



ASSESSMENT of COURSEWORK

Policy

DEFINITIONS

Terms in this document, for which definitions are not provided in the text or may not be self-evident or for which usage at ACC may differ to that in other higher education institutions are as follows:

Assessment: Includes examinations, essays, tutorial assignments, reports, practicums and any other means by which the College assesses whether students have achieved the learning outcomes associated with a unit of study.

Graded assessment items commonly require attainment of 50% or greater to pass. Certain practical assessments in units with significant mapping against CCEA competencies, will have a hurdle requirement and all assessment tasks/performances must be successfully passed despite the overall mark. When this is applicable, this is clearly stated in the unit profile and the examination and assessment document and assessment rubric.

Award Program: A program of study leading to a qualification accredited by TEQSA and, in many instances, also a relevant professional body. Award programs lead to a qualification located at levels 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 or 10 of the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Consensus Moderation: Is broadly defined as a peer review process used to reach a general agreement about what quality assessment and its outcomes “looks like”; it ensures that the judgments of students' performance are consistent and have the same “meaning” irrespective of time, place, institution or examiner.

Exam Invigilator: Academic or other member of ACC staff who supervise examinations and in so doing ensure that students abide by the rules applicable to that examination and are available to answer any procedural query that a student may have.

Hurdle Assessment: An assessment task the student must pass to pass the unit. If a student fails a hurdle, they fail the unit regardless of the total mark they receive.

Hurdle requirement: A hurdle requirement is an assessment task mandating a minimum level of performance as a condition of passing the unit of study. Hurdle assessments are compulsory requirements within individual units that must be met in order to achieve satisfactory results in those units.

Marking Rubric: In the higher education context, a rubric is typically an evaluation tool or set of guidelines used to promote the consistent application of learning expectations, learning objectives or learning standards or to measure their attainment against a consistent set of criteria. Marking Rubrics clearly define academic expectations for students (in terms of learning outcomes – i.e. knowledge, skills and understanding) and help to ensure consistency in the evaluation of academic work from student to student, assignment to assignment, or course to course. In this way they ensure adherence to standards in terms of definite levels of achievement and/or performance. They are also used as scoring instruments to determine grades, which reflect the degree to which learning standards have been demonstrated or attained by students.

Reliability of assessment tasks: Assessment tasks are designed to be implemented consistently. This means even if the task itself addresses the learning outcomes (i.e. it is valid), if it is too complex in its nature and/or has its scope beyond what is expected to address the learning outcomes, the task may become unreliable as a means of assessment.

Reliability of marking/grading: Assessment tasks are marked consistently, correctly and fairly across different submissions/examinations being assessed by the single marker, as well as across different markers, cohorts and locations. Many assessment tasks require the markers to apply their expert discretion to generate a mark/grade and an effort needs to be made to make sure this subjective variation is eliminated as much as possible.

Review and Confirmation of Grades: This process involves consideration of final grades and interim results submitted by a Stream Coordinator to the Education and Grading Committee for review and approval prior to the date that the final grades are released to students. A process of quality assurance, including a review of the distribution of grades and assessment moderation, occurs prior to the release of grades for each semester or term. Assessment moderation is a process separate from the marking of assessments, which ensures that an assessment outcome (e.g., mark and/or grade) is fair, valid and reliable, that assessment criteria have been applied consistently, and that any differences in academic judgement between individual markers can be acknowledged and addressed. It ensures consistency in marking within student cohorts and across time. The Education and Grading Committee presents all grades and results per semester for reporting to the Academic Board.

Semester: Either of the two periods of study into which an academic year is divided, constituting half of the regular academic year.

Special Assessment: An alternative assessment that is designed to include the same learning objectives as the original assessment and involves tasks that are based on the same criteria and standards as the original assessment and will be marked/graded according to those criteria and standards.

Stream: A scientific or professional discipline or body of knowledge which forms an essential part of the degree program curriculum. Streams at the ACC comprise one or more units of study.

Stream Coordinator: The academic staff member who is responsible for the overall management of a stream of the program curriculum. This includes scaffolding of the units within the Stream. **Term:** A portion of a Semester, usually 50%, in which a unit is delivered at the ACC.

Unit: An element of a Stream (as defined above), that has specified student learning outcomes and requires satisfactory performance in assessments that measure student performance regarding learning outcomes.

Validity of assessment tasks: Assessment tasks are designed to assess what they are supposed to assess, which are the learning outcomes of the tasks, unit and course. This means even if students find a particular assessment task engaging and performed well, if the task does not address the learning outcomes, it is not valid in the given context.

Validity of marking/grading: Assessment tasks are marked in response to what the assessment tasks are supposed to assess. This means even if the criterion-based marking is conducted by a single trained assessor/marker using a rubric to maintain the consistency of the marking, if the marking was undertaken against the criteria inconsistent with the learning outcomes, the marking is said to be invalid as assessment. This inconsistency includes the disproportionate allocation of marks for only specific aspects of the learning outcomes.

PURPOSE

This Policy has been developed to reflect the ACC's commitment to ensuring the quality and appropriate alignment of assessment of students' learning across all units within the Bachelor of Chiropractic and other award programs. The focus is on ensuring authentic assessment of program and unit learning outcomes and graduate attributes, and ensuring that assessment is effective, efficient and student-centred in its design, implementation and review. It is to be read in conjunction with the *College's Grades and Result Policy and Procedures, Examinations Procedure and Requests for Extension or Deferment of Assessment Procedure*, which provide detailed guidance to staff and students.

The section titled 'Principles' indicates the framework through which the College approaches the design, implementation and review of assessment tasks and examinations.

The section titled 'Policy' refers to the processes used by the College, which ensure that the demonstration of student knowledge and achievement of learning outcomes are reflected and measured through assessment tasks, including examinations, which are valid, reliable and fair. This section includes details of the approach applied to ensure effective moderation of assessment. Moderation is fundamental to the ongoing development, maintenance and continuous improvement of academic quality. Moderation provides assurance that assessment activities have been designed and implemented appropriately so that students and staff can be confident that the assessment tasks, marking and therefore the results obtained are valid and reliable.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to staff and other employees, who are responsible for the development, administration and continuous improvement of assessment and examination of student learning across all units integral to ACC award programs.

PRINCIPLES

Student assessment is used to determine academic progress and individual achievement. Implementation of coursework assessment principles ensures assessments are of high quality, effective and efficient, and acceptable to all stakeholders, including students.

The following principles provide a framework for staff, when determining the design, implementation and review of assessments, including examinations.

Compliance with Higher Education and Professional Standards

- The Australian Chiropractic College is required to satisfy TEQSA and the CCEA that its graduates meet the requisite standards and are competent to practise chiropractic. Accordingly, the ACC aims to meet these standards.

Effective Assessment

The ACC ensures effective assessment through assessment that:

- Achieves the desired outcome for which it was designed and minimises the potential for negative or unintended outcomes.
- Aligns with Graduate Attributes, Learning Goals and Outcomes and provides clear demonstration of a student's successful academic progress and achievement.
- Allows for provision of constructive student feedback.

- Is a valid and reliable source to provide certification of student academic achievement.
- Aids in the development of independent learning strategies and capabilities through effective and timely grading and constructive feedback.

Efficient Assessment

The ACC ensures efficient assessment through:

- Assessment tasks that are designed to allow for the minimum number of assessments whilst ensuring sufficient evidence of student progression and learning.
- Optimisation of the potential benefit of assessment to a student via a grade allocated mark and the through the quality, and quantity and timely provision of critical feedback.
- Optimisation of staff gains through their efforts in designing, implementing and providing assessment of tasks provided to students.

Student-Centred Assessment

The ACC ensures student-centred assessment through:

- Assessments that are designed to take into account the diversity in student background, academic history and experience, and allow for maximum opportunity to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes.
- Review processes that ensure continuous fairness, consistency and transparency in design and delivery, and assessment criteria.
- Providing opportunity for student appeal against any of the following in accordance with the *ACC Student Academic Appeals Policy and Procedures*:
 - Assessment design.
 - Implementation.
 - Grading criteria or procedures. Note that student appeal against the grade or result awarded to a particular assessment is covered in the *ACC Grades and Results Policy and Procedures*.
- Ensuring that students understand their rights to:
 - Fair, consistent, equitable and transparent assessment guidelines and practices.
 - Reasonable support and learning systems to, wherever possible, eliminate or reduce potential barriers to success for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Refer to the *ACC Student Support Policy and Procedures*.
 - Reasonable support and learning systems to, wherever possible, eliminate or reduce potential barriers to success, particularly in areas of disability. Refer to the *ACC Disability Policy and Disability Support Procedures* for further information.

POLICY

Scope and Purpose of Assessment

The purpose of assessment, including examinations, is to measure student learning outcomes associated with each unit of study.

ACC therefore ensures that:

- Unit learning outcomes are clearly stated in each Unit Profile.
- All assessment tasks have alignment with at least one learning outcome and graduate attribute. Having all learning outcomes assessed under one assessment tool is not considered good practice nor is the notion of having individual assessments for each learning outcome. This is considered ineffective and inefficient.
- The principles of authentic assessment are observed. This involves the assessment of one or more aligned learning outcomes per task. Learning outcomes are not to be repeatedly assessed via different assessment tasks.
- Each Unit Profile will clearly demonstrate the following:
 - The relationship between assessment task and learning outcome.
 - All fundamental details of an assessment including the aspects of each task, marking criteria and/or rubrics.
- Assessments are proportional to unit credit and appropriate to the AQF level of the program.
- Hurdle assessments are used where they are required by safety or professional accreditation, registration or licensing requirements. Hurdle assessment tasks are clearly identified in the Unit Profile.
- There are not more than 3 separate assessment tasks with hurdle requirements per unit.
- There are no hurdle requirement/s in assessment tasks weighted at less than 20% of the total assessment.
- Practical assessments in units with significant mapping against CCEA competencies, will have a hurdle requirement and all assessment tasks/performances must be successfully passed despite the overall mark. When this is applicable, this is clearly stated in the unit profile and the examination and assessment document and assessment rubric.
- The consequences of not meeting a hurdle requirement are made explicit to students.
- A student who fails a hurdle assessment will fail the unit regardless of the overall unit mark they achieve.
- Assessment hurdles require the specific endorsement of the Academic Dean.

Assessment Moderation

To ensure effective assessment, moderation is conducted both internally and through external moderators. This enables valid and consistent assessment of subject learning outcomes and student performance whilst maintaining comparable standards against other tertiary education providers.

Moderation endeavours to ensure that all aspects of ACC award programs meet AQF standards.

Collaborative moderation occurs at two (2) points during the assessment process: pre-assessment and post-assessment. Pre-assessment moderation certifies the relevance of assessment tasks against course learning outcomes and graduate attributes. Post-assessment moderation aims to achieve a comparability of results between students, ensuring marks/grades awarded to students are valid and defensible.

Collaboration between academic staff and external reviewers aims to maintain a high level of academic rigor whilst ensuring a comparable standard in relation to other relevant tertiary institutions.

For the Chiropractic Practice units 1- 4 (3CPRA1, 3CPRA2, 4CPRA3 and 4CPRA4), the summative assessments for clinical competency undergo internal and external moderation every semester as pre and post examination moderation. Furthermore, these assessments are an ongoing agenda item for the

Chiropractic Advisory Group (CAG) meetings to also provide external input into these clinical competency assessments in the pre-examination period each semester.

External members are engaged as panel examiners for the summative clinical competency assessments – Viva Voce and OSCE for the Chiropractic Practice units 1- 4 (3CPRA1, 3CPRA2, 4CPRA3 and 4CPRA4). External members are chosen for expertise in areas relevant to the assessment.

Assessment Timetable

- Assessment timetables are appropriately constructed to ensure a distribution of assessments that take into account the full range of academic demands on the student at any one point in time.
- Special consideration and arrangements are made to ensure optimisation of academic success for those students with a disability or special needs. Refer to Student Support Policy and Procedures.
- Ongoing constructive feedback is provided through the implementation of formative assessment tasks, thereby providing students with the opportunity to receive academic support and advice prior to summative assessment.
- Students are provided with adequate time to submit an assessment which may be subject to the possibility of equipment failure, or lack of availability of, or limited access to, references or learning materials.

Assessment Tasks

- A variety of assessment tasks (written paper, practical test) are designed, taking into consideration the following:
 - Demonstrable alignment against one or more learning outcomes.
 - Valid and reliable means of assessment of student achievement and their attainment of the desired learning outcome(s).
 - Balancing the length and complexity of each assessment against the full load of academic demands on a student's time.
- The opportunity to practise or experience each type of assessment prior to summative assessment is provided, within reason.
- Each unit up to 12 credit points has no more than 4 items of assessment and may have up to 4 different types of assessment, including examinations. Any exceptions require the approval of the Learning and Teaching Committee.
- The timing and weighting of assessments in each unit takes into account the College's commitment to promoting student engagement and learning, early assessment of a student's preparedness for learning, and areas where support may be needed.
- Final assessment items in any unit, including a final examination, may only account for a maximum of 60% of total marks. Any exceptions require the approval of the Program Development Committee and Academic Board.
- Unit Profiles state the learning outcomes for each unit and contain clear descriptions of each assessment item, identifying the following:
 - Relationship identified against aligned learning outcome.
 - Assessment criteria against which student performance will be measured (marking rubrics).
 - Assessment task weighting'.
 - Pass/Fail - specified criteria in terms of minimum performance/marks (if applicable).

- Referencing type.
 - Due dates and return dates.
 - Examination conditions (closed/open book).
 - Assessment specifications – individual or collaborative work, maximum lengths, penalties for breach of specifications.
- Any changes to the nature or scope of the assessment during a given Semester are only possible with the agreement of the students and through the approval of the Academic Dean and endorsement by the Academic Board, prior to formal notification of the change to students. Any proposed changes will allow adequate time for students to prepare, so as not to disadvantage any student.

Referencing for Written Assignments/Assessments

- Required referencing style(s) are outlined within each Unit Profile and all efforts are made to maintain consistency in referencing style across all units within an award program.
- All material produced and provided by the College for a particular unit recommends and uses the nominated referencing style.
- Referencing style(s) required for assessment tasks is reiterated with the assessment criteria and is stated in the Unit Profile.

Marking of Assessment Tasks

- Assessment tasks, excluding exams, are marked according to the published assessment criteria.
- Marks are allocated based on the student performance against the assessment criteria, using marking rubrics. Mark deductions will be implemented should the student fail to meet these criteria or breach assessment marking criteria, particularly with regard to submission dates, length of text in written assignments and referencing.
- Allocated marks toward each assessment task are proportionate to the work and effort expected of the student for successful achievement, as detailed in the marking rubric.
- Specific passing requirements, including minimum mark and performance requirements, are clearly outlined within the Unit Profile.
- All grades are reviewed and passed through a moderation process prior to release to the students. Any grades that may be released prior to this process are considered provisional and may be subject to change. Refer to Academic Moderation Policy and Procedures.
- Specified Certification of Grade dates are published prior to the commencement of each academic year and made available to staff and students.
- Supporting documentation is provided as evidence toward all academic decisions, in particular those with the potential for adverse implications for student academic progression.
- Those students registered for student support have adequate arrangements in place to ensure transparency, fairness and equity in the assessment process. Refer to ACC Student Support Policy and Procedures and Equity (Anti-discrimination) Policy.

Feedback on Assessment Tasks

- Timely and constructive feedback is provided on all assessment tasks throughout the semester to help facilitate optimisation of student learning opportunities. All feedback is provided in sufficient

time to allow for academic support and advice where required, thus allowing for the opportunity for improvement prior to subsequent assessment tasks.

- Feedback is provided to students no less than one week before the submission date of the next assessment item and no later than 10 working days after submission.
- Feedback is provided individually or on a group basis, and may consist of the following:
 - Identification of weaknesses.
 - Identification of strengths.
 - Suggestions on how to make improvements.
- Staff provide a written summary on the assessment outcomes for each unit, including the performance of the cohort, student feedback, and suggestions as to possible changes for future implementation for increased efficiency and effectiveness. Refer to Academic Moderation Policy and Procedures.

Academic Support

- The academic progress of each student is closely monitored to help in the early identification of at risk students or those who may require academic support.
- Academic support provides clarification of assessment errors due to misunderstanding of assessment criteria.
- Academic support is designed to assist students in the development of learning strategies and skills to enable them to improve upon their academic performance.

Special Assessment

- A request for a special assessment may be put forward by a staff member to the Academic Dean should they feel that the academic performance of an individual or group of students is in question and requires clarification.
- Special assessment criteria, implementation and delivery will be consistent with the initial assessment measures.
- Special assessments will result in either an interim result or final grade.
- Students are not permitted to apply for special assessment.

Review of Grade and Appeals

- Students have the right to request a review of grade and/or appeal against the outcome of academic decisions as outlined in the *ACC Review of Grade Policy and Procedure* and *Student Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure*.

Examination Procedures

- Examination (exam) procedures include expectations for staff and students, and are designed to ensure standardisation of exam requirements, and transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in the development and delivery of exams. The procedures are documented in detail in the College's Examination Procedure document.

Reasonable Adjustment – Assessment (including Examinations) Arrangements

- With regard to students who, at the time of enrolment, identify themselves as having a disability or having a condition which is likely to impact their study, the College will give due consideration to reasonable adjustments to student requirements, including assessments, as outlined in *The ACC Disability Policy and Procedures*, and *Student Support Policy and Procedures*.

Principles for Special Consideration

- The only ground on which a student may appeal for Special Consideration is where their assessments, including examinations, have been adversely affected by exceptional circumstances.
- The following principles apply when considering grounds for special consideration:
 - Equity.
 - Consistency.
 - Fairness.
 - Effectiveness.
 - Timeliness.
- The responsibility for determining the process whereby a request for Special Consideration is to be managed lies with the Academic Dean. The process may include, but is not limited to, referral of the student to the Requests for Extension or Deferment of Assessment Procedure.

Assessment Extensions and Deferments

- An Extension to a due date for submission of an assignment is limited to 5 days from the initial published due submission date, is not applicable to an examination. Requests are only considered on the basis of admissible grounds.
- A Deferment (different to an extension) is potentially applicable to both examinations and other assessments, and a separate set of conditions apply.
- In both instances (extensions and deferments), the procedures for student applications, admissible grounds, limitations, and timelines for decisions are outlined in the *ACC Requests for Extension or Deferment of Assessment Procedure*.
- Admissible grounds for applications include:
 - Medical grounds.
 - Personal/family situation.
 - Work-related.
 - Other unavoidable or unforeseen circumstance.
- The final responsibility for determining the outcome of an assessment extension request or deferment and whether a late penalty will apply resides with the Academic Dean.

Responsibilities

- Academic Board and its subcommittees are responsible for:
 - Implementation and monitoring of this policy across the programs to ensure effectiveness and consistency.
 - Development of systematic assessment review procedures and practices. Refer to the *College's Annual Program Performance and Unit Enhancement Reports Policy and*

Procedures.

- The Academic Dean is responsible for:
 - Implementation of this policy across all program units.
 - Effective communication of assessment policy, procedures and guidelines to both staff and students through the dissemination of concise information and expectations regarding adherence to systems and processes that enable effectiveness and consistency of implementation of assessments.
 - Review of procedures and practices concerning assessment development and implementation. Refer to the *Annual Program Performance and Unit Enhancement Reports Policy and Procedures*.

- Academic Staff are responsible for:
 - Familiarising themselves with the principles and related policy and procedures pertaining to assessment as well as clearly understanding their appropriate roles and responsibilities relating to assessment.
 - Ensuring that assessment guidelines and practices are implemented in a manner which is fair, consistent, equitable and transparent.
 - Monitoring assessment review practices regularly to maintain continuous improvement and effectiveness of assessment material.

- The College is responsible for ensuring:
 - A high standard and quality of academic teaching staff, who will be required to demonstrate active engagement in the scholarship of learning and teaching and who will have access to on-going academic scholarship and professional development to support innovation and continuous improvement in learning and teaching practices, including assessment.
 - Continued and regular assessment of learning and teaching resources and services, to ensure quality, quantity and currency with contemporary and benchmarked standards.
 - The administration and record keeping systems maintain all academic assessments, records and results relevant to the *Assessment of Coursework Policy, Examinations Procedure, and Extensions or Deferral of Assessment Procedure*.

- Students are responsible for ensuring that they:
 - Are familiar with this policy, corresponding procedures, and the College's Student Handbook.
 - Follow this policy and corresponding procedures.
 - Utilise assessment feedback appropriately to ensure quality learning.
 - Provide appropriate constructive feedback to support program review and future development.
 - Provide support documents and material should a request for extension, deferral, or special consideration be sought.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

The Academic Dean is responsible for the implementation of this Policy.

The ACC Learning and Teaching Committee, Academic Board and Program Development Committee are each responsible for various elements of quality assurance of Assessment at the ACC. Their respective roles are clearly

indicated in the ACC Governance Framework and will be monitored by the Board of Directors for their discharge of governance and management accountabilities.

REVIEW

The ACC's *Assessment of Coursework Policy* is reviewed every three years.

It is a policy of the ACC that any Policy or Procedure may be reviewed earlier as indicated by internal or external factors (including but not limited to such factors as changes in the guidelines of regulatory authorities, accreditation/registration requirements of the profession, or relevant legislation at state or federal level) as determined the Board of Directors and/or Academic Board.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Academic Integrity Policy and associated Procedures
- Assessment of Coursework Procedures
- Requests for Extension or Deferment of Assessment Procedure
- Grade and Results Policy and Procedures
- Student Support Policy and Procedures
- Disability Policy and Procedures
- Student Academic Appeals Procedures
- Equity (Anti-discrimination) Policy
- Annual Program Performance and Unit Enhancement Reports Procedures
- Inherent Requirements Policy
- Inherent Requirements Statement.

VERSION CONTROL

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| HESF | 1.4 Learning and Assessment 2.2 Diversity and Equity | 1.4.3 1.4.4 1.4.5 2.2.1 2.2.2 |
| Nature of Change | <p>Complete rewrite to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include hurdle requirements • Sequence of sections to improve flow of information • Separate out procedures from this policy <p>February 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate the Assessment Moderation Policy • Update Subject to Stream • Update course to program • Amend format to align with agreed policy format • Clarify arrangements in place for students who inform ACC that they have a condition that may impact their study • Clarify arrangements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. <p>April 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification in relation to the assessment of the chiropractic practice units. <p>June 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification in relation to practical hurdle assessments which are closely aligned to CCEA competency requirements. | |