

## ASSESSMENT POLICY

<b>Approved</b>	Academic Board
<b>Approval Date</b>	25/3/2019, 27/2/2017, 5/8/2016, 10/10/2011, 11/4/2011
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<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Academic Director
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<b>Related Documents (explicitly cross-referenced)</b>	
<b>Higher Education Standards (2021)</b>	1.4, 3.1.1(e), 5.1.3.4(b)
<b>National Code (2018) (if directly relevant)</b>	

### PURPOSE AND CONTEXT OF ASSESSMENT

#### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to articulate the philosophy and principles that guide the SCD approach to the assessment of student learning. It informs the procedures used in student assessment and feedback.

It is relevant to all undergraduate and postgraduate coursework units and programs, including cross-institutional enrolments.

It addresses the 2017 revised Higher Education Standards Framework section 1.4 Learning Outcomes and Assessment.

#### Context

The SCD has adopted standards-based assessment.

### POLICY STATEMENT

The Assessment Policy is informed by current practice in higher education in Australia and elsewhere. It is also informed by recent advances reported in the relevant literature. Furthermore, assessment procedures and practices are guided by certain covenantal principles which reflect the relationships within the SCD as a whole and its constituent teaching bodies. These principles express mutual commitment, responsibilities, and obligations between faculty, students, administrators, staff, council members, denominational stakeholders, and society. Furthermore, they express a commitment to the care of the whole person and to social justice. Therefore, this policy requires that students will be assessed on individual merit and not judged relative to the performance of other students in their cadre. They will be judged against clearly stated and publicly available assessment standards. These principles are the foundation for the principles for quality assessment described below.

Assessment is an integral component of the student learning experience. The curriculum has been designed to maximise that learning experience, which is aimed at more than just obtaining a grade.

### QUALITY ASSESSMENT

The following principles build on theory and practice in higher education and on the theological foundation. These principles underpin assessment practice and are the foundation of the assessment procedures that fully express the principles of standards-based assessment. Under standards-based assessment, clearly described standards for student academic performance are used to assess student achievement. Assessment task designers and assessors are required to identify and clearly state the various levels of quality in performance that are associated with a grade and to advise students accordingly. Student marks reflect the level of performance they have achieved and comparisons between students are based on their achievement of the standards.

#### Assessment Principles

- 1) Students and teachers have a mutual responsibility to focus learning and teaching activities on the intended learning outcomes.
- 2) Active student engagement in learning is characterised by:
  - a) inquisitiveness, motivation and enthusiasm for learning,

- b) attendance and active engagement in all classroom (whether face to face or online) learning experiences provided by the class teacher, e.g. lectures, tutorials, workshops, assessment tasks.
  - c) increasing mastery, competence, and academic independence and interdependence,
  - d) student inquiry, experimentation, and research-based learning,
  - e) disposition towards lifelong learning,
  - f) attention to feedback to improve performance,
  - g) increasing capacity to connect learning activities to life-related issues, and
  - h) developing graduate capabilities.
- 3) Student learning is most effective when students experience diverse, innovative, and contextually relevant assessment tasks that are designed to promote active engagement.
  - 4) Students are treated as persons whose identities are complex, unique, and valued.
  - 5) Ethical practice, honesty, integrity, objectivity, equity, social justice, tolerance, and inclusiveness provide an opportunity for success for all students.
  - 6) Grades and reports of student learning achievements are valid, reliable, and accurate representations of each student's capabilities in relation to clearly articulated learning objectives and result from procedures that are consistent, fair, and equitable.
  - 7) Students and staff demonstrate a scholarly approach through
    - a) inquiry and scholarship
    - b) critical thinking and analysis
    - c) self and peer review
    - d) intellectual and academic integrity
    - e) engagement with the rest of the learning community
  - 8) High quality and timely feedback assists students to improve their learning performance and to develop their capacity to self assess.
  - 9) Expectations and standards of denominational, national, and international stakeholders are met, where appropriate.
  - 10) The involvement of leaders and managers at all levels will achieve quality enhancement and continuous improvement in assessment. Evidence of these quality outcomes includes:
    - a) transparent, consistent, efficient and effective procedures;
    - b) provision of opportunities for all, at all levels of responsibility, to enhance their knowledge of and competency in assessment theory, practice, and procedures. In this way they will be well informed of their rights and responsibilities and have reasonable expectations regarding assessment process outcomes;
    - c) moderation and peer review processes focus on assessment design and grading outputs;
    - d) institutional quality assurance and quality enhancement processes are informed by regular and multi-level review cycles
    - e) quality processes that are well designed and consistently applied ensure adherence to institutional policy frameworks. They also ensure adherence to procedures relating to academic honesty, access, equity, records management, and intellectual property.
  - 11) Assessment Practices advance student learning
  - 12) Assessment Practices are communicated to students clearly at the outset of each course unit undertaken

#### **RESPONSIBILITY FOR ASSESSMENT**

<i>Faculty</i>	All faculty have a responsibility to ensure that assessment tasks conform with SCD Policy and principles of assessment.
<i>Students</i>	All students must engage in set learning activities including the relevant classes, tutorials and workshops, completing assessment requirements as set, and conform with SCD Policy requirements.
<i>Teaching Bodies</i>	Teaching Bodies must comply with SCD Policy and ensure staff and students are well informed of their obligations.
<i>SCD</i>	Through its Academic Board, SCD will ensure that Assessment Policies and Procedures are reviewed regularly and conform with current best practice.

#### **REQUIREMENTS FOR COURSEWORK PROGRAMS**

The Assessment Procedures document describes the requirements for

- approval of assessment,
- demand hours,
- credit points, and
- weighting of assessment items.

## **MONITORING OF ASSESSMENT**

Each individual Course Unit Booklet will specify details of specific assessment tasks and the learning outcomes being assessed. Course Unit Booklets are monitored by the Academic Directors of each teaching body and the SCD Discipline Coordinators.

Each teaching body moderates the assessment results internally before submission to the Coursework Committee. The SCD Coursework Committee monitors all assessment results and grade distributions at the end of each teaching semester, reporting to Academic Board.

## **MODERATION OF ASSESSMENT**

Discipline Moderation and Institutional Moderation procedures require external moderators to review quality assurance issues including reporting on quality of assessment.

## **GRADINGS CRITERIA AND GRADE DESCRIPTORS**

The current Gradings Criteria and Grade Descriptors can be found in Section 3 of the SCD Handbook. This information is conveniently available in the document *Student Result Procedures: Assessment and Monitoring*.

## **ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES**

Examination procedures, late submissions, remarking, penalties and notification to students are all covered in Section 3 of the SCD Handbook.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Students are expected to adhere to high standards of academic integrity and honesty. Failure to do so may constitute academic misconduct.

The SCD policy and procedures relating to academic misconduct can be found in Section 3 of the SCD Handbook.

## **STUDENT APPEALS**

The SCD policy and procedures relating to appeals regarding assessment can be found in Section 3 of the SCD Handbook.