

Assessment Policy Version 1.3

1. Purpose

Assessment provides feedback to students on their learning and progress and opportunities to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes expected for their course.

This policy complies with the Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF) 2021.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the

- Academic Integrity Policy
- Complaints and Appeals Policy
- Request for an assessment extension or supplementary assessment form.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all subjects offered by Nexus Institute of Higher Education.

3. Definitions

Academic integrity. Academic integrity is the expectation that teachers, students, researchers and all members of the academic community act with: honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (TEQSA “What is academic integrity?” (13 October 2022)).

Compassionate or compelling circumstances. Compassionate or compelling circumstances are generally those beyond your control and which have an impact upon your course progress or wellbeing. These could include serious illness or injury, bereavement of close family members major political upheaval or natural disaster in your home country, a traumatic experience, or unavailability of relevant subjects.

Formative assessment. Formative assessment provides ongoing feedback to help students identify their strengths and weaknesses and target areas that need work. Formative assessments usually have low weight in the final mark for a subject.

GPA. Grade Point Average (GPA) is the measure used to summarise a student’s academic achievement. The GPA is used to inform decisions about enrolment, course progress and scholarships. The GPA is the weighted average for all subject grades and is calculated across a student’s program. Grades are assigned weights: HD=7, D=6, Cr=5, P=4, F=0, FA=0. To calculate the GPA, multiply the grade for each subject by the number of credit points for that subject, add these scores for all subjects and divide by the total number of credit points which attempted.

Learning outcome. A learning outcome is a clear and specific statement that articulates what students should be able to do at the successful completion of their study. Learning outcomes must be measurable and assessed.

Moderation. Moderation is a process for ensuring that marks or grades are awarded appropriately, consistently and fairly.

Rubric. A rubric is a scoring guide that assesses and articulates specific components and expectations for an assignment.

Summative assessment. Summative assessment evaluates student learning by comparing it against some standard or benchmark. Summative assessments have a high weight in the final mark for a subject.

4. Policy statement

Assessment promotes learning, prepares students for future learning and practice and allows students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills on meaningful, practice-oriented tasks. Assessment enables students to prepare for their intended future careers and develop their capacities for professional and personal judgement and lifelong learning.

In particular, employers value the ability to work collaboratively because, in most modern workplaces, people work in teams which can be cross-disciplinary and diverse. For this reason, Nexus Institute uses group work as a teaching strategy so that students can work together on substantial projects with a shared objective.

To ensure that assessment is fair, valid and reliable, Nexus Institute uses a criteria and standards approach so that students know the level of performance required for each assessment task and understand how their submission and performance will be evaluated.

Standards are developed by academic staff applying professional judgements about expected levels of student performance. Standards are benchmarked against acceptable levels of performance within the discipline. Marks awarded should reflect the work expected from students and the quality and standard of the students' work.

Assessment tasks are aligned with course and subject learning outcomes, professional accreditation (where this applies) and graduate attributes. Assessment tasks are designed to be fair and reliable and to validate student attainment of the learning outcomes. The rationale for the assessment tasks will be explained to students in each subject. This particularly applies to group work. Group work can only be used if it is linked to the subject learning outcomes and students have resources and support to work effectively in groups.

Assessment are designed to support effective student learning. Formative assessment tasks provide opportunities for students to identify their strengths and weaknesses and for lecturers to direct students to the Learning Skills Centre or specific academic support or to Student Counselling for personal support. Early formative assessment tasks, particularly for students in their first terms of study, provide diagnostic feedback to students identify areas for targeted support and improvement. Students should receive some feedback on their learning before the census date to make informed choices for their subject choices.

Feedback on assessment tasks will be timely and informative to provide students with guidance on their performance and how they could improve on subsequent assessment tasks.

Courses will include a variety of assessment tasks, to recognise the diversity of students, their stage of development and their learning styles to provide reasonable opportunities for all students to demonstrate their learning. This should include authentic assessment that reflects the circumstances and complexity of professional workplace environments. Assessment tasks will take account of IT applications and AI tools so that students appreciate the ethical use of these tools and their limitations. To provide assurance of learning, key assessment tasks across a course of study should ask students to demonstrate their

understanding without recourse to AI. This will usually mean that at least one assessment task in each subject tests what students can do without the aid of AI tools.

Assessment types may include:

- Practicals testing skills and problem-solving
- Reports based on investigation and critical analysis
- Case Studies
- Design projects
- Portfolios
- Reflections describing the learning experience and critically analysing what has been learned
- Business plans and operating manuals
- Programs and solutions to problems
- Practical tests and demonstrations
- Examinations with invigilation
- Quizzes, both formative and summative in-class invigilated tests
- Projects covering design, development and/or implementation
- Discussions such as tutorial activities and online responses on discussion boards
- Vivas
- Presentations on projects and pitches
- Placements and Internships
- Group projects.

The weighting of assessment tasks reflects the complexity and amount of work expected. The assessment matrix in Appendix 1 provides guidelines based on the length and duration for the various types of assessment. For example, a 30-minute quiz is usually weighted at 10% of the total assessment in a subject and a 60-minute quiz carries a weight of 20%.

Assessment tasks will be designed so that students receive clear instructions about the use of AI tools and the extent to which they may be used whilst maintaining academic integrity, so that opportunities for cheating, plagiarism and misuse of artificial intelligence are minimised.

5. Procedures

The number, type and weighting of assessment tasks and the learning outcomes they relate to must comply with the specification approved by the Academic Board.

Assessment tasks for each subject will be reviewed to ensure that they align with the subject learning outcomes, guide students towards the goals and requirements for learning and provide opportunities for students to measure their progress. Assessment tasks must be clear and unambiguous and have appropriate weighting in the final mark based on the expected workload. Assessment should be designed to differentiate levels of learning, practice and achievement.

The timing and requirements for assessment tasks and the marking criteria will be clearly communicated to students in the Subject Outline at the beginning of each subject.

Marks are based on a student's level of performance in achieving stated learning outcomes and must never be norm-referenced. Negative marking for incorrect answers is not allowed.

Marks cannot be given solely for attendance. Participation in class and online activities can be encouraged with a 10% maximum mark. The weighting of a single assessment task should not exceed 50% and the weighting of a group assessment task should not exceed 40% unless approved by the Academic Board. A group assessment with a weight of more than 25% must include a component or a related task to recognise individual contributions. This can be achieved through peer review, contribution to an oral presentation, or reflection on the group work. (See the Appendix 2 for additional comments on group work.)

Formative assessments should be included in all first year subjects before the end of week 4. Formative assessments may be either ungraded or have minimal marks allocated.

Feedback on written assessment tasks will usually be provided to students within two weeks of the submission date. Feedback should help students identify their strengths and areas for improvement. The timing of assessment tasks should enable students to apply feedback from an earlier task to a later task. In particular, in subjects with an exam, no assessment tasks will be due in the final week of teaching.

To pass a subject, students must submit a genuine attempt for all the assessment tasks and achieve 50% overall. This requirement is designed to demonstrate that all learning outcomes are satisfactorily achieved. Students who do not make a genuine attempt on an assessment will have an opportunity to make a later submission but with their overall mark capped at a pass grade.

Mandatory and threshold assessment tasks should only be used if a clear rationale is provided and approved by the Academic Board.

A student who experiences difficulties in meeting submission deadlines because of compelling or compassionate circumstances, may apply for an extension or supplementary assessment (see the Request for extension or supplementary assessment form). A request for an extension must be received by the Subject Coordinator in writing no later than one day after the due date for the assessment task. Relevant supporting documentation (such as a medical certificate or documentation of other serious circumstances outside the student's control) must be provided no later than three days after the due date. The Subject Coordinator will notify the student in writing whether an extension is granted. If an extension is granted, the Subject Coordinator will inform the student about the extended due date and any other requirements that need to be met before submission. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, extensions beyond the end of the study period will not be approved.

If an assessment task is not submitted on time, a penalty of 5% of the total mark for the assessment will be applied for each day the assessment is overdue.

All assessment tasks, including examinations, must allow reasonable adjustments for students with disability impairments.

Grades

Grade		Grade Points	Percentage or descriptor
HD	High Distinction	7	85-100; demonstrates learning outcomes for the subject at a very high standard.
D	Distinction	6	75-84; demonstrates learning outcomes for the subject at a high standard.

Cr	Credit	5	65-74; demonstrates learning outcomes for the subject at good standard.
P	Pass	4	50-64; demonstrates learning outcomes for the subject at a satisfactory standard.
F	Fail	0	0-49; unsatisfactory performance not meeting the learning outcomes.
FA	Absent Fail	0	The student has not withdrawn and not submitted attempts at assessment tasks totalling 50% or more.
FW	Fail Withdrawn	0	The student has withdrawn from the subject after the census date.
W	Withdrawn (without academic and/or financial penalty)	NA	The student has withdrawn from the subject before the census date or has provided evidence of serious illness or misadventure after the census date.
S	Satisfactory	NA	Demonstrates achievement of the learning outcomes.
U	Unsatisfactory	NA	Has not demonstrated achievement of the learning outcomes.

Approval of grades. Internal moderation will be used to check that marking and grading is conducted in a fair and accurate manner and that the assessment criteria are applied appropriately and consistently.

The Board of Examiners reviews final marks in all subjects and reports from Course Directors and Subject Coordinators to assure overall consistency of grading. The Examinations Board approves the release of final marks to students.

The Board of Examiners may moderate marks to address inconsistencies in performance standards. Moderation may also be applied to marks just below a grade boundary where a student has a mark on a major piece of assessment which compares favourably with marks in the grade above.

Supplementary assessment. Supplementary assessment provides an opportunity for students who have failed a subject, but who were close to passing, to undertake additional assessment to pass the subject. Whether supplementary assessment is offered will be determined by the Board of Examiners on the advice of the Subject Coordinator.

Students may apply for supplementary assessment as outlined in the Subject Outline. The Board of Examiners may also grant supplementary assessment without an application. There are no provisions to defer a supplementary assessment.

Supplementary assessment can take any form designed to test the achievement of the learning outcomes for the subject. The highest grade following supplementary assessment is a pass (P).

In determining whether to make an offer of a supplementary assessment, the following factors will be taken into consideration:

- the student's overall academic performance

- whether there is evidence of improved performance by the student over the course of the subject
- whether there is a reasonable expectation, based on the student's performance, that the student can achieve a pass in the subject if given the opportunity to undertake a supplementary assessment
- whether the student has attempted all assessment tasks
- the student's demonstrated engagement with the subject including participation in class and contribution to any group assessment tasks
- whether the student is a potential graduand and
- any other relevant circumstances.

Review of assessment decisions. Students may request a review of an assessment mark or a final grade in a subject if they believe the outcome is not a fair result in terms of the assessment criteria, or if they believe there has otherwise been an error in the marking. The outcome of a successful review of grade appeal may be either a change of grade or an opportunity for supplementary assessment.

Students should first discuss any concerns about their assessment marks with their lecturer for the subject. If the concerns are not resolved, the student may request a review of an assessment mark or a final grade by the Course Director.

Appeals. Students have the right to appeal any decision made under this policy. The Complaints and Appeals Policy sets out the appeals process.

6. Roles and responsibilities

Students should make sure that they understand assessment requirements, complete assessment tasks in English, only submit their own work, follow guidance from their teachers and seek advice if they encounter difficulties.

The Subject Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that assessment items validly assess the learning outcomes of the subject. Benchmarking and peer review of assessment should be used to set standards and assess alignment and ensure that the assessment and learning outcomes are up to date.

The Subject Coordinator is responsible for assessing student work fairly and providing timely feedback to students, maintaining records of marks for all assessment items and for moderation of marking aligned to the marking guide.

The Course Director is responsible for monitoring assessment across the subjects in the program and confirming that moderation and benchmarking are conducted.

The Executive Dean is responsible for managing this policy and leading an ongoing continuous improvement process of assessment strategies. The Executive Dean will provide a report on assessment to the Academic Board after the end of each study period.

The Board of Examiners is responsible for approving final grades in subjects and their release to students. The Board of Examiners also approves offers of supplementary assessment.

7. Related information

- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021, Standards 1.3 1.4 and 5.2

- TEQSA Guidance note: Academic integrity.
- TEQSA What is academic integrity?
<https://www.teqsa.gov.au/students/understanding-academic-integrity/what-academic-integrity>
- TEQSA Assessment reform for the age of artificial intelligence
<https://www.teqsa.gov.au/guides-resources/resources/corporate-publications/assessment-reform-age-artificial-intelligence>

8. Document control

Category	Academic
HESF Standard	1.3, 1.4, 5.2
Policy name	Assessment Policy
Policy owner	Executive Dean
Approved by	Academic Board
Date of approval	20 September 2024
Date of next review	1 November 2026
Change log	Version 0. Original version created on 22 October 2023.
	Version 1. Feedback from Academic Board incorporated on 29 Nov 23.
	Expanded comments on the use of AI tools in Section 4 on 14 Jul 24.
	Included requirement to submit all assessment tasks on 26 July 24.
	Included GPA and comments on formative assessment on 11 Aug 24.
	Assessment matrix (appendix 1) included on 6 Sep 24.
	Corrected descriptions of grades in table on page 4 (27 May 2025).

Appendix 1: Guidelines for Assessment Length and Duration

Type of assessment	Level	Individual or group	Description	Weight
Report, blog post		Individual	1000 words	20%
Research report		Individual	1500 words	30%
Research report		Individual	10 minutes	30%
Case study	First year	Individual	1200-1500 words	20%
	Higher yr	Individual	2000-3000 words	25-30%
Project		Individual	Design and requirements	20%
Project		Individual	Model and interface + 800 words	30%
Programming project	First year	Individual	Code + 500 words	30%
	First year	Individual	Code + 1500 words	40%
	Higher yr	Individual	Algorithm + 2000 words	25%
Test plan		Individual	Execute plan + report results 1000 words	25%
Presentation	First year	Individual	5 minutes	20%
Report + presentation	Higher yr	Individual	1500 words + 5 minutes	20%
Portfolio		Individual	2000 words + 5 minutes presentation	30%
		Individual	Weekly lab reports	30%
Role play		Individual	15 minutes	30%
Practical		Individual	Test or simulation + 1500 words	30%
		Individual	Code and test	20%
		Individual	Application + report 2000-2500 words	40%
Quiz		Individual	30 minutes	10%
Exam		Individual	2 hours	30-35%
Exam		Individual	3 hours	35-40%
Online discussion forum		Individual	2 posts per week over 10 weeks	10%
Tutorial submissions		Individual	Weekly exercises over 10 weeks	20%
Reflection		Individual	800 words	20%
Reflective journal		Individual	500 words per week	20%
Project engagement		Individual	Evidence of participation	20%
			Client assessment	10%
Report		Group	2000-3000 words	20%
		Individual	250-800 words	10%
Report and presentation		Group	1500-2000 words	20-30%
		Individual	300 words or presentation	10%
		Group	2000 words	20%
Case study		Group	3500 words	20%
		Individual	500 words	10%
Coding problem	First year	Group	Program + documentation	20%
		Individual	Peer assessment	10%
	Higher yr	Group	Program + report 1200 words	25%
Design project		Group	Design + 2000 words	20%
		Individual	Configuration	10%
Project		Group	Design, evaluation 2000-4000 words	20-25%
		Individual	Presentation or pitch	10-15%
		Group	Demonstration + 500 words	15%
		Group	Presentation of strategies 10 minutes	25%
Practical	First year	Group	Analysis, design and/or test	20%
		Individual	Presentation 10 minutes	10%
Practical	Higher yr	Group	Implementation report 1000 words	20%
			Presentation 10-15 minutes	
Problem-solving		Group	Code + report 800-1200 words	25%

Appendix 2: Group work

Benefits

Group work helps students develop skills valued by employers (such as problem-solving, negotiation, conflict resolution, leadership, critical thinking and time management), helps students articulate their ideas, refine concepts and develop interpersonal skills through discussion and collaboration and exposes students to diverse ideas and approaches.

The expected benefit of a group project should be clearly stated in the learning outcomes of the subject. For example, group work may be the best way to develop and assess collaboration, communication or other important abilities. Clear specification of the learning outcome communicates to the students that they will be assessed against this learning outcome and makes the assessment process transparent.

Challenges

Group work brings mixed reactions. For some students it is their best learning experiences, while others find it confusing, challenging and confronting. Students who do not feel confident about their ability to communicate prefer to work independently. Many students complain about "free-riders" – group members who don't contribute to the group or whose lack of contribution results in lower marks for the group.

The group task must be sufficiently complex so that all group members meet the required learning outcomes in completing the task together. Students may divide up the tasks within a group project in a way that prevents all the students from achieving all the learning outcomes. Teachers must be alert to these challenges and provide guidance. Teachers should expect to manage disputes among group members (particularly regarding "free-riders").

Strategies

When designing any type of group work tasks, take into account the time needed to educate students around the principles of teamwork including communication, organisation, time management, task management, conflict resolution, reflection and collaboration. Help students learn how to identify group issues, listen reflectively, give constructive feedback, structure discussions, manage their groups, give group presentations and compile reports. Encourage students to monitor their development, reflect on their performance and identify how they can improve.

Team dysfunction needs to be identified as early as possible and appropriate strategies put into place to manage issues as they arise. Encourage students to identify and raise issues at all stages. Formative peer assessment or individual student reflection can be used to identify team conflicts. Teachers may also identify any causes of concern through observation.

For marking purposes, distinguish between the product and process of group work. The product represents the whole group's contribution. Individual contributions can be assessed by observing the group in class, collecting individual evidence, or by peer assessment.

[Based on resources from UTS, UNSW and UQ. See
<https://www.uts.edu.au/research-and-teaching/learning-and-teaching/enhancing/enhancing-experiences-group-work/group-work-resources>
<https://www.student.unsw.edu.au/groupwork>
<https://my.uq.edu.au/information-and-services/student-support/study-skills-and-learning-advice/study-skills-and-learning-advice-overview/group-work>]