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## Assessment Principles and Requirements

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### Purpose

This section describes [assessment](#) principles and requirements, including [assessment](#) design and student workload, at both course and program level.

If a student does not believe that the requirements in this section are being adhered to, they should discuss the matter with the relevant [program director](#) in the first instance. If the matter remains unresolved, the student should discuss their concerns with the head of school.

### Relevant to

All students enrolled in

- enabling programs
- undergraduate and postgraduate coursework programs
- single course and cross-institutional enrolments
- Open Universities Australia units delivered by UniSA

### Cross-references

- [Code of good practice: University Teaching](#)
- [Code of conduct for students](#)
- [A-49: Postgraduate coursework degrees with a significant research component](#)
- [UniSA Teaching and Learning Framework](#)

## 1.1 Principles of student [assessment](#)

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### 1.1.1 [Assessment](#) plays an essential role in shaping student learning

[Assessment](#) practices should promote student engagement as described in the University's Teaching and Learning Framework. Good [assessment](#) practices judge levels of performance and support student learning.

### 1.1.2 [Assessment](#) is an integral component of course and program design

[Assessment](#) tasks should be aligned with the objectives and teaching and learning arrangements of the course.

[Assessment](#) across the courses within a program should be coordinated to:

- a. ensure coverage and opportunity for student achievement of the learning outcomes for the program
- b. ensure coverage, development and achievement of the program's Graduate Qualities
- c. ensure consistency in the University's expectation of workload across courses
- d. spread [assessment](#) load and intensity across the [study period](#) (see clause 1.2.3 and 1.2.5 d)
- e. provide a variety of types of [assessment](#) (see clause 1.1.4).

### 1.1.3 The design of [assessment](#) tasks has a significant impact on student learning

[Assessment](#) design should provide students with the stimulus to learn in depth, to apply their developing skills and knowledge in new situations, and challenge and change their ways of thinking and doing.

- 1.1.4 **[Assessment](#) tasks should be diverse**
- [Assessment](#) practices should be inclusive and support equity principles, catering for both individual and group diversity. It should be recognised that all [assessment](#) models have limitations and a capacity to disadvantage certain students. Every effort should be made to minimise such disadvantage by using a variety of [assessment](#) techniques. Inclusive language must be used to avoid gender, racial, cultural or other language bias.
- 1.1.5 **[Assessment](#) should be used for both [formative](#) and [summative](#) purposes**
- [Formative assessment](#) helps students and staff to identify strengths, weaknesses, and ways to improve and enhance learning attainment. [Summative assessment](#) provides information to judge the extent to which a student has achieved objectives relevant to the Graduate Qualities in a course or program.
- 1.1.6 **Good [assessment](#) requires clear articulation of purpose, requirements, standards and criteria**
- [Assessment](#) works best when students have a clear understanding of [assessment](#) expectations. [Assessment](#) criteria in particular need to be clear and explicit so that students know what is expected of them for each [assessment](#) task.
- 1.1.7 **Good [assessment](#) practice allows students to receive timely feedback on their learning**
- High quality feedback is clear and constructive, and enables students to make sensible judgements about modifying aspects of their academic performance in order to meet the objectives of a course. Such feedback should enable students to understand their level of development of the required skills, their mastery of the understandings embedded in the [assessment](#) activity, and how their performance in each domain could be improved in subsequent learning activities.
- 1.1.8 **[Assessment](#) methods should be valid, reliable and consistent**
- Every effort should be made to ensure that [assessment](#) methods and judgements are valid and reliable, and are regularly subjected to peer review, discussion and consensus. Moderation processes that apply to the setting and marking of [assessment](#) tasks, including external benchmarking where appropriate, should be established to improve the validity and reliability of both.
- 1.1.9 **Good [assessment](#) practices should promote ethical academic conduct**
- Ethical academic conduct is both a staff and student responsibility. Good [assessment](#) design can both educate students about appropriate academic conduct and minimise academic misconduct.

## 1.2 Requirements for coursework programs

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- 1.2.1 For undergraduate programs, the provisions specified in clauses 1.2.2 to 1.2.5 below are mandatory. These provisions are discretionary for postgraduate programs.
- 1.2.2 When planning teaching, learning and [assessment](#) activities, academic staff will take into consideration the total time that students will need to allocate to all major and related tasks required to engage with the course content and successfully achieve the desired course outcomes. This includes attendance at lectures, tutorials, practicals, laboratory sessions and studio classes, participation in online activities, completion of [assessment](#) tasks and self-directed, independent course related reading, research and reflection to enable meaningful engagement with theories and concepts. In total, the time students need to spend on all such activities should not exceed 35 hours per unit within a course (e.g. 4.5 unit course x 35 hours = 157.5 hours).
- 1.2.3 The mapping of [assessment](#) load and intensity across a program is essential to ensure that the timing of [assessment](#) tasks is varied across core courses in a program so that students are not unreasonably overloaded at any one time during a [study period](#). [Program directors](#) are responsible for monitoring [assessment](#) within courses in their program to ensure compliance with this requirement. This may include supporting a variation to the [assessment](#) requirement at clause 1.2.5 (b) below.
- 1.2.4 For the purpose of this policy, [assessment](#) tasks that contribute to the final [grade](#) in the course are divided as follows:
- Continuous assessment tasks** occur within regularly scheduled class time (or equivalent time periods for online/external students) and do not require any additional preparation time, other than what would normally be expected for class participation. A course may have a number of these tasks during the [study period](#). Collectively these are known as 'a set of [continuous assessment tasks](#)'.
  - An **assessment point** occurs when students are asked to submit work at a specified point of time in the course, including an end-of-course [examination](#) where these are used. Tasks associated with [assessment points](#) require students to work beyond their regular contact and preparation time.
  - Additional assessment requirements** (sometimes referred to as [assessment hurdles](#)) are conditions for passing a course or [assessment](#) task other than the overall [mark](#). They include, but are not limited to, the achievement of a specified minimum in a particular aspect of the course, or specified attendance requirements.
- 1.2.5 Unless a specific case is made for variation as approved by school and division boards, the following requirements apply:
- normally, there will be no more than three [assessment points](#) in any 4.5 unit course plus the option of one set of [continuous assessment activities](#)
  - at least 15% of the total [assessment](#) for the course will occur in the first half of the [study period](#) in which the course is taught
  - for a 4.5 unit course, individual students will be required to complete learning activities that are equivalent to no more than 4,500 words of assessed writing. This word count should be adjusted proportionately for less complex forms of writing such as journals and [examination](#) answers
  - where possible, due dates for [assessment](#) tasks in core courses will be coordinated to ensure students are not unreasonably overloaded at any one time during a [study period](#)
  - where participation is assessed it should be clear how it is related to course objectives and on what criteria it will be judged. In undergraduate courses the percentage weighting given to participation in class or by designated online activities will be no more than 10% and will count as one [assessment point](#)

- f. all text-based [assessment](#) tasks should be submitted electronically using the University's electronic assignment management system within [learnonline](#). Special provisions will be made for those students who do not have access to electronic communication.

The above requirements apply particularly to courses where [assessment](#) is principally text-based. In courses where [assessment](#) is of a different kind, the requirements should be adjusted, but aim to be equivalent in complexity and workload. This requires being aware of the workload involved (e.g. in group work, or the creation and development of a performance) and the degree of intellectual independence and creativity required.

Staff should avoid the overuse of [continuous assessment tasks](#), particularly in higher level courses.

### **1.3 Communication of [assessment](#) requirements to students**

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- 1.3.1 The course outline will explain the expectations of the [assessment](#) task, its relationship to the program Graduate Qualities, and the criteria and standards by which performance will be judged.
- 1.3.2 Students will also be made aware of [assessment](#) requirements such as length, weighting, submission dates, provisions for extension and re-submission, form of presentation and the extent to which these (and the [assessment](#) task itself) are negotiable between academic staff and students (see [clause 2.1](#)).
- 1.3.3 Additional [assessment](#) requirements (see [clause 1.2.4 c](#)) should be included in the course statement and in the section of the approved course outline headed 'Additional [assessment](#) requirements'.
- 1.3.4 Students are responsible for ensuring they are aware of and understand the [assessment](#) requirements for the course(s) in which they are enrolled.

### **1.4 Feedback to students**

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- 1.4.1 Feedback is one of the most important aspects of the learning process and serves the critical function of enabling students to make timely and informed judgements about their performance so that subsequent [assessment](#) can be undertaken with improved likelihood of success and enhancement.
- 1.4.2 Feedback is provided in a variety of ways, including:
- model answers to questions
  - verbal comments from teaching staff, both individually and to the class
  - emails and online forum comments, both individually and to the class
  - verbal comments on presentations and participation in class discussions
  - preliminary [assessment](#) task advice
  - face-to-face [assessment](#) task discussion, individually, and in groups
  - written feedback comments regarding drafts and [assessment](#) tasks
  - written comments on feedback proformas
  - via the University's electronic assignment management system within [learnonline](#).
- 1.4.3 Feedback on [assessment](#) tasks for students studying internally will normally be provided within ten working days, but no longer than 15 working days following the deadline for submission of the [assessment](#) task. For those students studying externally and offshore, feedback will be provided within 15 working days.

- 1.4.4 Where a subsequent [assessment](#) task builds on earlier [assessment](#) tasks, the earlier [assessment](#) task will be returned at least ten working days before the deadline for submission of the later [assessment](#) task (or equivalent for intensive teaching).
- 1.4.5 Where possible, some expectation should be built into the [assessment](#) design and grading process requiring students to acknowledge and act on the feedback provided.
- 1.4.6 Feedback for [formative assessment](#) may be provided via the University's electronic assignment management system within [learnonline](#) where practical. (A hyperlink will be included in the course outline and on the [learnonline course site](#)). Feedback may include either [marks](#) or [grades](#), or a combination of both, as appropriate for the [assessment](#) task in question.
- 1.4.7 Feedback for [summative assessment](#) will be provided via the University's electronic assignment management system within [learnonline](#) and will include as a minimum:
- an indication of the Graduate Qualities being assessed by the task
  - [marks](#) and/or comments in response to key components of the task, and
  - a summary comment.
- 1.4.8 Where [summative examinations](#) are used in a course, [course coordinators](#) will ensure that arrangements are made for appropriate feedback to students (e.g. provision of worked solutions on the [learnonline course site](#) or group feedback sessions).
- 1.4.9 In the case of [summative examinations](#), students have the right to sight their [examination](#) scripts, but are not entitled to either the original or a copy. (In the case of offshore, OUA or external students, this will be arranged on a case by case basis.) Students wishing to receive individual feedback from a [summative examination](#) may contact their course lecturer within ten working days following the finalisation of results for that [study period](#) (see [clause 8.1.1](#)) to make an appointment. (In the case of offshore, OUA or external students, this appointment may occur by email or telephone.)
- 1.4.10 Where students are undertaking placements (see [Section 4](#)), it is expected that they will be provided with regular and constructive feedback about their performance, either by the [course coordinator](#), designated University placement supervisor and/or the supervising professional in the workplace.

## 1.5 [Examinations](#) as an [assessment](#) technique

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- 1.5.1 Where [summative examinations](#) are used, they will contribute to no more than 70% of the [marks](#) on which final [grades](#) for any course are based.
- 1.5.2 Where a professional association requires that [summative examinations](#) in any course should count for more than 70%, schools must seek a formal exemption from the division.

## 1.6 [Management of assessment](#)

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- 1.6.1 The University is obliged, under the [Higher Education Support Act 2003 \(Cwth\)](#), and as provided for in the [Privacy Act 1988 \(Cwth\)](#), to take reasonable steps to protect students' personal information against loss, unauthorised access, use, modification or disclosure, and misuse. This obligation extends to the management of [assessment](#), the submission of [assessment](#) tasks including the use of cover sheets, and the provision of results and feedback to students. To ensure compliance with this legislative requirement, the provisions in clauses 1.6.2 and 1.6.3 apply.

- 1.6.2 [Assessment](#) task cover sheets:
- a. Where students submit an [assessment](#) task in hard-copy, they are required to include a signed and completed cover sheet.
  - b. Where students submit an [assessment](#) task via the University's electronic assignment management system within [learnonline](#), a cover sheet is automatically created and includes the student's name and student ID.
  - c. If a student submits an [assessment](#) task via the University's electronic assignment management system within [learnonline](#) but it is returned in hard copy form, a cover sheet may still be useful.
  - d. In the case of group [assessment](#) tasks, each member of the group is required to sign the cover sheet, and each student will receive written feedback on their group [assessment](#) task.
- 1.6.3 Distribution of marked [assessments](#):
- a. [Course coordinators](#) will determine how marked student [assessment](#) tasks are distributed. This information will be included in the course outline.
  - b. Acceptable means by which marked [assessment](#) tasks can be returned to students include:
    - i) electronically to the individual student via [learnonline](#)
    - ii) collection during class, only by the student
    - iii) collection from the school office or a staff member (students will need to present their student ID card as proof of identity)
    - iv) collection from [course coordinator](#), lecturer or tutor by prior arrangement
    - v) by post (students attach an A4 stamped, self-addressed envelope with correct postage to their [assessment](#) task)
    - vi) test /exam results may be displayed publicly provided that only the student ID and result are included. A student's name and ID must not be visibly linked in the public domain.
  - c. Marked [assessment](#) tasks must not be left unattended for collection.
- 1.6.4 Where practical, students are required to keep a copy of all work submitted and maintain it until the final course [grades](#) are recorded, submitted and released.

## 1.7 **Online staff resources**

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- [Graduate Qualities](#)
- [Code of good practice: University Teaching](#)
- [Learning and Teaching Unit - Teaching in Higher Education](#)
- [Learning and Teaching Unit - Learning Advice](#)