THE UNIVERSITY
OF ADELAIDE
AUSTRALIA

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES ON ASSESSMENT FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS

Authorised By: Vice-Chancellor   **Date Authorised:** 10 March 2005

Effective Date: 10 March 2005

Last Amendment Date: 19 September 2006

Review Due Date: 31 July 2007

TRIM File Number: None

Related Documents:

Implementation & Review: Convenor, Assessment Monitoring Committee

Superseded Documents:

Any person who requires assistance in understanding any aspect of this document should contact the Secretary of the Assessment Monitoring Committee on 36106.

Assessment practices may vary with discipline, but all assessment practices should be based on the principles and guidelines outlined below. Individual students, teaching staff and coordinators are required to ensure, and be able to demonstrate, that these principles and guidelines are used in the local context.

The format consists of a statement of principle, followed by the expected responsibilities of students and staff.

1. All Forms of Assessment

1.1 Diagnostic, Formative and Summative Assessment

Assessment may be used for diagnostic, formative or summative purposes. Diagnostic assessment is usually undertaken before a learning activity and informs the student and teaching staff of the prior knowledge and understanding of the student in a particular area. Formative assessment is undertaken as part of the learning process and informs the student and teaching staff of the progress of student learning and ways to improve. Summative assessment usually occurs after the learning activity and is used to judge competence and standards.

Students: students are expected to prepare adequately and undertake all assessment tasks to the best of their ability. In addition to studying the appropriate content for an assessment task, this preparation will include reading the appropriate documentation on assessment guidelines and rules, plagiarism, assessment times and submission dates and staff consultation times. If a student is unable to meet a deadline for an assessment task, it is their responsibility to inform the staff member concerned as soon as possible and discuss the consequences.

Staff: teaching staff are expected to inform students whether an assessment task is diagnostic, formative or summative, any course specific requirements for assessments, consultation times,

submission times and penalties for late submissions, grading schemes and descriptors, weightings for individual tasks and the format for assessment feedback.

1.2 Objectives and Standards

Students need to be advised of the objectives and standards expected for assessment tasks. It is particularly important to inform first year students of the grading scheme and grade descriptors, and how the marking scheme at University may differ from that used in secondary schools. There should be a direct link between the intended learning outcomes, actual student work and student grades.

Students: students are expected to familiarise themselves with the standards expected for an assessment task, including the grading scheme and grade descriptors.

Staff: teaching staff are expected to provide, where appropriate, examples of previous assessment tasks and standards expected. The format for these examples should be determined by the discipline area. A marking scheme will be used to ensure consistency, particularly if assessment tasks are marked by more than one assessor. Assessment tasks should be aligned to the stated objectives and outcome(s) for the course and program.

1.3 Graduate Attributes

Assessment information should describe which program graduate attributes are being tested. Since assessment practices often drive student approaches to learning, it is important to articulate to students which program attributes are being developed in a particular course and the evidence that will be used to show their development.

Students: students should be familiar with the transferable capabilities that are being developed and tested as part of their assessment tasks and keep copies, where appropriate, of examples of their work for later use in portfolios.

Staff: teaching staff are expected to match the type and form of assessment to the requirement for evidence of development of program graduate attributes.

1.4 Equity Principles

Assessment practices will be transparent and fair, take into account the needs of students with disabilities, and support equity principles such as inclusive language and avoid gender, racial or cultural bias.

Students: students should avoid waiting until close to the assessment deadline to commence their work and be aware of multiple assessment deadlines that fall within a small space of time and spread their work evenly over the available time. Students with a disability should consult with the University of Adelaide Disability Liaison officer for support and assistance. Students should be aware that the University supports an environment that avoids gender, racial or cultural bias.

Staff: where possible, teaching staff should avoid concurrent deadlines for multiple, major assessment tasks that fall within a short space of time. Students with a known disability should be referred to the University of Adelaide Disability Liaison officer for support and assistance. Assessment has a major impact on student workload and on staff time and the appropriate level and extent of assessment should be planned with these criteria in mind. Staff are expected to provide assessment tasks that avoid any obvious gender, racial or cultural bias.

1.5 Feedback

Where possible, diagnostic and formative assessment tasks should provide meaningful feedback to students, in a timely manner, on how they might improve their performance.

Students: students are expected to use diagnostic and formative assessment feedback to direct their learning and improve their performance in later assessments.

Staff: teaching staff are expected to develop appropriate feedback for assessment tasks so that students may judge and revise their work and performance. All feedback is potentially useful to student learning and feedback should be directed towards student work, not the student.

1.6 Normative and Criterion Referenced Assessment

Assessment methods are required to be as valid and reliable as possible. If criterion referenced assessment is used, students should be informed of the criteria to be used and their relationship to the grading scheme and descriptors. If normative assessment is used, students should be informed of the expected standards and how they relate to the marks assigned.

Students: students should be aware of the different forms of assessment and take note of the specific criteria for each assessment task.

Staff: teaching staff should inform students whether a criterion referenced or normative assessment process is being used and the criteria associated with assessment marking and grading.

1.7 Student Input

Student input into the assessment process should be sought through such means as the course evaluation process and student representatives on School or Faculty committees.

Students: students should convey their constructive comments on assessment practices and procedures to the teaching staff or through the appropriate student representative on the various University committees

Staff: teaching staff, Schools and Faculties are expected to provide appropriate opportunities for student feedback on assessment practices and procedures and discuss the feedback, and where appropriate, inform students of the outcomes of these discussions.

2. Assessment of Group Work

The principles outlined in the previous section also apply to
the assessment of group work

2.1 Introduction

The University Graduate Attributes highlight the importance and necessity of group work, as indicated by Attribute 4:

Skills of a high order in interpersonal understanding, teamwork and communication.

In order for students to develop capabilities in teamwork, they should be provided with opportunities to work in groups. This section highlights the additional responsibilities that apply to students and staff in relation to the assessment of group work.

In the context of this document, group work refers to activities that involve more than one student and where these activities have been prescribed by a staff member with the explicit direction that the product and/or process of the group work will involve the contribution of more than one student. These guidelines were constructed after reviewing the available literature, including Isaacs (2002, http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/downloads/T&L_Assess_group_tasks.pdf) and James, McInnis and Devlin (2002, http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/assessinglearning/).

2.2 Group Work and Graduate Attributes

Group work is designed to develop skills and capabilities in effective teamwork. Any proposed group work and associated assessment tasks must be compatible with the development of the University Graduate Attributes, the objectives of the course and the assessment schedule provided to students.

Students: students are expected to prepare adequately for group work and contribute appropriately to group tasks. If a student is unable to adequately contribute to group work it is their responsibility to inform the other group members and the staff concerned as soon as possible and discuss the consequences.

Staff: teaching staff should ensure that the purpose of group work and the assessment processes used are designed to enable students to develop their skills and capabilities in relation to the University Graduate Attributes.

2.3 Objectives of Group Work

Students need to be advised of the objectives of the group work and whether both the process (what they do) and product (what they finally produce) of group work will be assessed.

Students: students are expected to familiarise themselves with the objectives and standards expected for group work, including the marking scheme. Where the process and product of group work will be assessed, students should ensure they make an appropriate contribution to both components.

Staff: teaching staff must inform students whether the process of group work and/or the product of group work will be assessed and provide the relative weightings that will be used.

2.4 Procedures for Groups

Clearly defined procedures for the establishment and organisation of the groups should be developed, taking into consideration issues associated with gender and culture. The frequency and purpose of group meetings should be specified.

Students: students are expected to abide by the procedures established for the roles and functions of the group as a whole, and for individuals within the group. When group meetings have been scheduled, students should make every effort to participate, and inform other group members and staff if they are unable to attend.

Staff: staff should be aware that the University supports an environment that avoids gender, racial or cultural bias. Instructions to students regarding working in groups should contain clearly articulated guidelines and expectations, in addition to description of mediation and complaints procedures. Staff should provide students with guidelines on how to develop appropriate processes for working in groups, including timelines for feedback to and from the group on their progress.

2.5 Weightings

The weightings of group assessment and individual assessment tasks should be appropriate and consistent with the objectives and workload requirements for the course. The group assessment mark should normally be 30%, or less, of the total mark for a course. Where a course coordinator wishes to allocate more than 30% of the final mark for the course to group assessment, a case must be made based on specific learning objectives and permission from the appropriate Executive Dean (or nominee) should be sought.

Students: students should note the weightings allocated to group work and assign appropriate time to complete their allocated share of the overall workload.

Staff: where a group assessment has several components, staff should provide details of the allocation of marks and appropriate guidelines to students on how to distribute the workload.

Note: Examples and references for group work may be found on the Centre for Learning and Professional Development website: http://www.adelaide.edu.au/clpd/

3. Assessment of Participation

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<tr><td>The principles outlined in the previous section also apply to
the assessment of participation</td></tr>
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3.1 Introduction

Student participation in active learning can take many forms, including formal classroom or online discussions, workshops, artistic performances, practical sessions or field trips. Participation can include (but is not limited to) small group discussions, small group written exercises, class presentations, laboratory work, field trips, designs, role-playing, online discussions, wikis, blogs and webinars. Participation can involve (but is not limited to) thoughtful commenting on, reflecting on, or critiquing, content or presentations provided by staff or other students. Attendance alone is not normally regarded as active participation. Active participation encourages students to prepare for classes. It develops communication skills and promotes deep rather than surface learning.

3.2 Summative Assessment of Participation

When planning to use the assessment of participation for summative purposes, staff should be aware of issues relating to the reliability and validity of such assessments. These include the use of subjective measures to determine levels of student engagement in class discussions, cultural or gender impediments to student engagement in class discussions, and some inherent disadvantages to students whose first language is not English.

See, for example: http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/ and
http://www.plu.edu/~dmc/gallery/MDP/DanaStairs/Files/img/Research_Collab.pdf

Summative assessment of participation should be made against specific criteria that are provided to students in advance of the assessment. Staff should inform students in advance when a participatory activity will be assessed for summative purposes.

Students: students should take note of the criteria used to assess their participation and make every effort to participate in a substantive manner.

Staff: teaching staff should provide specific details of the standards and expectations of participation. This should include details on how students will demonstrate their level of participation, and how marks will be assigned. Students should be informed of any requirements for references or evidence for their contributions and whether they are expected to critique other students' work or comments. For online participation, students should be informed of the expected length of discussion board entries, the number of entries required, and whether critiquing of other students' work is mandatory.

3.3 Online Resources

Staff and students should be aware of the following policies in relation to the use of online resources for participation in discussion boards, role-playing, wikis, blogs and webinars:

a *Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy* - http://www.adelaide.edu.au/policies/565/
   This policy defines 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' use of University IT Facilities, clarifies the responsibilities of the users of those facilities, and outlines the procedures that will be followed in the event of breach of the policy.

b *Guidelines for Email Use by Students* - http://www.adelaide.edu.au/policies/661/
   These guidelines provide clarification on practical issues relating to the use of email by University students.

c   *Guidelines for Internet Use by Undergraduate Students* - http://www.adelaide.edu.au/policies/662/
These guidelines provide clarification on practical issues relating to the use of the internet by undergraduate students.

d   *Guidelines for Posting on MyUni Forums* - http://www.adelaide.edu.au/policies/674/
These guidelines provide information for posting content on MyUni Forums to maintain a friendly and welcoming environment for all users of the MyUni Forums.

Students: students are expected to abide by the policies for the use of online resources.

Staff: staff are expected to abide by the policies for the use of online resources and should include reference to the relevant University policies when describing activities involving online participation.

3.4 Marks for Participation

Normally no more than 10% of the marks contributing to the final mark in a course should come from the specific assessment of participation.

Where a course coordinator wishes to allocate more than 10% of the final mark for the course to participation assessment, a case must be made based on specific learning objectives and permission from the appropriate Executive Dean (or nominee) should be sought.

Students: students should familiarise themselves with the marking criteria and standards associated with the assessment of participation. They must not be biased towards another student when assigning marks when their input is required.

Staff: teaching staff should provide an appropriate marking scheme and criteria for any assessment of participation, and the process used to determine these marks should be made explicit.

Examples and references for the assessment of participation may be found on the Centre for Learning and Professional Development website: http://www.adelaide.edu.au/clpd/

4. Self-assessment and Peer Assessment

> The principles outlined in the previous section also apply to
> peer and self-assessment

4.1 Marks for Self-assessment and Peer Assessment

Normally no more than 10% of the marks contributing to the final mark in a course should come from an individual assessment item of either peer and self-assessment. The total marks for a combination of peer and self-assessment and participation in a course should not normally exceed 20% of the final mark in a course.

Where a course coordinator wishes to allocate more than 10% of the final mark for the course to an individual peer and self-assessment, or more than 20% for the use of all three assessment items, a case must be made based on specific learning objectives and permission from the appropriate Executive Dean (or nominee) should be sought.

Students: students should familiarise themselves with the marking criteria and standards associated with peer and self-assessment. They must not be biased towards another student when assigning marks when their input is required.

Staff: teaching staff should provide an appropriate marking scheme and criteria for any peer and self-assessment, and the process used to determine these marks should be made explicit. Where peer and self-assessment is used for summative purposes, the relevant academic staff member responsible for the assessment should review the marks for consistency and reliability.

5. Assessment Complaints

Students who believe that an assessment mark is unfair should initially discuss their concerns with the staff involved in the course. If they are still concerned about the assessment outcome they should seek a meeting with the appropriate Head of Discipline or School. Students who are not satisfied with the outcome of that meeting may use the *Student Complaints Policy* to lodge an official complaint. http://www.adelaide.edu.au/policies/100/

Further details on assessment complaints and appeals (including requests for re-marks) can be found in the 'Assessment Policy' section of the University's annual *Student Guide,* available at http://www.adelaide.edu.au/policies/603/