



Assessment Policy and Procedure

Academic Board Approved Policy

Policy Compliance with Relevant Legislation

Regulatory Requirements	Relevant Standards	Section/s
Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015 & 2021		
1.3 Orientation and Progression	<p>2. Specific strategies support transition, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. undertaking early assessment or review that provides formative feedback on academic progress and is able to identify needs for additional support, and c. providing access to informed advice and timely referral to academic or other support. <p>3. Methods of assessment or monitoring that determine progress within or between units of study or in research training validly assess progress and, in the case of formative assessment, provide students with timely feedback that assists in their achievement of learning outcomes.</p>	<p>Section 4 Section 5 Section 3.2</p>
1.4 Learning Outcomes and Assessment	<p>1. The expected learning outcomes for each course of study are specified, consistent with the level and field of education of the qualification awarded and informed by national and international comparators.</p> <p>2. The specified learning outcomes for each course of study encompass discipline-related and generic outcomes, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. specific knowledge and skills and their application that characterise the field(s) of education or disciplines involved b. generic skills and their application in the context of the field(s) of education or disciplines involved c. knowledge and skills required for employment and further study related to the course of study, including those required to be eligible to seek registration to practise where applicable, and d. skills in independent and critical thinking suitable for life-long learning. <p>3. Methods of assessment are consistent with the learning outcomes being assessed, are capable of confirming that all specified learning outcomes are achieved and that grades awarded reflect the level of student attainment.</p>	<p>Section 3.2 Section 5 Section 8</p>

	<p>7. Records of results state correctly, in addition to the requirements for all certification documentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the weighting of units within courses of study b. the grades and/or marks awarded for each unit of study undertaken and, if applicable, for the course overall c. where grades are issued, an explanation of the grading system used 	
5.3 Monitoring, Review and Improvement	<p>2. A comprehensive review includes the design and content of each course of study, the expected learning outcomes, the methods for assessment of those outcomes, the extent of students' achievement of learning outcomes, and also takes account of emerging developments in the field of education, modes of delivery, the changing needs of students and identified risks to the quality of the course of study.</p> <p>3. Comprehensive reviews of courses of study are informed and supported by regular interim monitoring of the quality of teaching and Supervision of research students, student progress and the overall delivery of units within each course of study.</p> <p>Note: SCl is not going to offer research-based courses.</p>	Entire Policy

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Version Control

Version	V2.1
Review	The Academic Board will review this Policy in accordance with the Institute's <i>Policy Document Review Schedule</i> .
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Policy Custodian	Dean
Policy Contact	Dean
Related Documents	<p>Assessment Moderation Policy</p> <p>Glossary of Terms</p> <p>Quality Assurance Policy</p> <p>Student Code of Conduct</p> <p>Student Grievance Management Policy and Procedure</p>
Related Legislation	<p>Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (Cth)</p> <p>Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011</p> <p>Australian Qualifications Framework 2013</p> <p>National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students</p> <p>Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000</p>
Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021(Cth)	<p>B1.1 "Higher Education Provider" Category</p> <p>Standard 1.3, ss 2, 3</p> <p>Standard 1.4, ss 3, 6</p> <p>Standard 1.5, ss 7</p> <p>Standard 3.1, ss 1</p> <p>Standard 4.2, ss 1</p> <p>Standard 5.1, ss 3</p> <p>Standard 5.3, ss 2, 3</p> <p>Standard 7.2, ss 2</p>

Policy Benchmarking

Australia Institute of Higher Education

International School of Management Sydney

Macquarie University

The University of Newcastle

1. Preamble

1.1 Purpose

Southern Cross Institute ('the Institute' or 'SCI') has developed the Assessment Policy and Procedure ('the Policy') to ensure that all student assessment tasks are properly designed to determine the extent to which students achieve the specified learning outcomes of their course of study. This Policy enables the academic staff to make decisions about the performance of individual students within a unit of study to improve performance outcomes.

1.2 Background

Assessment is an integral part of the learning and teaching process and an important aspect of maintaining academic standards. This Policy establishes guidelines on how SCI will ensure the assessment design is constructively aligned with the learning outcomes of each unit and the course they contribute towards, and that students are properly informed about assessment criteria and procedures.

1.3 Definitions

For definitions, please refer to 'Glossary of Terms'.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all students and academic staff at the Institute.

3. Policy Principles

As outlined in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), all assessments must be standards-based and provide evidence of the level of achievement with respect to learning outcomes and graduate attributes. To evaluate student learning effectively, assessments must:

- 3.1 satisfy AQF requirements and relevant professional accreditation standards;
- 3.2 align explicitly with stated learning outcomes of the unit so that students perform the learning outcomes in their assessment work;
- 3.3 follow a transparent procedure with fairness, integrity and confidentiality;
- 3.4 be relevant to industry-needs focused curriculum and instruction;
- 3.5 encourage and improve learning by providing constructive, meaningful and adequate feedback;
- 3.6 ensure academic integrity and promote good practice in acknowledgement and citation of sources;
- 3.7 cover a variety of cognitive and skill-based tasks that students can fairly achieve;
- 3.8 be marked by appropriately qualified markers, with grades applied consistently in accordance with the Marking/Grading Criteria and/or rubric; and
- 3.9 consist of a minimum of two and a maximum of four items of assessment for each unit with a minimum value of 10% per assessment item and a total of 100% for each unit.

4. Policy Details

The Assessment Policy and Procedure describes the mechanism for gathering relevant evidence and making informed decisions to determine student learning outcomes at the Institute.

4.1 Rationale for Assessment

Assessment drives student learning and can be a powerful form of learning itself as well as a measure of achievement. The rationale for SCI assessment is:

- i. to support the developmental progress of students in the cognitive, procedural and affective domains of learning relevant to their discipline and beyond their discipline in the form of generic skills;
- ii. to provide relevant industry relevant information for ongoing evaluation within professional practice environments;
- iii. review and improve the quality of the curriculum and the efficacy of the teaching and learning cycle;
- iv. to measure and confirm the standard of student performance and achievement in relation to a unit's defined learning outcomes;
- v. to reward student effort and achievement with an appropriate grade; and
- vi. to promote, enhance and improve the quality of learning by providing feedback that is valid, constructive, informative, accurate, positive and appropriate to the student's needs.

4.2 Forms of Assessment

- i. Normally, assessment of a unit of study will involve several forms of assessment including formative and summative assessment tasks.
- ii. Formative assessment provides opportunities for students to provide evidence of their learning during the unit and receive feedback that supports their further development and refinement of knowledge and skills stated in the unit learning outcomes.
- iii. Summative assessment seeks to measure the degree to which students have achieved the unit learning outcomes, usually conducted at the conclusion of the unit.
- iv. A combination of forms of assessment items are used at the Institute. Those assessment forms include examinations, reports, essays, quizzes, reflective journals, presentations and case study-based assessments. Additional forms of assessment may be used in units with prior approval of the Academic Board.

4.3 Late Submission Penalties

The submission deadline for the written assessments will be specified in the unit outlines provided to the students. Late submission penalties will apply.

- i. Written assessment tasks submitted electronically after midnight on the due date will be deemed as a late submission.
- ii. Every day for up to ten (10) working days, a penalty of 5% of awarded marks for each day will be applied. The penalty will be calculated by subtracting 5% after marking the assessment task.
- iii. For work submitted ten (10) working days after the due date, a mark of zero will be awarded.
- iv. No marks will be given to students with unexpected and/or unapproved absence from in-class assessments (quiz, test, presentation and others).

5. Assessment Task Guidelines

5.1 For Level 100 (First-year units), the first formative assessment task should be held in

Weeks 4-7 and should be worth 10% to 30% (unless otherwise approved by the Academic Board) of the total grade.

- 5.2 For advanced second/third-year units, the assessment strategy will incorporate advanced and diverse forms of evaluation to better measure students' depth of understanding, critical thinking, and application skills in their field of study. The assessments may include but are not limited to, project-based work, comprehensive case studies, reflective journals, peer-reviewed assessments, presentations, and research papers. These methods are chosen to encourage higher-order thinking, real-world application of knowledge, and development of professional and academic skills.
- 5.3 Where required by a professional accreditation body (such as CPA/CA/ACS), the assessment requirements will be amended with the approval of Academic Board.
- 5.4 Exam durations
 - Final Exam – 1.5 hours to 2 hours (additional 10 minutes reading time)
 - Quiz (formative assessment)– 30 to 45 minutes (no additional reading time)

For graduate courses, the initial formative assessment is typically scheduled between Weeks 4 and 7, with its weightage ranging from 10% to a significant portion of the total grade (unless otherwise approved by the Academic Board). Assessments are notably more rigorous, with the possibility of the entire unit being evaluated without supervised exams. Adjustments to assessment criteria may occur to meet professional accreditation standards, such as those set by bodies like ACS/AASW/ASWEAS, subject to Academic Board endorsement.

Detailed information on assessment items and their weightage is provided to all students in all unit outlines.

6. Notification to Students of Assessment Requirements

- 6.1 The unit outline will be made available to students in the Learning Management System (LMS) a minimum of five (5) working days prior to the start of terms and the assessment tasks will be discussed with students in the first week of classes. The unit outline will provide the specifics of all assessment tasks including a description of the unit's objectives and learning outcomes including the relationship between each assessment task and the unit learning outcomes as well as the overall learning outcomes of the course and the Institute's Graduate Attributes. The assessment schedule will provide the date and time that each assessment is due along with advice on how the assessment is submitted or conducted. The relative weighting of each assessment task is clearly stated and penalties for late submission are explained.
- 6.2 The preferred referencing system (APA 7th Edition) is stated and links to resources for referencing are provided along with links to information regarding penalties for poor referencing and plagiarism.
- 6.3 No changes to assessment tasks will be actioned during a term unless exceptional circumstances require this and only with the approval of the Dean.

7. Assessment Feedback

- 7.1 Students must receive feedback that refers to the criteria in the rubric on their work in a timely manner with guidance on how to improve the quality of their work in subsequent assessments.
- 7.2 The provided feedback should acknowledge the efforts of the individual student and should draw on the unit learning outcomes to explain achievement and areas for improvement.
- 7.3 The students will receive assessment feedback in a timely manner. The turnaround period for assessment items is ten (10) working days from the submission date. The ten (10) working days assessment feedback applies to moderated and/or unmoderated

assessment items.

8. Assessment Submission

All assessment items must be submitted in accordance with the requirements and due dates as outlined in the unit outlines. Assessment items submitted after the due date will attract penalties. The assessment due date extensions can only be granted under extenuating circumstances, with documentary evidence and in accordance with this Policy.

8.1 Assessment tasks must be submitted by the students by the due date unless the student has an approved extension.

8.2 Students must apply for an extension to the Student Support Manager before the due date.

8.3 Assessment extensions may be granted for whole unit or individual assessment under the discretion of lecturer for a limited time only (maximum of 5 working days).

8.4 Applications for longer extensions will be considered as a special consideration and must be submitted in advance of the submission date to the Academic Director. The student must provide a valid reason and evidence for their request for extension. Please see section '*Special Consideration*' for detailed information.

8.5 To maintain the integrity of the assessment extension process, SCI will keep records of the extension applications as per the Records Management Policy.

8.6 Requirements for Successful Completion of a Unit of Study

- i. In order to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes students must attempt all of the summative assessment tasks and achieve at least 50% of the total marks for the unit of study to pass. Where professional accreditation conditions apply, assessments will comply with accrediting body conditions.
- ii. A Supplementary Assessment may be granted to students who have failed that unit and obtained total marks between 46 – 49% (inclusive) provided the student has completed all other assessment tasks.
- iii. The student who is seeking supplementary assessment will have to provide relevant evidence and documentation including submission of *Special Consideration Application Form*.
- iv. The maximum mark a student would be able to secure for the unit through supplementary assessment is 50%.
- v. If the supplementary assessment marks/grades are not available with the rest of the student grades for a semester, those results will be approved by the Academic Board under special submission by the Dean.
- vi. The final grades achieved through supplementary assessment will be declared to students after Academic Board approval.
- vii. For professional practice units of Master of Social Work (Qualifying), students must demonstrate an attained competency of practice to pass the placement. Further details on professional practice assessment are indicated in the *Work Integrated Learning Handbook*.

8.7 Students are required to submit all assessment work online so that it can be subject to electronic scanning to detect plagiarism, artificial intelligence and/or academic misconduct through 'Turnitin'. Software such as 'Turnitin' primarily focuses on detecting plagiarism and artificial intelligence by comparing submitted documents with a vast database of sources, including academic papers, websites, books, and other documents.

9. Reasonable Adjustment

SCI is committed to making a reasonable adjustment to accommodate the needs of a persons

with a special needs. Any request for reasonable adjustment should be made to the Dean by submitting the *Reasonable Adjustment Application Form*. If the requested reasonable adjustment has financial implications, the Dean will seek the approval of the Governing Council.

9.1 SCI also recognises students with additional special needs that can affect learning such as:

- mental health conditions
- medical conditions or ongoing illnesses
- learning difficulties
- other special needs

9.2 Reasonable adjustment in the learning environment or assessment items will be made based on the assessment of a reasonable adjustment application.

10. Special Consideration

For special consideration due to extenuating or exceptional circumstances, students should submit a *Special Consideration Application Form*. Please note that your application must be made within five (5) working days of the due date for any applicable assessment.

10.1 Special consideration may be made if a student encounters extenuating or exceptional circumstances that may affect their ability to complete an assessment task. For special consideration, students should contact the Academic Director(s) for advice on deferment, or an extension to the assessment task due date.

10.2 Academic Director(s) will make a reasonable effort to support students facing unforeseen circumstances. SCI will ensure the provision of adequate support for students requiring special consideration.

11. Grading Criteria

The student assessment performance in individual units shall be graded in accordance with the following guidelines:

Grade	Code	Mark range	Description
High Distinction (outstanding performance)	HD	85% and above	Complete and comprehensive understanding of the unit content; development of relevant skills to an outstanding level; demonstration of an extremely high level of interpretive and analytical ability and intellectual initiative; and excellent achievement of all major and minor objectives of the unit.
Distinction (very high level of performance)	D	75-84%	Very high level of understanding of the unit content; development of relevant skills to a very high level; demonstration of a very high level of interpretive and analytical ability and intellectual initiative; and comprehensive achievement of all major and minor objectives of the unit.
Credit (high level of performance)	C	65-74%	High level of understanding of the unit content; development of relevant skills to a high level; demonstration of a high level of interpretive and analytical ability and achievement of all major objectives of the unit; some minor objectives not fully achieved.
Pass (competent level of performance)	P	50-64%	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.
Fail (unsatisfactory performance)	F	below 50%	Inadequate understanding of the basic unit content; failure to develop relevant skills; insufficient evidence of interpretive and analytical ability; and failure to achieve some or all major and minor objectives of the unit.

Grade Pending	GP		A final grade is yet to be awarded for the unit as students have not yet completed all the assessment tasks and special consideration has been approved due to medical grounds or exceptional circumstances beyond the control. This is a temporary grade only and must be finalised before the end of the following semester.
Supplementary Assessment (including Exam)	SX		A final grade is yet to be awarded for the unit as a supplementary exam in the last term only and under special circumstances approved by the Dean for students who have failed the unit and obtained a total mark between (46- 49%), provided the student has completed all other assessment units. This is a temporary grade only and must be finalised before the end of the following semester.
Withdrawn from Course	WD		The student has withdrawn from the Course after the census date without penalty
Advanced Standing	AS		Credit has been granted for the unit of study following an application and its approval for Advanced Standing.
Deferred Assessment	DEF		Deferral has been granted for one or more assessment tasks via Special Consideration.
Absent Fail	AF		If student did not attempt one or more assessments and scored less than 50% of the total marks for the unit of study to pass.
Withdraw Fail	WF		Student has withdrawn from the course after the census date.

12. Moderation of Assessment

The Institute will apply assessment moderation to all written assessment items worth twenty (20) per cent or more. Detailed information on assessment moderation is contained in the *Assessment Moderation Policy*.

13. Approval and Publication of Results

- i. After the conclusion of the teaching semester, the unit lecturers will submit the Gradebooks of each unit's in-semester assessment marks to their relevant Academic Director.
- ii. After the conclusion of final exam/assessment, the unit lecturers will submit the finalised Gradebooks including the final exam/assessment marks and grades to their relevant Academic Director.
- iii. The Academic Directors will submit all completed Gradebooks to the Dean.
- iv. The Dean will present semester grades to Learning & Teaching Committee for approval.
- v. The Dean will present the Learning & Teaching Committee approved grades to the Academic Board for ratification.
- vi. The Academic Board ratified grades will be handed to the Student Support

Manager for release.

- vii. If the supplementary assessment marks/grades are not available with the rest of the student grades of a semester, those results will be approved by the Academic Board under special submission by the Dean.
- viii. The Student Support Manager is responsible for publication of the official examination timetable, the release of official result statements and unofficial semester academic records.
- ix. Results in individual assessments and grades awarded in a unit will be displayed or published to each student on the Institute's Learning Management System.
- x. No student's grade or mark will be lowered after it has been officially released except in the case of proven academic misconduct by the student or an administrative error, with the final decision to be made by the Dean.

14. Assessment Record Keeping

SCI will ensure an ongoing record of student marks and grades is securely maintained in accordance with the *Records Management Policy and Procedure*.

15. Quality Assurance

The integrity of academic assessment at the Institute will be maintained as per the *Academic Integrity Policy*.

16. Review of an Assessment Decision

A student may request a review of an assessment decision. In the first instance, students should approach the Lecturer to discuss their concerns about the assessment decision. Students must submit a request for appeal within five (5) working days of receiving formal notification of the assessment result. A student may request a review of an assessment decision in accordance with the appeal process provided in *Student Grievance Management Policy and Procedure*.

17. Appeal

Students may appeal against a decision made under this Policy and associated Procedure. The student's appeal will be dealt with in accordance with the Institute's grievance handling procedures outlined in the *Student Grievance Management Policy and Procedure*

Appendix I: Sample Forms of Assessment

Quizzes	Quizzes are intended to test if students' study regularly and have a good grasp of the material covered in lectures and tutorials. Quizzes usually will have descriptive/composition answers and written work which allows academics to assess the English language proficiency. Words such as 'explain', 'describe', 'relate' should characterise quiz questions. It will support the capacity of the academic staff to assess where further English language support is necessary for individual students.
Examination	Exams are (usually) closed-book exams that test knowledge acquired from the entire unit and may include a combination of practical, theoretical, self-reflective, and case study questions, focusing on all topics covered during the teaching term.
Case study/written reports	Case studies and reports encourage students to apply academic learning to real-world scenarios. They vary in length and while they are not usually the same length as an essay, they must adhere to the same academic standards, including appropriate referencing and should demonstrate adequate research frequently indicated by a literature review.
Projects/Practical exercise	These can be conducted individually or in groups and address a practical element of a subject. They may employ various media in resolving a material or technical problem and frequently include a written report. Practical exercises allow students to demonstrate their applied or technical skills associated with the abstract learning of their subject.
Group work and/or presentations	<p>Group presentations are usually accompanied by a written report of adequate length and appropriate format to demonstrate the research problem, the key literature pertaining to the issue as well as major findings and recommendations.</p> <p>Group work demonstrates a student's ability to work and interact with others as well as enhances their individual learning. Such activities reflect common business practices and often require students to demonstrate various skills.</p>