

### Purpose

Course assessment methods are approved and reviewed as part of the University's program approval process. This section of the Manual describes the principles and procedures that underpin moderation and variation of course assessment methods.

### Relevant to

- All courses offered as part of:
  - an enabling program
  - an undergraduate or postgraduate coursework program
  - single course and cross-institutional enrolments
  - Open Universities Australia (OUA) units delivered by UniSA
- Students eligible for variations or alternative arrangements to assessment methods. This includes students with disabilities, Indigenous Australian students, students from non-English speaking backgrounds, and students who provide evidence of medical, compassionate, religious observance or community service grounds.

### Cross-references

- [A-35A: Quality assurance and improvement: programs, courses and teaching arrangements](#)
- [A-42: Honours Degree Programs](#)
- [A-49: Postgraduate Coursework Degrees with a significant research component](#)
- [C-7: Students with disabilities](#)
- [Coursework Program Approval Manual and associated guidelines](#)

## 3.1 Moderation of assessment

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- 3.1.1 Moderation of assessment includes the planning and operation of assessment design and approaches to marking, as well as processes associated with the review of judgements made about students' results or grades and feedback. This view of moderation is founded on the importance of using valid and fair assessment items as well as having valid and reliable judgements made on the quality of students' work.
- 3.1.2 Processes which result in the implementation of high quality assessment practices, including external benchmarking, are critically important in relation to the commitment the University makes to key stakeholder groups, such as students, industry and the general community, around the provision of high quality education.
- 3.1.3 Each division will ensure that moderation practices in its schools and courses are documented and consistent with the view of moderation outlined in 3.1.1 and 3.1.2. They must specify:
- a. the manner in which all assessment items in all courses are valid and fair ways of measuring student achievement in relation to learning outcomes
  - b. practices which enhance consistency in judgments made about student achievement in and across courses, including the use of:
    - (i) marking guides, keys, schemes and rubrics to promote shared understandings around expectations and performance in assessment
    - (ii) second marking – where a second marker assesses a representative sample (a minimum of the square root of the student cohort plus all fails) of marked work

- (iii) double marking – where all assessment items are blind marked independently by two assessors in cases of high value assignments and dissertations
  - c. expectations relating to the review of marks or grades awarded to students' work, including feedback, and any subsequent actions that may be required before the marks or grades are released to students in a timely fashion (as determined by policy)
  - d. equivalent practices for alternative forms of delivery, for example, transnational or external
  - e. the nature and timing of external benchmarking of moderation practices.
- 3.1.4 An important part of the University's approach to setting and maintaining consistent, University-wide standards is that these moderation approaches are approved by Academic Board.

## **3.2 Variations to assessment**

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- 3.2.1 Assessment methods, tasks and timelines must be specified in the course information booklet and distributed to students by the first class of the course.
- 3.2.2 It is expected that a student will complete the assessment requirements for a course within the relevant study period unless the student:
- a. qualifies for a variation due to:
    - (i) supplementary assessment (see [clause 7.2](#))
    - (ii) deferred assessment (see [clause 7.3](#))
    - (iii) special consideration (see [clause 7.4](#))
    - (iv) a delay in the marking of the final assessment (see [clause 8.2.4](#)), or
    - (v) provisions as set out in the student's Disability Access Plan (see clause 3.2.3)
  - b. is aware of circumstances for which they will require a variation to assessment. In these cases they must lodge their request with the Course Coordinator within the first two weeks of the course, (or equivalent for accelerated or intensive teaching)
  - c. requests a variation to assessment methods, tasks and timelines on the grounds of unexpected or exceptional circumstances (see [clause 7.5 to 7.8](#)). Variations which are required on these grounds should be discussed with the Course Coordinator at the earliest possible opportunity.
- 3.2.3 Provisions for students with disabilities are outlined separately in University policy [C-7: Students with disabilities](#). Adjustments and variations for students with disabilities will only be made in accordance with that policy, and only for students who have a Disability Access Plan that has been developed in conjunction with the Learning and Teaching Unit disability service, or UniSA transnational administration office, as applicable.

## **3.3 Variations to examinations**

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- 3.3.1 The following students are entitled to the variations specified under clause 3.3.2 unless the course information booklet specifies that no variations are available:
- a. Indigenous Australian students
  - b. students of non-English speaking background (NESB students) who were:
    - (i) born outside Australia
    - (ii) arrived in Australia less than ten years previously, and

- (iii) speak a language other than English at home
  - c. mature age students (i.e. 21 years or over at the time of admission to the program) who speak a language other than English at home
  - d. transnational students of non-English speaking background where the language spoken at home is not English, and the medium of instruction is English.
- 3.3.2 Students who meet the eligibility criteria above will be entitled to the following provisions, unless the course information booklet specifies that no variations are available:
- a. extra time to be used for reading or writing. This will normally be an extra ten minutes per hour for every hour of standard examination time, and
  - b. the use of an English language or bilingual print dictionary (not annotated) for Indigenous Australian students, or
  - c. the use of a bilingual print dictionary (not annotated) for students identified in clause 3.3.1 b, c or d above.
- 3.3.3 Provisions for students with disabilities are outlined separately in University policy [C-7: Students with disabilities](#). Adjustments and variations for students with disabilities will only be made in accordance with that policy, and only for students who have a Disability Access Plan that has been developed in conjunction with the Learning and Teaching Unit disability service or UniSA partner administration office, as applicable.
- 3.3.4 Provisions may be made in relation to difficulties associated with travel to examination venues, such as significant financial hardship and/or carer responsibilities. Provisions will be determined on a case by case basis and will require supporting documentation such as a recommendation from a student counsellor.
- 3.3.5 Where additional materials or resources are allowed as a variation to examination procedures, these materials must not be enhanced or tampered with in any way that provides an additional advantage to the student. For example, if a student is allowed to take an English language print dictionary into the examination but other resources are not allowed, the dictionary must not have any additional notes or markings in it.
- 3.3.6 A student who is entitled to variations, as specified above, will have access to these variations for the duration of their program, unless they enrol in a course that specifies in the course information booklet that an alternative arrangement is in place, or that there are no variations available.
- 3.3.7 Data which is collected during enrolment and held on the student record system will identify students in one of the categories above. Academic staff are not required to make decisions on a case-by-case basis regarding eligibility for variations to examinations.

### **3.4 Extension to assessment task deadlines**

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- 3.4.1 An extension to the timeline in which to complete individual assessment tasks may be granted on medical or compassionate grounds or special circumstances (see [clauses 7.6 - 7.8](#))
- 3.4.2 An extension to the timeline in which to complete individual assessment tasks will be granted to externally enrolled students due to late dispatch of course materials, providing the student enrolled in the course prior to the commencement of the study period.
- 3.4.3 Applications for an extension must be lodged in writing with the Course Coordinator before the due date for the assessment task and must be supported, where appropriate, by documentary evidence. The Course Coordinator will respond in writing, normally within two working days, and will keep a copy of the correspondence.