



University Procedure

Assessment (Higher Education)

1. Purpose

This Procedure describes the processes required to support the implementation of the Assessment Policy.

2. Scope

This Procedure applies to all assessable units within higher education courses.

3. Definitions

Course: A course is a program of study/research leading to the granting of an official award or qualification of the University contained in University Schedule 5.1. A course contains subsidiary elements variously referred to as units, competency units or modules.

Assessment: Assessment is the process of gathering and analysing information in order to guide and make judgements about students' learning in relation to curriculum goals and/or competency standards. This formative process recognises the benefits to students of making sense of, reflecting on, and developing their own contributions to knowledge.

Assessment guides learning and teaching by providing constructive feedback to all participants in teaching/learning processes and informs judgements about student achievement.

Unit: A unit of study is defined as a discrete body of learning and/or skills. All units of study are approved by Academic Board in Unit Outline form. A Unit Description incorporating the approved Unit Outline plus specific administrative arrangements for that semester must be given to each student enrolling in a unit.

Unit Outline: The Unit Outline is the University accredited document that outlines the nature and purpose of the unit. It also outlines all assessable tasks and other requirements that must be successfully completed by students undertaking the unit.

Unit Description: The Unit Description must be given to the students at the beginning of the teaching period (within two weeks) or at an early learning session where a student is taking the unit in a weekend, vacation or other block mode. This Unit Description is the learning contract which forms the basis on which students gain the credit points assigned to the unit. The Unit Description must reflect the substantive components of the Unit Outline and cannot introduce new requirements not already delineated in the Unit Outline.

Workload: The learning workload of a unit is defined as the number of hours necessary to be given by an average student to learning activities in order to achieve the objectives of that unit. A semester coursework load for an average full-time student is approximately 600 hours calculated as about 15 weeks at an average of 40 hours per week given to learning activities directed at achieving the objectives of the units taken by a full-time student in a semester.

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**Credit Point:**

One (1) credit point is the value of approximately 10 hours of learning activity by an average student directed at achieving the objectives of a unit. Learning activities may include: pre-lecture preparation, reading; participation in lectures and tutorials; participation in laboratory sessions; conduct of private research; work on individual and team projects; writing essays; problem-solving and project work; individual consultation with teachers; preparation for tests and examinations; taking tests and examinations.

Sixty credit points is the standard value of one full-time semester workload in a course and 120 credit points the standard value of one year workload in a course.

The credit point value of a unit will normally be 15 and the sum of credit points in a semester for units taken by a full-time student making normal progress is 60.

The credit point value of a unit is constant regardless of the course, location and year of a course in which a unit is taken.

Learning Tasks and Assessment:

Learning tasks and assessment are both the process through which students will learn in the unit and the learning products of the unit which form the basis for judgements about student learning achievement during the unit. Such work products emerge from intellectual/creative processes that are supported by teacher-student consultation and feedback.

Learning tasks and assessment are not simply the stipulated work products of the unit; they must be seen in the context of the whole unit as the processes through which learning takes place. Learning tasks and assessment enable the integration of the learning objectives, content, learning activities and assessment of student learning throughout the unit. Thus learning tasks and assessment can be activity-based, of varying magnitudes, conducted at different times during a teaching period and may include negotiation about their various forms. Learning tasks and assessment must also involve reflection on both the learning process and the products of learning.

Moderation of Assessment:

Moderation is a quality assurance process by which an individual or group not involved in setting or marking an assessment task confirms that at all stages that assessment has been conducted with accuracy, consistency and fairness. Moderation contributes to the continuous improvement of assessment practices and to sharing good practice among colleagues.

4. Actions

A Guiding Principles

These Guiding Principles and the procedure that follows should be applied to all unit offerings. The academic staff member responsible for the unit (Unit Coordinator) and, where applicable the unit teaching team, will ensure alignment between the learning objectives of the unit and the learning tasks and assessment that students are required to complete within the unit.

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The Unit Coordinator will ensure that assessment is based on explicit, pre-specified, and/or negotiated criteria (criterion-referenced assessment). The University does not support assessment decisions made solely on the basis of student performance relative to that of the rest of the cohort (norm-referenced assessment).

In addition to the above statements, and as appropriate to units, modules or courses, assessment procedures and practices, should:

- be valid, fair, flexible, feasible, incorporate clearly defined assessment criteria and acknowledge cultural diversity;
- respect, recognise and develop students' current knowledge and experiences and provide appropriate opportunities for the formal recognition of prior learning;
- encourage the use of a range of assessment practices or modes designed to accommodate the diversity of learners;
- assist learners to develop and expand their learning styles and demonstrate their achievement as learners;
- be adapted to enable students with disabilities to demonstrate their achievements with respect to the knowledge, skills or competencies being assessed
- incorporate feedback that supports student learning and is prompt, informative and, where appropriate, provided throughout, not just at the end of, the learning process.

The Course Coordinator must demonstrate how the sequencing of units and the learning objectives and associated learning tasks and assessment of individual units, are aligned with the objectives of the course overall.

The Unit Coordinator must ensure that appropriate information about learning and assessment is included in the Approved Unit Outline and provided to students in the Unit Description for the relevant semester (templates for the Unit Outline and Unit Description are provided in the Learning and Teaching Information and Resources Guide for Staff.

Unit Coordinators must ensure that every student receives a copy of the Unit Description based on the approved Unit Outline. The Unit Description must indicate the learning tasks students are required to complete in a unit, and how student learning will be assessed in that unit.

A copy of every Unit Description is to be lodged with the Administrative Officer of the School responsible for teaching the unit at the same time as it is made available to students. Where the unit is part of a course approved by a different School, the Administrative Officer will provide a copy of the Unit Description to her/his corresponding officer in the other School. The Unit Description must satisfy the requirements specified by the Academic Board. Heads of School are to certify to Course(s) Committees that appropriate Unit Descriptions have been lodged for all units being offered in a teaching period.

B Procedures

The following procedure must be adhered to in relation to the development and review of assessment.

Alignment

1. When reviewing assessable tasks the unit coordinator must ensure that such tasks align with those described in the Unit Outline. No new or additional requirements can be placed into the Unit Description.

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2. Where a new unit is being designed the assessable tasks are to be constructed in the context of:
 - The construct of the Unit Outline.
 - Unit objectives and content.
 - Assigned learning hours.
 - The level of the unit.
 - The purpose of the unit.
 - Where the unit will be offered.
 - Gender neutrality.
 - Cultural sensitivity.
 - Access and Equity Policy (student disability).
 - Course objectives.
 - Desired graduate characteristics.
 - Peer review (internal or external).

3. A statement in the Unit Description or other material given to each student will outline what needs to be done to successfully complete each assessable task. This includes
 - A clear statement that the task will be graded.
 - A brief outline of what students are expected to do.
 - A succinct statement of the requirements for completion of each task.
 - An indication of the approximate amount of time that should be devoted to each task.
 - Due dates and estimated dates for return of work and provision of feedback to students.
 - Statements of the criteria that will be used to grade the tasks.
 - Statements indicating the weighting of the tasks in the assessment of the unit.
 - A statement specifying the assessable tasks that are to be submitted for electronic anti-plagiarism verification and the processes involved.

4. Unit descriptions should indicate the approximate learning hours required for each assessable task.

5. Assessable tasks should be constructed so that they reflect the course objectives and assist students to obtain the University's desired graduate characteristics.

6. The tasks should be constructed in the context of the unit level – e.g. introductory or advanced.

7. The tasks should be constructed so that they can be completed within the learning hours assigned to the unit (one credit point = ten learning hours) taking account of the number of direct contact hours for the unit, the number of hours apportioned to self-directed learning and other assessable tasks.

Assessable Tasks

1. Assessable tasks should be constructed that both challenge the students to extend their knowledge and understanding and stimulate their interest.

2. Assessable tasks need to be logically sequenced so that knowledge builds upon the learning from previous assessable tasks

3. The time frame for completion of all assessable tasks needs to be clearly outlined in the Unit Description together with any penalties that may apply regarding lateness, plagiarism etc.

4. Where the tasks are being reviewed by new academic staff, the new tasks should be discussed with peers within the discipline base and the discipline coordinator or other appropriate staff.

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5. All newly designed tasks should be reviewed by at least one other academic within the discipline responsible for the unit or a cognate area.
6. Any changes to assessable tasks should to be discussed within the discipline responsible for the unit and the discipline coordinator or other appropriate staff member.
7. Once changes to assessable tasks are agreed to by the discipline group the new Unit Outline incorporating the changes are to be forwarded to the appropriate School Course Committee for endorsement and forwarded to the Higher Education Curriculum Committee.

Assistance for students

1. The Unit Description should detail how a student can seek assistance to complete assessable tasks. This might include discussion with tutors and lecturers, staff from the International Student Programs Office, staff from the Library or Student Services etc.
2. When a student is unable to complete an assessable task through illness or other circumstances, a process needs to be outlined for students indicating how to obtain Special Consideration etc.

Feedback

1. Assessable tasks should be returned to students in a timely fashion with sufficient informed feedback to allow the student to determine how their work could be improved. This might include identifying areas that require further study and any other strategies that may assist the student in the learning process.
2. Academic staff should allocate time for students to meet with them to discuss their studies and assessable tasks at mutually convenient times.

Security and Confidentiality

1. Arrangements should be put in place by Schools for the collection and recording of submitted work.
2. While submitted work is being assessed it should be securely stored.
3. If the need arises for the Unit Coordinator to discuss an the work of a student with staff or other students, the discussion can in no way identify the author either directly or indirectly.
4. All assessable tasks are to be returned to the original author and must not be collected by friends or colleagues unless authorised in writing by the author of the work. Returned works must be kept in a secure location until all students have collected it.

Moderation

1. Assessment tasks are subject to pre and post assessment in accordance with the Moderation of Assessment (Higher Education) Policy and Procedure.

5. Responsibilities

The Head of School or nominee is responsible for the maintenance of this procedure.

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6. Policy Base

- [Assessment Policy](#).

Statutes and Regulations:

- [Statute 2.2 - Academic Board](#).
- [Statute 5.1 - Academic Awards and Courses](#).
- [Statute 5.2 - Entry Quotas, Admissions and Enrolment](#).
- [Statute 5.3 - Assessment](#).
- [Statute 5.4 - Exclusion for Reasons of Unfitness](#).
- [Statute 5.6 - Admission to Academic Awards](#).
- [Regulation 5.1 - The Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Masters Degrees by Research and Professional Doctorates](#).

7. Associated Documents

Related Policies:

- [Learning and Teaching Policy](#).
- [Moderation of Assessment \(Higher Education\) Policy](#).
- [Pathways and Articulation Policy](#).
- [Evaluation and Improvement of Courses, Units, Competency Units and Modules Policy](#).
- [Evaluation and Improvement of Teaching Policy](#).
- [Teaching and Assessing in a Language Other than English Policy](#).
- [Equal Opportunity/Valuing Diversity Policy](#).
- [Policy Development, Implementation and Review Framework Policy](#).

Related Procedures and Guidelines:

- Guiding Academic Principles for Off Campus / Third Party Provision (Currently under review)
- [Moderation of Assessment \(Higher Education\) Guidelines](#).
- [Review of New Award Courses \(Higher Education\) Procedure](#).
- [Review of Established Sealed Award Courses \(Higher Education\) Procedure](#).
- [Review of Established Courses Guidelines](#).
- [Managing Disruptive Behaviour Guidelines](#).
- [Teaching and Assessing in a Language Other Than English Procedure](#).
- [Teaching and Assessing in a Language Other than English Guidelines](#).

- [The Unit Outline, Unit Description and Unit Handbook Entry Templates](#) contained in the [Learning, Teaching and Resources for Academic Staff \(2005\)](#) section of the [Learning & Teaching website](#).

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8. Forms/Record Keeping

Title	Location	Responsible Officer	Minimum Retention Period
Unit Description	School Administrative Office	School Administrative Officer	Whilst the Unit is continued to be offered
Unit Outline	School Administrative Office	School Administrative Officer	Whilst the Unit is continued to be offered
Unit Handbook Entry	School Administrative Office	School Administrative Officer	Whilst the Unit is continued to be offered
Assessment Criteria and Associated Marks and Student Feedback for each Student for each Unit	Unit Coordinator	Unit Coordinator	Six months after the Appeals Period for that semester has ended. (All records must be destroyed in keeping with requirements of the University's Central Records Office)

9. Implementation

The Assessment (Higher Education) Procedure is to be implemented throughout the University community in the form of:

1. An Announcement Notice under the *'myUB Gateway-UB Communicate'* website and on the *'What's New'* page on the *'Policies and Procedures @ UB'* website to alert the University-wide community of the approved Procedure, and/or

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