

Assessment

Title	Assessment
Overview	Describes arrangements for the conduct of assessment generally.
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Related documents	
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Assessment

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Definitions

Definitions: (NB. These are working definitions that may be changed to ensure consistency with terminology employed in the Student System).

Forms of assessment:

Assessment components: Discrete tasks or elements of assessment within a particular subject. A component may be a single task (e.g. examination; essay) or a set of tasks (e.g. laboratory reports; weekly exercises).

Examination: Includes only assessment held during the examination period. For example, formally supervised written examinations; written or online tests; oral tests; performances; aural tests.

Longer Assignment: substantial piece of work to be submitted by a student for assessment, completed outside class time, by a pre-determined due date. This includes 'essay', 'dissertation', 'research project', 'take-home examination', 'portfolio' 'report', or other longer written project, design or programming task. In general, an individual task worth more than 25% of the subject points, and/or of more than 1000 words is considered a 'longer assignment'.

Shorter assignment: work to be submitted by a student for assessment, completed outside class time and by a pre-determined due date. Includes 'short essay', 'take-home test', 'problem set', 'short report', or other written project, design or programming task, usually submitted to teaching staff in class. Shorter assignments are often weekly tasks (e.g. laboratory reports; weekly tutorial exercises) and may be grouped together as a single component of assessment.

In-class task: includes all assessment undertaken and completed during a class. For example, written or online tests; oral tests or presentations; practical work, including reports and problems solving exercises; performances; aural tests; and, class participation.

Prescribed (Hurdle) requirement: An assessment requirement that must be satisfactorily completed in order for the student to pass a subject, irrespective of the marks achieved by completion of other components of assessment in that subject.

Additional Assessment: Component(s) of assessment administered (subject to strict criteria) to some students in addition to or (in the case of special assessment) instead of the advertised requirements.

Alternative Assessment: Component(s) of assessment administered in a different form or under different conditions to students assessed as experiencing academic disadvantage or as a result of Special Consideration, instead of the advertised requirements.

Results:

Marking: the act of assessing individual assessment components, generating a score and/or grade, and feedback, as appropriate.

Score or raw score: the **provisional result** of an assessment component, prior to compilation and conversion to percentage mark & grade according to the University grading scheme.

Mark: The numeric figure (e.g. 75%) expressing the result for each subject in percentage terms.

Grade: A notation (e.g. H1, P) that describes a student's performance in each subject, derived from the mark, with the exception of WD or incomplete grades.

Final result: The mark and grade determined by the Board of Examiners as a student's result for the subject as a whole.

Return of Results: The day by which results have to be submitted within the Student System by teaching departments.

Due Date: The date by which an assessment task must be submitted to avoid incurring a penalty for late submission.

Expected return date: The date that completed assessment, together with feedback from Examiners, is expected to be available for collection/review by students.

Roles and responsibilities:

Subject Coordinator: An individual academic staff member designated to be responsible for the teaching and administration of the subject.

Examiners: The Examiners are persons designated by the chairperson of the examination board from those teaching the subject as the Examiners (under statute 12.1).

Assistant markers: persons assisting Examiners assess student's work; for example, tutors and demonstrators.

Examination Board: Name given to the group of **Examiners** responsible for assessment in each subject.

Departmental Assessment Coordinator: The Head of Department or their nominee with responsibility for coordinating assessment within a teaching department.

Course Progress Committee: A committee chaired by the custodial dean or their nominee (often a relevant faculty Associate Dean) which makes recommendations to boards of Examiners on re-assessment after borderline failure or for additional assessment for the last subject of a student's degree¹.

Subject and course details:

Class: A set instruction or learning time held at a specified time during a teaching period, which may be a lecture, tutorial, seminar, laboratory, or practical.

Assessment period: Each teaching period is followed by an assessment period, during which the final assessment component (examination or assignment) falls due. The assessment period for semester subjects is four weeks (one week for the summer term). An assessment period of one or more weeks must be defined for non-standard subjects.

Swot Vac: a period of time between the teaching and the assessment period during which teaching and assessment is suspended to allow preparation by students.

Standard teaching semester: the usual teaching semesters, approved by Academic Board annually, comprising semester 1, 2 and a summer semester of 6 weeks.

Fixed, full-time course: A course where a student must successfully complete all subjects of the course during a particular academic year and maintain a full-time enrolment. A student who fails a subject is not permitted to progress to the next year of the course without repeating the failed subject.

Subject Guide: A publication, authorised by the subject coordinator, which contains subject specific information, including assessment information, subject information such as the class schedule and weekly topics, and readings and resources assembled for the student.

This policy applies to all coursework degrees

¹ Not the Unsatisfactory Progress Committee, established by the Academic Board (see the Unsatisfactory Progress Policy), though common membership may be advantageous.

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This policy is underpinned by University statute 12: Assessment and Admission to Degrees, and should be interpreted with reference to this document. In addition, the University has policies on Coursework Theses, Examinations (including Alternative Examination Arrangements), Academic Misconduct, Extensions, Students Experiencing Academic Disadvantage and Special Consideration that intersect with this policy.

This policy is designed to ensure that students are treated in an equitable and fair manner in relation to assessment, and to provide staff with the framework to do so.

The policy does not prescribe with respect to the design of assessment tasks. Subject Coordinators and Examination Boards are well placed to develop sound assessment practices that reflect the characteristics and particular requirements of their subject areas. This document provides a policy framework to support such discipline-specific assessment design and implementation.

There are also other reference documents and guidelines developed by the Centre for the Study of Higher Education (CSHE) discussing best practice in assessment, such as the '*University of Melbourne Guide for Reviewing Assessment*'², which provide valuable input into this process.

1. The purposes of assessment and grading

The University of Melbourne recognises that assessment in higher education serves multiple purposes. The nature and requirements of assessment tasks help define the learning that is expected of students and significantly influence students' patterns of study. Assessment also assists the University to provide students with feedback on their progress. Finally, and primarily, assessment allows the University to measure student learning against established objectives.

The University aims to employ approaches to assessment and grading that positively influence students' study habits, provide students with helpful feedback where possible, and measure fairly, grade and report the extent of student learning.

The University's assessment and grading are informed by four fundamental principles:

- Assessment tasks are designed to measure accurately the knowledge and skills that a student has obtained up to the point at which the task is completed.
- The marking of assessment tasks is designed to quantify the level of student learning against identified objectives for each task or component of a task.
- Grading is designed to record and report whether or not students have demonstrated an overall level of performance that warrants successful completion of a subject and to allow excellent achievement to be recognised and rewarded.
- The University's assessment and grading practices will treat all students equally and fairly.

² Centre for the Study of Higher Education, 2005. Please refer to this document online at <http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/pdfs/GRA.pdf> for further detail.

2. What is assessed?

Each subject offered at the University has a defined list of objectives that are communicated to students through a range of subject guides, the Course & Subject Handbook³, the Learning Management System and subject websites. Subject objectives include the development of discipline specific knowledge and skills, as well as generic skills⁴. Guiding the development of these skills and knowledge and measuring progress against these objectives are the purposes of assessment in each subject.

3. Subject study level

Each subject at the University is offered at a particular level: undergraduate (levels 1, 2 and 3); honours (level 4), or; various postgraduate levels (diploma or masters level). A subject offered at level 1 (and therefore available to commencing undergraduates) will have assessment and grading that reflects the expectations for students at that level. Similarly, a postgraduate subject will have assessment that reflects the expectations for graduate students.

4. Responsibility for the conduct of assessment

Assessment is overseen by the Academic Board, which delegates much responsibility to teaching departments. The Head of Department (the head) or their nominee, in the role of Department Assessment Coordinator, reviews all aspects of assessment for subjects taught through that department. This role also provides a link between the Academic Committee⁵ responsible for the overall development and design of each course (which reports to the Academic Board), and the Examination Board in each subject.

A subject is considered to be the responsibility of the department within which the designated Subject Coordinator (as listed in the University's Course & Subject Handbook) has their substantive position (or appointment, if a sessional member of staff). Each subject is assigned to a department in the Student System⁶.

The Examination Board comprises all of the Examiners in the subject as well as the head of the relevant teaching department or their nominee (often the Subject Coordinator), and works in close collaboration with the designated Departmental Assessment Coordinator to determine (within parameters established at the course level) the assessment requirements for the subject.

Examination Boards are responsible for the design, preparation and administration of all components of assessment, including additional assessment, and must ensure, to the extent possible, that each Examiner in the subject applies the same standards, in reference to explicit criteria, against which each student's work is marked.

³ Also known as the University Handbook.

⁴ Including the development of the abilities and attributes encompassed in the 'Graduate Attributes of the Melbourne graduate' resulting from the Melbourne Experience, see: <http://www.unimelb.edu.au/about/attributes.html>.

⁵ This could be either a faculty academic programs committee or a Course Standing Committee.

⁶ The administrative responsibilities for a subject's assessment – e.g. for exam papers, results processing, etc may be delegated to an organisation unit such as a Student Centre, however the academic responsibility for the subject remains with the Head of the relevant teaching department.

Determining assessment requirements

- 4.1. *Fixed requirements* (requiring approval by the appropriate Academic Committee, and publication in the University's Course & Subject Handbook):
 - The forms of assessment to be used;
 - The prescribed size, length or extent of each component of assessment;
 - The approximate timing of assessment tasks;⁷
 - The weighting of each component of assessment.
- 4.2. *Variable requirements* (determined, by the Examination Board, in time for publication at the commencement of the subject):
 - The criteria on which these tasks will be graded and marks allocated;
 - The due date for submission or performance of each component of assessment;
 - Penalties for late submission of assignments⁸;
 - Guidelines for breach of word limits on assignments and failure to follow prescribed formats;
 - The expected date for return of results for each component of assessment;
 - Where appropriate, guidelines for a resit of a test or examination;
 - Where appropriate, guidelines for being excused from an assessment task.

The details of assessment requirements listed in 4.1 and 4.2 above must be published to students in an appropriate form, ideally within the subject entry in the Learning Management System (see also Section 13 '*Parameters of Assessment Requirements*' below)⁹.

Determining marks and grades

Examination Boards determine:

- Whether each student to be assessed has passed, and the grade and mark to be awarded to each student or, where this cannot be determined, the offer of appropriate additional assessment;
- An appropriate response to each application for Special Consideration made during teaching and/or;
- An appropriate response to each recommendation made by the central Special Consideration committee.

5. Explaining assessment criteria to students

Making assessment criteria explicit helps ensure that students direct their efforts appropriately. Given that assessment sends powerful signals to students about the learning most valued, providing such clarity of expectations is critical.

The way in which criteria are explained will differ depending upon the task, discipline and subject level¹⁰. Highly detailed, quantitative 'score-based' *numerical criteria* (e.g.

⁷ Not specific due dates; for example 'end of semester', 'mid-semester', 'weekly'.

⁸ Even if this is a specified standard penalty.

⁹ A subject guide template will be developed as an appendix to this policy, so that a consistent format is provided for students, and Examiners/subject coordinators can easily supply the information.

¹⁰ Sample criteria for different forms of assessment (e.g. exam, assignment, practical work) will be developed as an appendix to this policy, showing how the criteria can be related to the objectives of the subject.

“20% for grammar and expression, 20% for use of readings”, etc.), are appropriate in some circumstances but not all.

The level of detail of explanation may vary from one type of assessment task to another; for example, the detail provided for an examination compared to a major essay may not be comparable.

Criteria should be published with the details of each assessment task.

It is desirable to make assessment *standards* explicit, where possible, in addition to explaining criteria. This involves providing an explanation or example of the qualities of work required to achieve particular grades. Making explicit the standard required to achieve the higher, honours grades is particularly desirable.

Explanations of assessment criteria presented to students should be:

- specific to each task;
- clearly worded in plain English;
- sufficiently detailed so as to provide guidance to students undertaking assessment tasks, but not so detailed as to make the task meaningless (i.e. by providing ‘the answer’);
- justifiable (i.e. linked to the learning objectives of the subject);
- except for pass/fail subjects, structured to enable differentiation between levels of performance;
- appropriate to assessment weightings (of sufficient detail given the relative importance of the task);
- supported by a verbal or written statement about what constitutes the various levels of performance (e.g. what constitutes ‘outstanding’ versus ‘adequate’ level work and examples of each where practical)¹

6. Marking guidelines for Examiners and assistant markers

Agreed assessment marking criteria help to set and maintain standards within (and across) subjects. There are many benefits to the early development and documentation of explicit assessment criteria.

Most importantly, having detailed and documented marking guidelines supports assessment parity when multiple assessors are involved. This is particularly critical when some Examiners have limited experience with university assessment (e.g. new staff; industry or research associates outside the University).

Examination Boards through the subject coordinator are required to ensure, as far as practicable, that each Examiner and assistant marker in the subject applies the same standard in marking. Therefore, if more than one person is assessing the same task, including examinations, the use of assessment marking criteria demonstrates equity of marking.

Marking guidelines provide other benefits for subject planning, coordination and teaching:

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- Early establishment of the detailed assessment criteria necessary to prepare marking guidelines helps to ensure alignment between intended learning outcomes and assessment;
- Involving all members of the examination board in this process helps ensure that assessment tasks are cohesive in their design;
- Sharing this information with all staff involved in teaching the subject before assessment commences helps ensure that the teaching throughout the subject best supports the learning deemed important;
- Detailed assessment criteria ensure that all staff share an understanding of what is ‘outstanding’ work, reducing moderation of results where differences are identified after the fact;
- Written guidelines can provide excellent support to claims of procedural fairness; and
- If double marking is later required (see Section 19.2, ‘*Double marking*’ below), a clear record of the criteria to be applied is invaluable.

In addition, if the criteria are presented as ‘marking sheets’, and so completed for each student’s work, these can form part of the feedback provided to students¹¹.

It is important that marking guidelines, in whatever form and used for whatever purpose, align with the explanation of assessment criteria provided to students in advance (see Section 5, ‘*Explaining assessment criteria to students*’ above).

Not all marking guidelines need be highly detailed documents, establishing precisely what is required to obtain each grade or mark. The level of detail appropriate will depend upon the task, year level, weighting of the assessment component concerned, and diversity in experience among Examiners. It is, however, difficult to imagine assessment that would not benefit from documented assessment criteria in some form.

7. Forms of assessment

Assessment can take a variety of forms including those listed below. Each form of assessment can be categorised according to whether it is an examination, an assignment, an in-class task, or some aspect of practice. This categorisation will determine what rules apply for the administration of each piece of assessment (including late marking penalties, extensions, etc.).

- Formally supervised written examinations - examination
- Take-home examinations - assignment
- Written or online tests - examination or in-class task¹²
- Essays, dissertations, minor theses or other written assignments - assignments
- Oral examinations or tests - examination or in-class task¹²
- Seminar presentations - in-class task
- Practical work, including reports and problem solving exercises – in-class task

¹¹ This will not always be appropriate, and feedback for many tasks is best provided in quite a different format (e.g. a mark with general comments on areas of strength and areas for improvement). A third option, appropriate for some assessment tasks, is to create two versions of the marking sheet (i.e. one for staff reference, another for student feedback), each in language most appropriate for the respective user groups.

¹² Depending on timing: e.g., if held during the examination period, this would be an examination.

- Performances - examination or in-class task¹²
- Aural tests - examination or in-class task¹²
- design or programming tasks - assignments
- Field work - practice
- Clinical or practice work - practice
- Portfolio - assignment
- Class participation¹³ - in-class task.

It is recognised that some forms lend themselves to assessment in particular subject areas, just as others may be less efficient or effective in that area. Notwithstanding these concerns, Examiners are encouraged to employ a variety of assessment tasks to ensure rigorous assessment, and to provide opportunities for all students to develop the desirable knowledge and skills and to demonstrate their capabilities.

A single assessment task - and specifically a 100% examination - is unlikely to provide an opportunity for effective feedback to students and may not enable a student to demonstrate the achievement of a subject's objectives. In certain subjects, however, in courses structured accordingly, this may be the most appropriate form of assessment (e.g., 100% examination in certain subjects in specialised, professional degrees may indeed be appropriate). Where a single assessment task is proposed for a subject, explicit justification must be provided to the Academic Board through the course approval process and must demonstrate how effective feedback will be provided to students and how the learning objectives for the subject will be appropriately assessed.

This requirement also applies to subjects with a single assignment, such as a research project or minor thesis (see Coursework Thesis policy).

Student peer assessment may take the form of either in-class or assignment, but assessment will be of a task of a type listed above.

8. Alternative assessment components

In some cases, alternative assessment options may be appropriate, and a student may be provided with a choice about the form of assessment they undertake in order to demonstrate achievement of a subject's objectives (for example, they may either complete an optional essay which, if not completed, is substituted by an additional end of semester examination).

Consideration needs to be given to equity concerns, and marking criteria must be carefully defined. Particular care needs to be given to the problem of ensuring equivalence between marks awarded for a student sitting for the examination option and, marks awarded for a written assignment.

¹³ Not attendance; participation, see Section 9, *Weighting of assessment components* for more detail.

9. Weighting of assessment components

Examiners are encouraged to employ more than one form of assessment in a single subject in order to enable students to demonstrate their capacity to understand the material they are studying.

Each component of assessment will be assigned a weighting, expressed in terms of the maximum percentage of the total mark in the subject that may be obtained by completion of that particular component of assessment. The weighting indicates to the student how much time should be allocated to one assessment task compared with another, and guides the depth of engagement with course content.

For example, one subject may require a student to complete a written assignment worth 40% of the total mark, and a formally supervised written exam worth 60% of the total mark. Note that word limit is not necessarily a determinant of the weighting of each component of assessment in a given subject.

Class participation will not be assigned more than 10% of the total mark for a subject. Assessment criteria for participation must make clear the expectations for participation and explain how performance is differentiated (e.g. what is 'good participation' compared to 'outstanding participation'?). Participation means more than attendance, and marks should not be awarded simply for students attending scheduled classes.

10. Prescribed (hurdle) requirements

Some subjects may require the successful completion of specific assessment tasks in order to demonstrate a basic level of knowledge or acquisition of certain skills.

For example, for a subject in which practical as well as theoretical knowledge is critical, a student who has not satisfactorily completed both practical and theoretical elements may be deemed unsuited to further study in that discipline, or deemed not to have satisfied the objectives of the subject.

A prescribed component must be published within the Course & Subject Handbook¹⁴.

Students who do not satisfy the Prescribed (Hurdle) hurdle requirements in any subject will fail that subject, even if they have obtained more than 50% of the marks available by the completion other components of assessment.

Where Prescribed (Hurdle) requirements form part of the assessment for a subject, the particular nature of these requirements and the consequences for failing to meet them must be communicated to students with the details of assessment (for example, if a student will be ineligible to sit for the exam if they fail a prescribed component, this must be made clear to students).

Examples of Prescribed (Hurdle) requirements include:

- Class attendance requirements (where class participation constitutes core learning): Examiners/Assistant markers must keep a log of attendance where

¹⁴ A student, for example, who as a result of a disability would be unable to complete a practical requirement, needs to be aware of this prior to enrolling in the subject.

class attendance is required, and must specify which classes are required (for example specify if attendance at tutorial, seminar or labs is required, but is not for lectures);

- Successful completion of all components of assessment required to achieve an overall pass in the subject (where performance against critical subject objectives are demonstrated in different assessment tasks);
- Successful completion of particular components of assessment required to achieve an overall pass in the subject (e.g. Students must pass at least ten out of twelve lab reports, in order to demonstrate accumulation of learning);
- Attainment of a specified minimum level of performance in complements of assessment (if this is not necessarily a pass in the components) and/or,
- Successful completion of both practical and theoretical elements of the subject required to achieve an overall pass in the subject.

10.1. *Pass/Fail Hurdle Requirement*: If a hurdle requirement (such as practical work) is not able to be graded, its completion as a hurdle requirement, with the final result being dependent on performance in theoretical work marked to the full range of results, may be appropriate.

11. Group / syndicate work

For certain subjects, and particularly within postgraduate learning, group tasks and collaborative work might form part of learning and assessment.

Group assessment requires careful planning and consideration, as not all contributions from students to a project or task will be equal, and students are very conscious of equity issues if all contributors receive the same mark for an assessment task regardless of their individual contribution.

When constructing the assessment of group or collaborative work, Examiners should consider whether it is appropriate to set tasks that recognise and differentiate the performance of each individual group member from the performance of the group as a whole.

Assessment marking criteria must indicate how particular aspects of the group activity, for example, teamwork, cooperation (the “process” of group learning) and the final product, relate to the objectives of the subject. Where teamwork and cooperation are to be assessed as part of group work, the assessment marking criteria should clearly outline how performance on these aspects will be judged by the assessor.

In some cases, the achievement of the learning objectives for a group task may be best expressed by a pass/fail only outcome for the subject.

The CSHE document “Assessing group work” provides further information about structuring and assessing group work¹⁵.

¹⁵ Available at: <http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/assessinglearning/docs/Group.pdf>.

12. Assessment in intensive subjects

Assessment tasks should reflect the nature of the teaching and learning experience. In intensive subjects, this may mean, for example:

- utilisation of more immediate assessment forms, such as class participation, group or collaborative in-class assessment;
- requiring independent preparation, such as the requirement that a student undertake specified reading or research prior to teaching and demonstrate their acquired knowledge in classes¹⁶, and/or;
- requiring individual or collaborative research project work, conducted after face-to-face teaching has concluded.

13. Parameters of assessment requirements

Each assessment component required for completion of a subject will be defined by particular parameters that describe the extent of that component. For example, a formally supervised written examination will be of a prescribed length of time (usually 2 or 3 hours), and a written assignment will have a prescribed word limit.

Word limits are established to define an assessment task and to encourage students to produce concise work that reflects the scope of the tasks set for them. Assignments are structured to ensure workloads for students (and for academic staff) are reasonable and properly communicated.

13.1. *Compliance with word limits:* In order to ensure equity and consistency, students should be penalised for submitting assignments that are substantially different from the prescribed size. Penalties are applied at the discretion of the Examination Board, but must be applied equally to all students enrolled in the relevant subject.

If, at the written discretion of the Subject Coordinator, an extension of the word limit is available, the grounds should be made clear to students.

The penalty for lack of compliance must be communicated to students with the details of assessment and should be sufficiently detailed (i.e. specifying the word limit, any leeway, the marking penalty itself, and any exceptions to the rule) (see Section 15, 'Standard penalties', below).

13.2. *Compliance with style and format guidelines:* In some areas of study, compliance with a professional or academic style and/or mandated formats is essential. Different style and formats may be specified for different assessment tasks, to enable students to demonstrate their understanding of the applicability of presentation styles for differing purposes.

Students need to be advised of style and formatting expectations, and ideally provided with examples to follow. Marks allocated for style

¹⁶ Not to say that this is exclusive to intensives, and pre-reading and preparation before classes is generally required; the difference for intensives is that this cannot take place concurrently.

separately to 'academic judgement,' or penalties for not following prescribed formats, must be detailed and published with the details of assessment.

A general, default standard-format for submission of work is recommended in Section 26, '*Preparation of assignments*' below, and would be applied in the absence of other mandated expectations.

The purpose of this standard format is to enable Examiners to assess work on its merits, without distraction due to difficulties in reading and interpreting work presented in a more idiosyncratic format.

14. Late submission of work

In order to ensure equality of opportunity for students, assignments must be completed within specified time limits. Assignments that are not submitted on time will attract a marking penalty unless an extension of time has been awarded to a student (see section 28 '*Extension of time to complete assignments*' below).

The nature of the penalty should be considered in light of the nature and the timing of the task. For example, a 100% penalty is probably unreasonable if applied to an assignment completed over many months and worth most of the marks for the subject that is submitted a few days late, but may be appropriate for a weekly exercise completed after a lab or tutorial, to be discussed during the next class.

Penalties are applied at the discretion of the Examination Board, but must be applied equally to all students enrolled in the relevant subject.

The nature of the penalty should be based on:

- The level of the subject;
- The length of time to complete the assignment (a penalty may appropriately be more severe for short-term task that is late by the same number of days when compared to a longer task completed over many weeks);
- The nature of the task (weekly exercises/ problems might appropriately not be permitted to be submitted late if, for example, the answers / solutions are provided to students shortly after the submission of work).

Penalties for late submission must be communicated to students with the details of assessment and should be sufficiently detailed (i.e. specifying the due date, any leeway, the late penalty itself, and any final deadline for submission before an assignment may not be submitted and assessed) (see Section 15, '*Standard penalties*', below).

Based on the nature of the subject and the assessment task, Examiners in some subjects may choose not to apply any penalty for late submission. Examiners must communicate the absence of a penalty to students as part of the assessment statement for that subject.

15. Standard penalties for New Generation undergraduate degrees

The following are standard penalties for exceeding word limits and for late submission of work that apply to New Generation undergraduate courses.

Penalties applying to subjects in postgraduate coursework programs must be published with subject details (see Section 4.2).

15.1. Penalty for exceeding word limit on a longer assignment

At the discretion of the Board of Examiners, assignments that exceed the word limit by more than 10%, inclusive of footnotes, should attract a marking penalty of 10% of the marks that would otherwise have been awarded.

Assignments that exceed the word limit by 25% or more may attract a higher penalty, including a cap on the maximum grade awarded, unless a student gains an exemption.

For example, an assignment with a limit of 2000 words will be marked down by 10% if there are more than 2200 words. If there are 2500 words or more, the maximum result that may be awarded is an H2B.

Discretion

A student may be permitted to exceed the word limit if the work is genuinely outstanding and original, and permitting a student to do so does not disadvantage other students who were required to conform to the word-limit. A student must seek advice before submitting an assignment that is well over the limit.

15.2. Penalty for exceeding word limit on a shorter assignment

Set at the discretion of the subject coordinator.

15.3. Penalty for late submission of a longer assignment

Unless an extension has been granted, for essays/assignments submitted after the due date, the mark a student is awarded for their work will be reduced by 10% for each day¹⁷ the work is late. This means that after three days, a student originally awarded 75% will be awarded 45%.

Unless an extension has been granted, assignments submitted later than 5 working days (or 1 week if due on a weekend) after the due date will not be marked, and will receive no marks.

15.4. Penalty for late submission of a shorter assignment

Set at the discretion of the subject coordinator.

15.5. Penalty for late submission of in-class tasks

Tasks that are required to be completed and/or submitted in-class, such as lab reports or short assignments (e.g. a problem set, short written assignments, short literature review), must be submitted on the due date unless a student had been awarded an extension. The penalty for late submission of in-class tasks is

¹⁷ Using electronic submission means work may be submitted on any day. Work due on a Friday, but not submitted until the following Monday, would be penalised by 10%.

usually 100% of the mark. In-class tasks will not be marked if submitted more than one week following the due date (i.e. after the return of work to students).

16. Timing of assessment tasks

Examiners should be mindful of the formal University assessment periods in setting assessment tasks.

- 16.1. *Early assessment* In order for students to appreciate how well they are performing against subject learning objectives, wherever possible students should be provided with formative and meaningful assessment tasks early in semester.

In particular, in first year undergraduate subjects students will be required to complete at least one component of assessment (e.g. first practical report, in-class test, attendance requirement etc.) within the first six weeks of the teaching period (a task that is submitted, marked and returned to the student within this period).

This feedback allows students time for them to act on this feedback in preparation for their final piece of assessment. Making this early assessment of performance in turn informs commencing 'student at risk' programs designed to identify and address problems that an individual student may experience in the transition to tertiary education.

- 16.2. *Final assessment:* In order to test students' accumulation of skill and knowledge throughout the teaching period, the final piece of assessment in each subject would normally be due within the defined assessment period for the subject, following the conclusion of teaching.
- 16.3. *'Swot Vac':* In order to allow preparation for final assessment for all subjects, assessment (any exam, test or due-date for an assignment) will not be scheduled during the 'swot-vac' period at the end of the standard teaching semester and before the assessment period.
- 16.4. *Student Workload:* Except for courses taught largely through intensive means, where assessment for the course may be integrated with the learning experience, the impact of assessment on other subjects in which a student may be enrolled should be considered in establishing the timing of assessment tasks in compulsory subjects.

To the extent possible, assessment tasks across compulsory subjects within a course should be timed to avoid overloading students at certain periods during each teaching period¹⁸.

¹⁸ This is a timetabling issue; once established, students are expected to plan their study and preparation around assessment deadlines.

Competing and conflicting deadlines for multiple assessment tasks, and especially during standard assessment periods, will not normally be considered grounds for the award of extensions or Special Consideration.

17. Publication of assessment details

In order for students to understand what is expected of them in each subject they undertake, specific information about assessment must be published according to a known timetable.

- Details of all the subjects to be offered in the following year including fixed requirements specified in Section 4.1 above, will be published with the publication of the Course & Subject Handbook, usually as close to 31 October in the previous year as possible.
- Specific due dates and expected return dates for assessment will be published in subject guides available to students as soon as practicable, but no later than within the first two weeks, or the first quarter of the teaching period, whichever occurs first.
- All subjects should provide a detailed assessment statement, including the extent and weighting of each component of assessment, criteria on which these tasks will be graded and marked, details of any prescribed requirements and specific due dates for assignments, and penalties for breaching standards or due dates; that is, the variable requirements specified in Section 4.2 above, in the Learning Management System (LMS).

18. Changes to assessment details

Once the details of subjects have been published and students have been permitted to enrol (in classes) for the following year, alterations to the assessment details will be considered late changes and subject to the late change policy of the Academic Board.

Changed assessment details will be communicated to students promptly, and affected students will have an opportunity to receive course advice and change their subjects where appropriate.

Late change to a fixed course requirement would rarely be permitted by the Academic Board.

19. Conduct of assessment

Assessment must be conducted in a way that ensures confidence in the assessment process.

Subject Coordinators must ensure that all staff marking assessment apply consistent marking guidelines to ensure the reliability and consistency of marking.

The following measures may be taken to ensure fairness and equitable treatment of students:

- 19.1. *Anonymous marking*: though not required, anonymous marking can ensure that marking is as objective as possible. Therefore, unless impracticable or

inappropriate for the task, assessment would usually initially be marked blindly (assignment and exam book cover sheets normally do not contain student names, and utilise an identifying code, such as the student number, to facilitate this outcome).

Examples of impracticable circumstance:

- group projects, where each participant's contribution might need to be established;
- small-weight, regularly submitted assessment tasks, such as weekly exercises, marked by the student's tutor, who also provides feedback to the student;
- small classes, where the marker would likely be able to identify the student from the content of an assessment task.

It is recognised that it is pedagogically appropriate in some circumstances for teaching staff to know the names of the students they are assessing and to exercise a professional, objective judgement about a student's attainment of the objectives of the subject.

It is also noted that, in order to provide appropriate feedback and subsequent to initial blind marking, comment and feedback may be tailored for the individual student.

19.2. *Double marking*: Double marking of all assessment is not required. However in order for a student to be deemed to have failed a subject, with limited exceptions, each failed component of assessment for that student must be marked by two independent (meaning not acting in concert) Examiners or assistant markers, at least one of whom is a member of the Examination Board¹⁹.

Wherever possible, copies of submitted work, whether failed or passed, should be retained (e.g. by the subject coordinator, or on the LMS) until the conclusion of the subject, to enable double marking as required (see also Section 31.3 'Request for second marking' below).

In cases where it is not possible for a component of assessment to be marked at two different times (e.g. performance or oral presentation) it is desirable for two Examiners to be present at the execution of the assessment task and to agree on a mark to be awarded.

19.3. To ensure that assessment is perceived to be unbiased, staff must be aware of any potential conflict of interest, for example as a result of a familial or other relationship with a student, and ensure that marking practices (for example ensuring blind marking, or seeking double marking of assignments where appropriate) are exercised to eliminate any perception of unfairness²⁰.

¹⁹ Double marking of a failed component of assessment is required under statute 12.3.

²⁰ Advice concerning relationships between staff and students is detailed in the publication 'Drawing the Line' see: http://www.hr.unimelb.edu.au/advice/support/dm/staff_student.

20. Additional assessment

Additional assessment provides a student with an opportunity to convert an initial fail mark into a pass. In addition, a student may be given a further opportunity to improve upon a pass mark as a result of a successful Special Consideration application.

At the discretion of the Examination Board, additional assessment may only be offered to a student in the following circumstances. Additional assessment is not awarded on any other basis.

Additional assessment, *unless Special Consideration is granted*, may only be granted in cases of *borderline failure* (as defined below). This includes failure in a subject in a fixed, full-time course where poor performance in one subject is balanced by strong performance in other subjects.

There are four types of additional assessment that may be awarded to students, as follows:

- 20.1. *Further Assessment*: If Examiners are unable to determine whether a student has satisfied the requirements of a particular piece of assessment, or what mark and grade to award a student²¹, they may, before the award of a final result for that piece of assessment or subject, administer a component of further assessment to the student. Such assessment may take any form or be subject to any conditions specified by the Examination Board and would usually be completed prior to the return of a final result for the relevant piece of assessment or subject.
- 20.2. *Special Assessment*: The award of Special assessment is based on an application for Special Consideration and is at the discretion of the Special Consideration Committee and the Examination Board. Such assessment will normally take the form of a formally supervised written examination, but this may be varied at the discretion of the Examination Board to take account of the circumstances of the student. Special assessment is to be assigned the same weighting as the component(s) of assessment it replaces, and should be marked to the full range of honours grades.

The following may be awarded to students after consideration of a student's circumstances by a Course Progress Committee (in consultation with the subject Board of Examiners), and will usually be conducted immediately after the return of results each study period and before publication of final results to students:

- 20.3. *Re-Assessment*: In general, a student may only be offered a second attempt at passing a subject if a borderline failure²² in a single subject²³ (other than a

²¹ That is, there is a dispute or lack of certainty about the particular marks that should be awarded, or whether a student has satisfactorily demonstrated achievement of learning objectives, and the administration of further assessment would result in clarification of the appropriate mark to be awarded the student.

²² This is commonly defined as achieving 45% or more, however discretion should be applied. Some fixed, full-time courses specify a 40% mark, given the more significant impact of failure on progression. Where appropriate, the general level should be published in the course entry Course & Subject Handbook. In addition, in phase out degrees, faculties may permit any student who has failed to be offered additional assessment in core & compulsory subjects that will no longer be available in a future year.

research project or thesis) has a significant impact on the student's progression through the course.

The following examples may constitute a significant effect:

- The course is a fixed, full-time course and failure in one subject would result in the student's progress to the next level of the course being delayed a year;
- The subject is a compulsory subject, offered only once a year, and a key prerequisite for the 'next' year of study in the student's course;
- The subject is a year-long subject.

Additional assessment of the type indicated above is normally offered as a supplementary exam, but its form would be determined by the Examination Board for the subject. Re-assessment following a borderline failure in a subject may only be awarded a maximum of 50% (P).

20.4. *Final Subject Assessment:* Students who are:

- in the final year of their enrolment;²⁴ and,
- who fail a single subject (worth up to 25 points) with a final result of 40 - 45%²⁵ or more will be eligible to undertake final subject assessment. This will normally be by way of a formally supervised written examination or equivalent written assignment. Such additional assessment is to constitute 100% of assessment in that subject and may only be awarded a maximum of 50% (P).

Unless impractical, a Board of Examiners should accept a recommendation from the Course Progress Committee for additional assessment. Example of an impractical circumstance: where practical work is an essential part of the subject, and it is not possible for additional assessment that enables the student to demonstrate their competence in practical work to be implemented in a timely way (before the commencement of the next study period).

With the exception of special assessment, which can only be awarded because of an approved application for Special Consideration, students do not need to apply for additional assessment. Students awarded additional assessment, but who do not receive notice prior to the release of final results, will be informed of their offer of additional assessment when the results for the relevant subject(s) are released.

Students may be required to perform additional assessment at any time prior to the release of final results, during an additional assessment period immediately following the release of final results, or during a defined supplementary examination period. It is therefore imperative that students make themselves available at short notice until the end of the additional assessment period. Examiners awarding additional assessment outside the defined supplementary examination period are required to provide formal notification

²³ For fixed part-time programs, and especially tightly integrated courses where many subjects are co-requisites, or where smaller (e.g. 6.25 point subjects) exist, flexibility around 'one subject' and the timing of this form of additional assessment should be considered appropriate. The course rule should be published in the Course & Subject Handbook, and discretion applied by the Course Progress Committee.

²⁴ For a part-time student; this explicitly means subjects taken in the final year of enrolment and not those required for the last 100 points of the degree.

²⁵ Some fixed, full-time courses accept a 40% mark, given the impact of failure on progression. Phase out degrees may permit a student with a lower mark to be offered additional assessment.

and instructions to the student at least 48 hours before the assessment is scheduled to be held.

Examiners need to be mindful when scheduling further or special examinations that a particular student may have more than one additional examination and should attempt to avoid scheduling assessment on the same day unless otherwise impractical.

21. Consideration for special circumstances

21.1. *Special Consideration*: Students who have experienced *severe* disruption in completing a component of assessment because of extraordinary or unusual circumstances may seek consideration.

Applications are submitted to the relevant Student Centre. A designated person will undertake an initial review and:

- Log the receipt within the relevant system²⁶;
- Check the application for completeness; and then either;
 - if it meets the significant disadvantage test, forward the application with a recommendation, based on precedents, to the department of the Subject Coordinator, or, if it meets defined criteria, to the central Special Consideration Committee²⁷; or,
 - Advise the student that the application is not successful.

Applications are subsequently determined by the teaching department, based upon the recommendation of the Student Centre unless:

1. the request is in relation to a final examination in the subject; or,
2. resolution is not possible within the department; or,
3. resolution is not possible prior to the date for release of final results to students for that component of assessment.

In these circumstances, the Examiners will receive and must respond to recommendations of the Special Consideration Committee.

See the Special Consideration Policy for more information²⁸.

21.2. *Other grounds*: Individual students may be granted consideration in addition to Special Consideration and a request made to Examiners seeking to vary assessment conditions:

- on grounds established under *Consideration for Shorter Assignments & Tests*, see Section 22 below;
- on grounds established under the Extensions Policy (see Section 28 below);
- to implement special arrangements under the Students Experiencing Academic Disadvantage Policy,

²⁶ I.e. within the Learning Management System, but may be another web-based system integrated with the LMS.

²⁷ Note – for Graduate Schools, a School-based committee may be established, subject to Academic Board approval, under the Special Consideration policy approved by the Academic Board in August 2007.

²⁸ This section may be altered when the implementation of the recommendations of the review of Special Consideration are implemented and the new processes and practices clarified.

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- to implement special arrangements made under Defence Force Reservists and Service Volunteers or Elite Athletes & Performers policies.

The nature of consideration offered is detailed in the referenced policy documents themselves.

- 21.3. *Further Consideration after the award of additional assessment or varied assessment conditions*: in all but exceptional circumstances, a student is not entitled to seek 'Special Consideration' for the completion of additional assessment, or to seek further variations to assessment conditions.

Nevertheless, acute, unexpected incidents that impact on a person's ability to complete additional assessment occasionally do occur, and reasonable attempts should be made to accommodate the student; for example, delaying a special examination by a short period.

If however a student is unable to complete additional assessment because of a continuation of the original circumstance, a student adviser will assist the student to reconstruct appropriately their course plan, rather than offer to alter the original offer of additional assessment, or varied assessment conditions.

Accommodations based upon a student's original condition/circumstances may not be comprehensive – for example, a diabetic student permitted to bring food into an examination and to have a small amount of extra time, who nevertheless experiences a hypoglycaemic event during their examination, is entitled to apply for Special Consideration for the hypoglycaemic event itself.

22. Consideration for shorter assignments & tests

Subject Boards of Examiners may decide to allow students some flexibility with regard to the submission of shorter assignments, and with completion of tests and locally administered mid-semester examinations, rather than require a student to complete the formal processes established under policies such as Special Consideration or Extensions.

This flexibility must be documented, applied equitably to all students, and offered with consideration of the assessment task itself; that is, there should be no doubt that the student has indeed satisfied the objectives of the subject.

- 22.1. *Extension of time to complete assessment tasks*: provided all students are treated equitably, if a student has grounds, and the provision of a short amount of extra time does not provide the student with an advantage over their peers, a student may be granted a short extension for a shorter assignment at the discretion of the subject coordinator.

- 22.2. *Exemption from assessment tasks*: in certain subjects where:

- multiple tasks *are completed as a set* (usually as a prescribed requirement²⁹); for example, weekly exercises and laboratory work; and,

[Except for assignments submitted in-class](#)²⁹ The requirement may also be an attendance requirement, but the effect is the same.

- the skills developed and accumulated across the teaching period can be demonstrated appropriately through other completed assessment tasks, students may:
 - a. be able to be excused if they miss one, or sometimes two classes and/or reports/exercises/tasks over a semester, according to guidelines published with assessment details; or;
 - b. be excused if they submit an application to be excused, and this is approved, according to guidelines published with assessment details.

For example, required to attend and complete a minimum of 10 out of 12 laboratory reports.

For example, exempted from completing 1 of 8 tutorial problem-sets.

If such an exemption is possible, details will be published with the details of assessment. Grounds are generally the same as those established for extensions.

In the absence of such guidelines permitting exemption, students who are unable to complete assessment tasks owing to circumstances outside their control should apply for Special Consideration.

- 22.3. *Resit*: in specified subjects only, a student may be able to apply for a resit for a specific test, for example, a mid-semester examination, on the same grounds as an extension³⁰.

If a re-sit is possible, details of grounds, and the process for application will be published with the details of assessment. The timing of the re-sit is at the discretion of the teaching department, but it may be held after the final examination for the subject³¹.

In the absence of specific guidelines permitting a re-sit, students who are unable to complete assessment tasks owing to circumstances outside their control should apply for Special Consideration.

23. Grading structure and policy

The grades and grade codes that are to be used under this policy are to be found in the University's Grading Scheme.

24. Distribution of grades

This policy does not require all subjects to conform to a specific distribution of grades, however to ensure consistency and equality of outcomes, and noting that, over time, assessment must allow discrimination of performance based upon results. It is expected

³⁰ A policy document on resits, proposing that in some circumstances an offer of a resit may not require an application for Special Consideration, is in draft form and will be considered by the Policy & Procedures Working Group.

³¹ That is, either a test held shortly after the final examination, or as an additional question/set of questions conducted as an additional section after the final examination.

that teaching departments, with oversight from the DAC and/or Head of Department, will monitor and review the distribution of grades awarded in each of their subjects.

25. Re-scaling / Standardisation of marks

In the unusual event that a subject coordinator:

- i. identifies an error in the application of marking guidelines, or
- ii. discovers that results for a cohort are disproportionate, or
- iii. observes an irregular distribution of grades (that is, where results are outside an appropriate distribution),

standardisation or moderation of provisional results of a subject may be undertaken.

Whenever adjustment takes place it must be documented and be transparent (the method defined and available to students).

This moderation or standardisation should respect the determination of a pass or fail result as a separate judgement.

26. Preparation of assignments

The following are guidelines for the preparation of assignments for submission. Assignments submitted that do not comply with these guidelines may attract a marking penalty.

- 26.1. *Cover Sheets*: Unless otherwise specified, work completed independently should (and all longer assignments must) be submitted accompanied by a coversheet provided by the University. Each coversheet includes a unique identifier that assists with document tracking, and includes a plagiarism declaration that the student signs. Work not accompanied by the University coversheet will not be accepted, with the exception of shorter assignments that are either submitted in person in class, or submitted via subject-specific assignment submission boxes³².

- 26.2. *Format*: Unless otherwise specified by the Subject Coordinator, written assignments will be:
- typed;
 - identifiable only by the inclusion of the relevant student number on each page. Students' names (with the exception of shorter assignments submitted in person, in class) should not be included in assignments;
 - double-spaced;
 - presented with margins of at least 2cm (right margin) and 4cm (left margin);
 - page-numbered; and;
 - if submitted in hard copy, either stapled together or appropriately bound.

³² In such circumstances it is appropriate to have students submit the plagiarism declaration once only (with the first assignment) as the declaration notes that it applies to all assignment submissions in the subject for the study period. The declarations should be retained until the end of semester, even if the assignment is returned to the student.

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Students may also be required to submit assignments in other formats, such as film or works of art, or handwritten solutions to mathematical problems. Subject coordinators must specify the precise requirements of these formats in assessment statements.

- 26.3. *Citation*: All referenced material must be acknowledged using an appropriate, consistent system within the document. Some teaching departments will recommend particular style guides specific to the relevant subject area (such as the Australian Guide to Legal Citation for Law students). In the absence of such a recommendation, students should follow the Harvard system.

Assignments with references should include either a reference list or a full bibliography of all works, as specified by the teaching department.

Non-compliance with these requirements may constitute academic misconduct (potential plagiarism) that can attract a range of penalties from deprivation of credit for that work to termination of enrolment. For more information about this, please refer to the policy on academic misconduct.

- 26.4. *Style*: The teaching department may specify a style of academic writing appropriate to the discipline or area of study. Written assignments should conform to the specified style, or may attract a marking penalty.

27. Assignment submission and collection

Unless otherwise specified, assignments must be submitted as follows:

- 27.1. *Deadline for submission*: Except for assignments submitted in-class, or where otherwise specified, the deadline for submission of an assignment on the due date is 5:00pm³³. Assignments submitted after 5:00pm on the due date are considered to be one working day late.
- 27.2. *Electronic submission*: The University is committed to increasing the provision of facilities for the electronic submission of assignments and this should, over time, become the usual means of submission of most assignments. A student will acknowledge an electronic version of coversheet including a plagiarism declaration as part of the submission.

Students will be advised if their teaching department(s) permit/expect electronic submission of assignments³⁴. This information should be included in the LMS.

If electronic plagiarism detection software is to be used or may be used, students should be advised, and advised of the circumstances (e.g. if applied to all assignments, or to suspect work or to a selection of assignments).

- 27.3. *Submission in person*: Except for assignments submitted in-class, assignments submitted manually must be delivered, together with the coversheet, to the

³³ This might be changed to reflect agreed opening hours of Student Centres.

³⁴ An alternative submission method may be provided for students with special needs.

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relevant Student Centre (or, if specified, to a teaching department). Where appropriate, students who would like their assignment to be returned to them by post should also submit a stamped, self-addressed envelope big enough to contain the assignment.

- 27.4. *Submission by post*: Assignments may also be posted to the relevant Student Centre (or, if specified, to a teaching department). Mailed assignments must be sent, together with a coversheet, by registered mail or express post. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that assignments posted to the University reach the relevant office by the relevant due date. The University takes no responsibility for material lost or damaged in the post.
- 27.5. *Copies of assignments*: Students must keep an electronic copy and a hard copy of each assignment they submit, at least until they have been awarded a final result in the relevant subject(s).
- 27.6. *Receipt of assignments*: Students will be provided with a receipt for their assignments, except for shorter assignments, short laboratory reports or other small written submissions that are submitted in person in class or submitted via subject-specific assignment submission boxes).
- 27.7. *Group assignments*: Group assignments must be accompanied by coversheets for each of the students in the group, however only the student designated by the group to submit the assignment will be given a receipt. Marked group assignments can be collected by a single, designated member of the group.
- 27.8. *Collection of assignments*: Where possible, academics will return marked assignments to students in class. Alternatively, unless otherwise advised, assignments, together with marks and feedback, will be available for collection from the relevant Student Centre (or if specified, from the teaching department) on the expected return date. Where students have provided a stamped, self-addressed envelope³⁵, work will be put in the mail on the expected return date. The University takes no responsibility for material lost or damaged in the post. Work will be neither mailed, nor available for collection before the expected return date. Students are required to show their student ID in order to collect their assignments.

Uncollected assignments will be retained in the relevant Student Centre (or if specified, in the teaching department) for at least six months following release of final results in the relevant subject³⁶. Following this period, these assignments will be disposed of as confidential waste.

³⁵ This applies only to written work. Models or artworks that are fragile, or potentially valuable, will be safely stored and available for student collection in a manner determined by the relevant teaching department.

³⁶ Assignments should be retained, if part of a dispute over assessment, according to guidelines established by the Vice Principal & Academic Registrar.

28. Extension of time to complete assignments

Where a student's capacity to prepare a piece of assessment has been affected by factors beyond their control, such as illness or some other unexpected occurrence, students may apply for an extension (see Extensions Policy for more details³⁷).

If the impact is so severe that the assignment would not be submitted for an extended period, a student may be required to make an alternative application for Special Consideration. A student should be directed to make a Special Consideration application for an extension if:

- the assignment would not be submitted prior to the date for release of provisional results to students for that component of assessment; or,
- an assignment is the final piece of assessment, and there is any risk that the assignment would not be submitted by the end of the assessment period.

See policy on Special Consideration for details further details.

Extension applications will first be assessed in the relevant Student Centre, and a response to the student provided within three working days of receipt.

29. Feedback to Students

Students are entitled to formative and summative feedback about their performance.

Students are forbidden to communicate with Examiners about the result of a component of assessment before the publication of results of that component, and feedback should only be initiated once results are known³⁸.

Comments should indicate to students how they have performed against assessment criteria. If a student seeks it, or is provided written feedback on an assignment returned to them, wherever possible comment should further indicate how a student can improve their performance, and ideally indicate what should be done specifically to achieve outstanding results.

In order for feedback to be provided about performance in examinations, a student should be able to discuss their answers (that is, see their script-book and comment on their answers³⁹, and to discuss these with an Examiner). A student can make a request to their subject coordinator to access their examination scripts from the previous semester, at any time before the end of the second week of the following semester⁴⁰. In the rare case where examination procedures are not complete at the beginning of the following semester, a student will be given at least two weeks following publication of results to request to view their examination scripts.

³⁷ A policy document on extensions, proposing that shorter extensions may not require an application for Special Consideration, is in draft form and is being considered by the Policy & Procedures Working Group.

³⁸ Regulation 12.2.10.R1 – Assessment: Conduct Of Students And Powers Of Supervisors, Part A. Any necessary enquiry should be made in writing to the academic registrar.

³⁹ Best practice guidelines for feedback to students, and specifically re examinations may be prepared by TALDEC as an appendix to this policy, providing advice about how comment should be recorded.

⁴⁰ For summer and winter recess subjects, or for intensive subjects, by the second week of the following study period.

Providing appointment times for students after return of provisional results on each component of assessment is recommended, particularly to allow students to address any problems / poor performance and/or be able to access support services of the University provided for them if required.

30. Return of work (assignments)

In order to provide students with useful feedback on their performance, assessment should be returned to them in a timely manner.

For example, the expected return date for each piece of assessment should normally be within three weeks of submission of that piece, but may be sooner, for example, return of weekly exercises or lab reports on a weekly basis. Notwithstanding this provision, the expected return date for the final piece of assessment in a subject should not be prior to the release of final results in that subject.

31. Following the release of final results

- 31.1. *Availability of staff to provide assignment/exam feedback and review*: Students are entitled to speak with Examiners in each subject about their assessment following the release of final results in order to seek feedback about their performance (see section 29 *Feedback to students* above). The Board of Examiners must therefore ensure that staff are available for students after the release of results.
Appointments with an Examiner can be made through the relevant Student Centre, or with the teaching department if appropriate⁴¹.
- 31.2. *Access to all marks*: If requested, Examiners should provide students with a detailed account of their marks for each subject (this may be provided using the LMS), including the marks awarded to each component of assessment and the calculation used to determine the final overall subject mark and grade. Prior to the release of final results for the subject, a student may be provided with raw scores (or provisional results) on return of a component of assessment. If this score is subject to adjustment, for example, scaling to take account of distribution of grades, students should be advised accordingly.
- 31.3. *Request for Second marking*: With the exception of double marking required for failed assessment (see Section 19, '*Conduct of Assessment*' for details), Examiners/assistant markers are obliged to mark each piece of assessment only once. Students are not automatically entitled to have their work marked by a different Examiner for any reason.

The first step taken by a student should be to discuss the mark with the marker and to provide written reasons to the marker explaining the perceived error. In the event that a student wishes to pursue a claim of an error in academic judgement by an assessor, the chair of the Board of Examiners must determine whether the original mark was appropriately determined according to established marking criteria.

⁴¹ E.g., if academic staff make provision for appointment times, and this is known by students.

31.4. *Errors in assessment and results processing:*

Departments, Student Centres, faculties and graduate schools are responsible for the development and administration of quality assurance processes (such as marking guides and electronic results processing) to minimise the number of errors made with respect to assessment and results processing.

Notwithstanding these measures, such errors discovered within three calendar months of the release of final results for the subject(s) concerned may be amended as follows⁴²:

- Where an error in the calculation or recording of any marks or grades is discovered, and correction of the error would mean an increase in marks for the student(s) concerned, the final result(s) should be amended and the student(s) notified immediately once the new final result(s) are confirmed;
- Where such an error is discovered, and correction of the error would mean a decrease in marks for the student(s) concerned:
 - The Department Assessment Coordinator and/or Head of Department should be consulted about the appropriate course of action;
 - A decision must be taken as to whether leaving the final result(s) as they are would constitute an unacceptable breach of the academic integrity of the relevant course (this is likely if students have passed core or compulsory subjects when they ought to have failed);
 - If this is the case, approval must be sought from the Academic Board to amend the final result(s) concerned. Students should be notified of the amendment immediately once the new final result(s) are confirmed;
 - In cases where the academic integrity of the relevant course has not been deemed breached to a significant extent, the erroneous final result(s) may remain unchanged.

32. Review of assessment details

Taking into account student feedback and to ensure currency and continuous improvement, details of all subjects, including assessment details and approximate due dates, should be reviewed by the teaching department each year and changes for the following year approved by the Academic Board⁴³.

33. Responsibilities of students

Students have a responsibility to contribute to their own learning by:

- Being aware of the learning objectives of each subject and how assessment is structured to demonstrate the achievement of the objectives;
- Being aware of the requirements and due dates for each piece of assessment including examination times;

⁴² This will necessitate changes to the statute, which stipulates that the error must be found before the first day of the following academic year (obviously providing longer to discover errors for summer and first semester subjects than second).

⁴³ See the CHSE publication a Guide on Reviewing Assessment, located from: <http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/pdfs/GRA.pdf>. Note also that the Teaching and Learning Quality Assurance and Teaching and Learning Development Committees have a role in review of assessment.

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- Being available for additional assessment during specified periods;
- Taking into account recommendations about the total time commitment required for successful completion of each subject (not only the teaching contact hours);
- Regularly consulting communication from the University including email and electronic noticeboards;
- Attending all classes regardless of any minimum attendance requirement; and,
- Seeking assistance if they experience difficulties with any aspect of their study.

Following the performance or submission of a piece of assessment, students are not permitted to discuss any matter pertaining to that piece of assessment with Examiners until after the return of a provisional or final result for the assessment concerned.

Students should ensure that they are familiar with policies and procedures relating to assessment, Special Consideration, examinations and academic misconduct as failure to comply with such instructions may result in penalties being applied.

34. Appeals

Students concerned about decisions made in respect to this policy should consult the Student Grievance Policy for information about how to conduct an appeal.

By resolution of the Academic Board under Statute 12.2.11, a dispute or question arising under the Assessment statutes may be made in writing to the Academic Registrar. The President of the Academic Board would then either handle the matter or, if the dispute or the question would be more appropriately dealt under any other statute or regulation, ensure appropriate action is taken.

References

ⁱ Drawn from the University of Wollongong 'good practice' assessment guide, see: <http://www.uow.edu.au/about/teaching/goodpractice/UOW008512.html>