

Assessment Policy

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|----------------------------|---|-----------------|-----------------------|
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| Related Documents | <i>Academic Integrity Policy</i> <i>Academic Integrity Procedure</i> <i>Application for Assessment Special Consideration</i> <i>Assessment Moderation Procedure</i> <i>Benchmarking Guidelines</i> <i>Credit for Prior Learning Policy</i> <i>Credit for Prior Learning Procedure</i> <i>Disability Support Policy</i> <i>Disability Support Procedure</i> <i>Equity and Diversity Framework</i> <i>Examinations Procedure</i> <i>Information for Students Policy</i> <i>Information for Students Procedure</i> <i>National Code Compliance</i> <i>Quality Assurance Framework</i> <i>Student Complaints and Appeals Policy</i> <i>Student Complaints and Appeals Procedure</i> | | |
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1. Context

This Policy supports Waratah Institute's (the 'Institute') commitment to maintaining academic standards.

Assessment is an integral part of learning and teaching and measures students' achievement of learning outcomes for the purpose of certification. Assessment at the Institute is based on clearly articulated criteria to facilitate students' understanding of the standard required to achieve learning outcomes. With a focus on applied teaching and learning, assessment at the Institute is primarily drawn from real-life practice.

2. Definitions

Assessment moderation: the process of establishing comparability of standards in student performance across for example, different markers, locations, units, programs and/or providers. It assures judgements made of student performance are consistent or comparable, appropriate, and fair. It also assures the validity and reliability of assessment tasks, criteria and standards.

Assessment task: an activity assigned to measure students a student's performance, which can include but limited to an essay, examination, presentation, case study, practicum, based-discussion, or project.

Assessment validation: the quality review of the assessment process. It involves checking that assessment tools produce valid, reliable, sufficient, current and authentic evidence to enable reasonable judgements to be made as to whether the learning outcomes or requirements of a program are met. It includes the review of a statistically valid sample of the assessments and making recommendations for future improvements to the assessment tool, process and/or outcomes and acting upon these recommendations.

Assessment: a process to determine a student's achievement of identified learning outcomes and may include a range of written and oral methods and practice or demonstration.

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF): Australia's national policy for regulated qualifications. It encompasses higher education, vocational education and training and school education and provides for national recognition and a consistent understanding of what defines each qualification type.

Award: the conferral of a qualification to a student and certification of the qualification provided in a testamur.

Benchmarking: in the context of assessment, benchmarking involves comparing performance outcomes and/or processes of similar programs of study delivered by the provider or other providers.

Block credit: credit granted to exempt a student from multiple units within a course, based on the completion of a different qualification. This type of credit cannot be transferred for admission into another qualification.

Compassionate or compelling circumstances: circumstances beyond the control of the student which will have an impact upon the student's progress or wellbeing.

Credit agreement: formal negotiated agreement within and between issuing organisations or accrediting authorities regarding student entitlement to academic credit.

Credit transfer: a process that provides students with credit for completed components of a program of study based on equivalence in content and learning outcomes.

Credit: exemption from study granted in recognition of equivalence of prior learning in regard to program content and learning outcomes. Credit granted provides a student with advanced standing in the program of enrolment (i.e. reduces the amount of learning required to achieve the qualification). Credit can be given in the form of block, specified or unspecified credit.

Criteria: specific performance attributes or characteristics that the assessor takes into account when making a judgement about the student response to the different elements of the assessment task

Disability: has the same meaning as in section 4(1) of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*, and includes physical, psychological and psychiatric conditions and injuries, and ongoing medical conditions.

Examination: an assessment task which is time-limited and conducted under invigilation.

Formative assessment: helps students and staff to identify strengths, weaknesses and ways to improve and enhance student learning. It is intended to support student learning rather than determine a final grade or mark.

Hurdle requirement: an assessment task that a student is required to pass in order to pass the unit in which it occurs

Invigilation: the supervision of students during examinations.

Learning outcomes: the expression of the set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning.

Mark: the result of an individual assessment and is expressed in numerical form.

Program: a course of study, comprising units of study, the successful completion of which results in the awarding of a qualification, such as a bachelor's degree.

Reasonable adjustment: the modification or provision of facilities or equipment employers for person with a disability to adequately engage in learning or perform their professional duties.

Recognition of prior learning: an assessment process that involves assessment of an individual's relevant prior learning (including formal, informal and non-formal learning) to determine the credit outcomes of an individual's application for credit.

Specified credit: credit granted based on formal learning of a specific component of a qualification, exempting the student from completing that component.

Summative assessment: an evaluation of the quality of students' learning involving the assignment of a grade or numerical result based on how effectively students have addressed learning outcomes.

Unit: a separate subject of study which, in combination with other units, make up a program.

Unspecified credit: credit granted on the basis of formal learning to an elective requirement of a qualification, exempting the student from completing that elective.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all Waratah Institute's programs, staff, and students.

4. Principles

The key principles informing this Policy are:

- assessments supported by quality teaching and learning;
- inclusion of formative and summative tasks;
- transparent and equitable assessment process to allow students to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes;
- alignment with unit learning outcomes, program learning outcomes, Waratah Institute's graduate attributes, and the appropriate AQF level;
- ongoing learning facilitated by quality student feedback; and
- quality assurance of the integrity of assessment design and outcomes.

5. Assessment design

Following are the guidelines for assessment design at Waratah Institute:

5.1 Assessments are standards-based with pre-determined criteria and standards that reflect learning outcomes at each level provided to students prior to commencing the assessment.

5.2 Assessments are mapped to demonstrated alignment with unit learning outcomes, program learning outcomes, Waratah Institute's graduate attributes, and the appropriate AQF level.

5.3 Assessment are authentic, being based on real-life practice so that students are prepared for employment in the designated field and/or further study. The authenticity of assessment will be reflected in the assessment type and/or assessment requirements and may include live projects and involvement in competitions.

5.4 Assessments engage students through an appropriate range and distribution of assessment types across units. Assessment types include individual, group, written, oral presentations, case studies, design outcomes, and projects. Mapping of assessment types will demonstrate the planned and sequential approach to the achievement of program outcomes.

5.5 Assessments do not overburden students:

Assessment tasks will reflect the relative importance of the learning outcomes through the weighting, size, timing, and level of difficulty:

- **weighting** – individual assessments within a unit will have a maximum weighting of 60% and minimum of 10%;
- **number** – for each unit, there is to be a minimum of two assessment tasks and a maximum of four;
- **size** – assessment requirements per unit will equate to 4,000 words, or equivalency for non-written assessments;
- **timing** – for each unit, assessment tasks are staged so that students have sufficient time to absorb and make use of assessment feedback in subsequent assessment tasks in the unit. Ordinarily there will be an assessment task due within the first four weeks of the trimester, with the final assessment due no later than the final week of the trimester;
- **difficulty** – the level of difficulty needs to be aligned with the reasonable expectations based on students' prior experience and learning outcomes.

6. Group assessments

Where a component of the final grade awarded to a student in a unit is determined by a group assessment, it will be structured in such a way that the student's individual performance can be assessed. The mark awarded to an individual student will be based on the application of one or more well-established, pedagogically sound mechanisms such as peer review, reflective journals and submission of discreet sections of a project.

7. Examinations

Some units may include an examination as an assessment task. Examinations are conducted under invigilation to ensure academic integrity. An examination's duration will not exceed three hours.

8. Hurdle

Some units may include a hurdle requirement where it is appropriate to ensure that a student has achieved all the relevant learning outcomes. Where a hurdle applies, this requirement will be clearly shown in the Unit Outline and relevant assessment materials

9. Assessment information for students

An overview of assessments for each unit of study will be provided to students in each unit outline at the commencement of the trimester. Details of each assessment task will also be provided at this time and will include the assessment brief, clear marking criteria, descriptions of performance standards, and exemplars of performance standards by prior students, where possible and appropriate.

10. Feedback to students

Timely and constructive feedback is to be provided to students, usually within two weeks of assignment submission to inform ongoing learning and teaching. Feedback on each assessment is to comprise a mark and a written comment. Final marks and grades for a unit are provisional until results are ratified by the Teaching and Learning Committee.

11. Quality assurance

Quality assurance processes are critical to ensure the integrity of assessments and the continuous improvement of teaching, learning and assessment practices. These processes are conducted collaboratively by lecturers who deliver and assess the relevant unit, and include:

11.1. Assessment validation

Systematic validation of assessment practices in each program is to be undertaken to evaluate quality and determine actions for continuous improvement. Assessment validation involves checking assessment instruments and practices are aligned with program outcomes. Validation of each assessment is to be undertaken prior to the delivery of the associate unit of study, and at least once during the delivery of the unit over the accreditation period.

11.2. Assessment moderation

Systematic moderation of assessment is critical in ensuring the delivery of quality student performance outcomes. Assessment moderation will take account of student performance and judgements about the standard of this performance. Moderation of each assessment is to be undertaken at least once over the accreditation period (refer to the *Assessment Moderation Procedure* for more information).

11.3. External benchmarking

The benchmarking of assessment tasks and student performance will assure outcomes are comparable with those of similar programs in regard to field of study and AQF level. Internal benchmarking of each assessment, involving comparison of outcomes with other similar programs offered by Waratah Institute, is to be undertaken at least once during the accreditation period. External benchmarking of

a range of assessments across a range of units of study, involving a comparison of outcomes with similar programs offered by other institutions, is to be undertaken within the first year of program delivery and in the second last year of the accreditation period.

12. Overdue assessments

Students need to submit assessments on the due date or by the approved extension date. An assessment submitted after this is “overdue” and a loss of 10% of the total possible mark will be applied up to a total of five calendar days, after which a zero mark will be recorded.

13. Special consideration

13.1. Circumstances for eligibility

Students may experience exceptional circumstances that negatively impacts on their performance or ability to complete assessment tasks by the due date. Exceptional circumstances are those beyond a student’s control, not a result of a student’s action or inaction, and are unusual, uncommon or abnormal. In such circumstances a student may be eligible for a modified arrangement, such as:

- an extension to the assessment due date or deferral of an examination;
- re-submission of an assessment or resitting an examination;
- adjustment to assessment results or provision of supplementary assessments; or
- other arrangements as approved by the Program Coordinator.

To be eligible for a modified assessment arrangement, the student must submit a completed *Application for Assessment Special Consideration* to the relevant lecturer, who decides based on the evidence provided.

Exceptional circumstances include:

- **Medical circumstances:** an unexpected illness, a recurrence of a chronic illness or an accident. Supporting documentation must be provided and may be an original certificate or letter from a registered treating medical practitioner, registered health practitioner or approved specialist, depending on the nature of the condition.
- **Compassionate circumstances:** hardship or trauma such as the death or serious illness of a close family member, severe disruption to domestic arrangements, being a victim of crime or an accident. Supporting documentation must be provided and may be:
 - o a letter from a counsellor;
 - o an original medical certificate or letter on letterhead from a registered treating medical practitioner, registered health practitioner or approved specialist;
 - o a letter from a person qualified to assess and support the application;
 - or
 - o a certificate from a funeral director or death notice.
- **Special circumstances:** includes religious reasons, legal commitment, military service, service with an emergency service, representing Waratah Institute, representing a state or home nation at a significant event, or unforeseen and significant employment-related circumstances such as a

move interstate at short notice. Supporting documentation must be provided and can include:

- o an official letter from the relevant service;
- o an original letter from the employer;
- o an original letter confirming commitments for athletes and performing artists; or
- o a copy of an accident report or a court summons.

Note: Acceptable documentation does not include that from a relative or personal friend of the student or friend of the student's family.

Note: A student with a disability or ongoing medical condition needs to refer to the *Disability Support Policy* and associated Procedure, which allow for reasonable adjustments to assessments.

13.2. Assessment deadline extension and deferral of an examination

An *Application for Assessment Special Consideration* for an extension to an assessment due date or deferral of an examination must be submitted at least one working day prior to the assessment due date or examination date, unless the evidence of the circumstances provided by the student indicate this would not have been possible. The timeframe granted for an extension, or deferral of an examination, will be based on the nature of the circumstances, without giving the student unfair advantage, and will not extend 10 working days except in exceptional circumstances and with Program Coordinator approval. The full range of Waratah Institute's Grading Criteria (refer to Section 14) applies to the assessment of extension or deferred examination.

13.3. Re-submission or resitting an examination

If a student has been affected by exceptional circumstances as per Section 11.3 of this Policy and has already submitted an assessment or sat for an examination, they may be eligible for re-submission or a resit. The Lecturer decides on re-submission or resits based on the evidence provided by the student in the *Application for Assessment Special Consideration*. The timeframe granted for a resubmission or resit will be based on the nature of the circumstances, without giving the student unfair advantage, and will not extend 10 working days except in exceptional circumstances and with Program Coordinator approval. The full range of Waratah Institute's Grading Criteria (refer to Section 14) applies to the assessment of a resubmission or resit.

13.4. Adjustments to assessment results or supplementary assessment

If a student has already submitted or sat an examination, and has been affected by exceptional circumstances as per Section 11.1 of this Policy, in response to the student's *Application for Assessment Special Consideration Form*, the Teaching and Learning Committee may decide to do one of the following:

- adjust the mark for the piece of work in question, having regard to the student's overall performance within the program, or decide no adjustment having regard to this performance;
- permit the student to sit a supplementary assessment even if the student's final mark is below 45%; **or**
- award a Conceded Pass if the unit precludes a supplementary assessment.

14. Supplementary Assessment

The opportunity for a supplementary assessment may be granted at the end of the trimester by the Teaching and Learning Committee if a student:

- has attempted all the assessments for a unit, and records a final mark from 45% to 49%; or
- has approved unexpected or extenuating circumstances as per Section 11.1.

The supplementary assessment will be designed to assess the required unit learning outcomes yet to be adequately demonstrated by the student. This will usually be part of a, or an entire, failed assessment task. The assessment must be completed within 5 working days of the approval, unless decided otherwise by the Teaching and Learning Committee. A grade of “Supplementary Pass” will be awarded to a student who successfully completes a supplementary assessment.

Supplementary assessments do not apply to units that specifically preclude them. In such cases, the Teaching and Learning Committee can decide to grant the student a conceded pass or terminating pass.

15. Requesting a remark

A remark involves a student’s performance in an assessment task being marked by a second assessor, without any further work by the student. If a student considers that an assessment has been awarded an unfair mark, the student can request a remark from the Program Coordinator within five working days of the mark being released. The request needs to include the reasons the student has deemed the assessment result does not reflect the assessment criteria.

With the approval of a remark, the Program Coordinator will assign a second marker to assess the student’s performance. Based on the assessment outcome by the first and second marker, the Program Coordinator will decide on the final result to be awarded to the student and will inform the student of this result. If required, the Program Coordinator will consult with one or more of the markers before deciding. A student will not be granted the opportunity to have the assessment marked for a third time. However, if the student is still dissatisfied with the re-mark, the Program Coordinator will advise on the process for appealing the decision, which will consist in the Dean reviewing the re-mark as per the *Student Complaints and Appeals Procedure*.

If the Program Coordinator deems the request for a remark unwarranted, the original mark will stand.

16. Grading matrix

16.1. Final notations

For each unit attempted, a student is to be awarded a grade according to the following criteria and grading scales:

| Outcome | Abbreviation | Mark | Description |
|-------------------------|--------------|--------|--|
| High Distinction | HD | 85-100 | <p>High distinction is awarded for an outstanding performance that provides evidence of an outstanding level of attainment of the relevant unit learning outcomes, demonstrating (as applicable):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consistent evidence of deep and critical understanding; • substantial originality, creativity and insight in identifying, generating and communicating competing arguments, perspectives or problem-solving approaches; • critical evaluation of problems, their solutions and their implications; • use of quantitative analysis of data as the basis for deep and thoughtful judgments, drawing insightful, carefully qualified conclusions from this work; • sophisticated communication of information and ideas in terms of the conventions of the discipline; and • consistent application of appropriate skills, techniques and methods with outstanding levels of precision and accuracy. |
| Distinction | D | 75-84 | <p>Distinction is awarded for a superior performance that provides evidence of a superior level of attainment of the relevant unit learning outcomes, demonstrating (as applicable):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evidence of integration and evaluation of critical ideas, principles, concepts and/or theories; • distinctive insight and ability in applying relevant skills, techniques, methods and/or concepts; • demonstration of frequent originality in defining and analysing issues or problems and providing solutions; • fluent and thorough communication of information and ideas in terms of the conventions of the discipline; and • frequent application of appropriate skills, techniques and methods with superior levels of precision and accuracy. |

| Outcome | Abbreviation | Mark | Description |
|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|--|
| Credit | C | 65-74 | <p>Credit is awarded for good performance that provides evidence of a high level of attainment of the relevant unit learning outcomes, demonstrating (as applicable):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> evidence of learning that goes beyond replication of content knowledge or skills; demonstration of solid understanding of fundamental concepts in the field of study; demonstration of the ability to apply these concepts in a variety of contexts; use of convincing arguments with appropriate coherent and logical reasoning; clear communication of information and ideas in terms of the conventions of the discipline; and regular application of appropriate skills, techniques and methods with high levels of precision and accuracy. |
| Pass | P | 50-64 | <p>Pass is awarded for an acceptable performance that provides evidence of a satisfactory level attainment of the relevant unit learning outcomes, demonstrating (as applicable):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> knowledge, understanding and application of fundamental concepts of the field of study; use of routine arguments with acceptable reasoning; adequate communication of information and ideas in terms of the conventions of the discipline; ability to apply appropriate skills, techniques and methods with satisfactory levels of precision and accuracy; and a combination of correct and incorrect answers. |
| Fail | F | 49 and below | <p>Fail is awarded for unsatisfactory performance, below the minimum acceptable level. This grade characterises work which shows a significant lack of understanding of the topic or its context and is therefore unsatisfactory.</p> |
| Supplementary Pass | SP | 50 | <p>Supplementary Pass is awarded for achievement of all learning outcomes specified for the unit to the required standard following a supplementary assessment.</p> |

| Outcome | Abbreviation | Mark | Description |
|----------------------|--------------|------|---|
| Conceded Pass | CP | 50 | A conceded pass may be awarded to a student who attempted all the assessments and records a final mark from 45% to 49% where the assessment conditions do not allow the provision of a supplementary task. Conceded passes are awarded at the discretion of the Teaching and Learning Committee and cannot be requested by a student. A student may only be granted a maximum of one conceded pass at each AQF level within a program. |
| Satisfactory | S | N/A | Satisfactory is awarded for performance that demonstrates a satisfactory level of attainment of the unit learning outcomes in units that are graded Pass/Fail. |

16.2. Other final notations

| Notation | Abbreviation | Description |
|-------------------------------|--------------|---|
| Withdrawn | W | Awarded when a student withdraws from a unit after the Census Date, and when academic and/or financial penalties have not been applied. |
| Credit Transfer | CT | Awarded when a student has achieved all of the unit learning outcomes to at least a satisfactory standard through prior formal learning. |
| Recognition of Prior Learning | RPL | Awarded when a student has achieved all of the unit learning outcomes to at least a satisfactory standard through prior informal and/or non-formal learning. |
| Exemption | X | The student has been granted exemption from completing the requirements of the unit under a block credit agreement. Note: exemptions cannot be transferred elsewhere as credit towards a unit. |
| Elective Exemption | UX | The student has been granted unspecified credit and is therefore exempt from the requirements of an elective unit. Note: exemptions cannot be transferred elsewhere as credit towards a unit. |

16.3. Interim notations

| Notation | Abbreviation | Description |
|---------------|--------------|--|
| Incomplete | IN | Awarded when all unit requirements have not been completed due to unexpected and extenuating circumstances, and further information or additional work is required by the student. |
| Supplementary | SUP | The student has been granted a supplementary assessment through which achievement of the unit learning outcomes |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|---|
| | | can be demonstrated. |
| Conditional Credit Transfer | CCT | The student will have achieved all of the learning outcomes specified for the unit conditional on completion of current formal learning. |
| Conditional Exemption | CX | The student will be granted exemption from completing the requirements of the unit under a block credit agreement. This is conditional upon successful completion of the current enrolment. Note: exemptions cannot be transferred elsewhere as credit towards a unit. |

17. Requesting a review of the final grade

If a student considers that their final unit grade is inappropriate or unfair, they may request a review of their final grade within five working days of the grade being released. A review must be requested from the Program Coordinator (or delegate) in accordance with the provisions of the Waratah Institute's *Student Complaints and Appeals Policy*, which can be accessed from the Waratah Institute's website. The review may result in:

- adjustment of the student's mark; or
- no change to the original grade.

The student may choose to appeal the decision under the *Student Complaints and Appeals Policy*, which can be accessed from the Waratah Institute's website.

1. Breaches

If a student or staff member is found to be in breach of this Policy, she or he may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the relevant *Code of Conduct and Misconduct Procedure*, which can be accessed from the Waratah Institute's website.

2. Appeals

Appeals concerning any decision taken in relation to this Policy should be made under the relevant *Complaints and Appeals Policy*, which can be accessed from the Waratah Institute's website.

18. References

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)

Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015 – Part A, Standards 1 and 5

National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018, Standard 8

19. Acknowledgements

In developing this Policy, Waratah Institute acknowledges:

- *TEQSA's Glossary of Terms*;

- Torrens University Australia's *Assessment Policy for HE Coursework and ELICOS*;
- Western Sydney University's *Assessment Policy*;
- *TEQSA Guidance Notes: Course Design (including Learning Outcomes and Assessment)*;
- *TEQSA Guidance Notes: Diversity and Equity*;
- *TEQSA Guidance Notes: Academic Quality Assurance*.

Document History:

| Version | Date | Author | Reason | Sections |
|---------|------------|-------------------|--|------------------------|
| 0.1 | 3/06/17 | Leanne McCoy | Amended following Academic Board meeting | All |
| 0.2 | 3/4/18 | Stephen Andrews | Revised in response to Academic Board feedback 26/2/18, and approved Policy Development and Review Framework | All |
| 1.0 | 28/5/18 | Julien Marechal | Revised in response to Academic Board feedback 16/5/18 | 5.4 |
| 1.1 | 8/08/2019 | Julian de Meyrick | Revised in response to TEQSA feedback and approved by the Academic Board 8/8/19. | 6, 8 (new sections) |
| 1.2 | 15/8/19 | Stephen Andrews | Revised in response to TEQSA feedback and approved by the Corporate Board 15/8/19. | 15 |
| 1.3 | 17/12/2019 | Philippa Ryan | Amended to reflect new trading name 'Waratah Institute'. | All |