moderator also has the opportunity to comment.

## 8.10 Ratification

Ratification is the final process in which the School, normally, through the School Assessment Moderation and Results Committee, confirms that the results, final mark and grades moderated, verified and submitted have met the grade requirements of the University's policies and procedures.

## 8.11 School Assessment Moderation and Results Committee (SAMRC)

8.11.1 A School Assessment Moderation and Results Committee is convened in each School at the conclusion of each teaching period.

8.11.2 The School Assessment Moderation and Results Committee normally consists of the following membership:

- Head of School (or nominee) (chair)

Program Coordinators and/or Discipline Leaders

In attendance:

- School Administration Officer (secretary)

8.11.3 The School Assessment Moderation and Results Committee will make recommendations on the following matters:

- the grades or grade notations for all students undertaking a course under the Committee's responsibilities, ensuring the results awarded properly reflect the levels of performance of individual students;
- the allocation and spread of results for each course, ensuring that any modification or scaling of marks has been applied fairly, systematically and for sound academic reasons; and
- in exceptional circumstances, and following consultation with the relevant Head of School (or nominee) and Course Coordinator, it may recommend a variation in the final marks initially lodged for the course.

8.11.4 In making a recommendation on grades, the Committee:

- ratifies the Course Coordinator's decisions on students' results, interim and final mark and grades, including those eligible for supplementary assessment
- provides the University's Learning and Teaching Committee with a summary of the final results and grades, moderation, verification and ratification process for the teaching period. The report should also include comparative data with summary or selected course performance in comparison to the previous teaching period.

8.11.5 Verification and Ratification are processed through the Interim Results Module.

## 9. Submission and approval of result, final marks and grades

The Head of School has the final responsibility to approve the grades in courses offered in their School. With approval from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), this authority to approve grades may be delegated to another person or body, for example, to a Deputy Head of School.

### 9.1 Final mark process

9.1.1 The School Assessment Moderation and Results Committee recommends to the Head of School the final marks, grades and grade notations for all students enrolled in the relevant courses. Once ratified by the Head of School, the final marks are submitted to Student Services and Engagement via the Interim Results Module.

9.1.2 The Head of School may, in exceptional circumstances, determine a grade of a student which is different from that recommended by the School Assessment Moderation and Results Committee or the Course Coordinator. The determination occurs after consultation with the Chair, School Assessment Moderation and Results Committee and the Course Coordinator (or delegate). Where the Head of School is also the Course Coordinator, the decision will be delegated to another appropriate senior academic staff member.

9.1.3 Following the release of final marks and grades, the Head of School is responsible for advising Student Services and Engagement of any amendments to final marks/grades previously submitted.

9.1.4 Final marks for each teaching period must be finalised and submitted to Student Services and Engagement via the Interim Results Module by the date specified by the Director, Student Services and Engagement. Any unfinalised results (e.g. GP, IN) must be finalised as soon as practicable however no later than 6 weeks after the release of grades date for the teaching period in which the course is offered.

9.1.5 Student Services and Engagement will notify students of their final marks and grades on behalf of the Heads of Schools by the due date.

## 9.2 Error in the computation of the final grade

9.2.1 In the case of an error in the computation of the Final Grade, the recalculated mark and grade will apply.

9.2.2 When an error in the computation of the Final Grade is identified subsequent to the release of final grades the following process is followed:

- The Course Coordinator for the identified course checks the results for all students in all assessment items in the Grade Centre in Blackboard. Any necessary adjustments are made; the results are then resubmitted to the Interim Results Module;
- The Course Coordinator provides a report to the relevant Head of School summarising the reason for the error and the effect on the cohort, including a summary of students who will have their mark and grade recalculated resulting in a new grade being awarded.
- Any recalculated grades are approved by the relevant Head of School. In approving the recalculated grades the Head of School should take into consideration the time since the grades were released, the potential consequences to the students and equity across the affected student cohort;
- Once approved by the Head of School, the adjusted grades are submitted to the student information system for transmission to the student/s;
- Following consultation with the relevant School, Student Service and Engagement communicate directly with all students that are affected, informing them of the rationale for the changed grade, available processes in the case of additional assessment, and support.

9.2.3 Students who have incorrectly received a Passing grade (PS-HD) which has been recalculated as a Failing grade (FL/FA) can, at the discretion of the Head of School, be eligible for an additional assessment task to assess the student's achievement of the course's learning outcomes. In cases where the Head of School determines that additional assessment is required, the interim notation of AE (Alternative Examination) or AO (Alternative Assessment) is applied. If a student is eligible for both alternative assessment (due to error correction) and supplementary assessment, then alternative assessment (AE/AO) will be applied, so that the possible final grade is not restricted to a Pass/Fail result.

## 9.3 Review of assessment and final grade

The process for students to seek a review of their result in an assessment task or their final grade is identified in the Review of Assessment and Final Grade – Procedures.

END

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### RELATED DOCUMENTS

Administration of Central Examinations - Procedures  
Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs - Academic Policy  
Coursework Curriculum Design - Academic Policy  
Coursework Curriculum Design - Procedures  
Deferred Examinations - Procedures  
Grades and Grade Point Average (GPA) - Academic Policy  
Review of Assessment and Final Grade - Procedures  
Student Academic Integrity - Governing Policy  
Students with a Disability - Operational Policy  
Supplementary Assessment - Procedures  
Work Integrated Learning (Placement) - Procedures

### LINKED DOCUMENTS

Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs - Academic Policy

### RELATED LEGISLATION / STANDARDS

Australian Qualifications Framework  
Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015