

Assessment Policy and Procedure HEPP04

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set out the guiding principles and procedures governing Southern Cross Education Institute (Higher Education) assessment processes.

SCOPE

This policy is for all academic assessments conducted by Southern Cross Education Institute (Higher Education).

DEFINITIONS

Assessment	A task which students are required to submit for grading as part of the total marks obtained for a unit.
Assessment System	A coordinated set of documented policies and procedures (including assessment materials and tools) that ensure assessments are consistent and are based on the Principles of Assessment.
Grade	The final result which describes the student's result derived from his/her combined marks for the assessed assessment tasks for a unit.
Mark	The final result expressed as a percentage which a student receives for the combined assessment tasks for a unit.
SCEI-HE	Southern Cross Education Institute (Higher Education)

POLICY

1. Assessment is the process of collecting evidence and making judgments about the extent to which students have achieved the intended learning outcomes of a course.
2. SCEI-HE uses various types of assessment. For each unit within each course, the final grade for a student is determined from the student's performance in all of the assessment's tasks for the unit.
3. Assessment at SCEI-HE is undertaken to:
 - 3.1 provide feedback to students on the effectiveness of their learning as they progress through their course;
 - 3.2 provide evidence for industry bodies and employers that students have attained a defined level of understanding of the unit content;
 - 3.3 provide an indicator for the lecturer, Course Coordinator and Academic Director of the effectiveness of teaching delivery;
 - 3.4 provide an indicator of any need for intervention and/or support; and
 - 3.5 provide benchmarks for the Academic and Corporate Boards on the effectiveness of teaching and learning in SCEI-HE's programs.
4. The following are the principles which apply to assessment and for processes of assessment at SCEI-HE:
 - 4.1 Assessment will be designed to measure:
 - 4.1.1 the achievements of students against defined learning objectives;
 - 4.1.2 to promote learning; and
 - 4.1.3 as early formative assessment to provide opportunities to students to improve their performance.
 - 4.2 The assessment processes for each unit will be provided in the unit outline.
 - 4.3 Every unit will be assessed using at least 2 different assessment methods.
 - 4.4 Assessment methods and the criteria by which assessments are judged will be explicit, appropriately defined, and based on academic achievement.
 - 4.5 Assessment will be fair.
 - 4.6 Assessment will not discriminate on grounds which are irrelevant to the achievement of the unit objectives.
 - 4.7 Feedback following assessment will be informative, constructive, and timely
 - 4.8 Grading processes will be transparent and reflect the extent to which each student has achieved the assessable objectives stated for the unit.
5. Various types of assessment are used at SCEI-HE to make a considered determination about whether or not students have achieved the learning outcomes for each unit. Assessment tasks may include (not an exhaustive list):

Annotated bibliography	Debates	Literature review	Poster presentation	Simulation
Case Studies	Essay	Observation	Professional Practice	Skills assessment
Community Projects	Examination	Online quizzes	Project	Test
Concept or mind maps	Forum	Oral presentation	Reflective journal	Video
Critical writing	Interview	Peer assessment	Research proposal	Work integrated placement
Data analysis	Journal	Portfolio	Role play	Written report

6. The type, scope and frequency of the assessment tasks and the criteria by which grading will be determined, will be communicated to the student at the commencement of the unit, early in the semester (preferably week 1 and no later than week 2).
7. In designing assessment tasks academic staff encourage students to demonstrate:
 - 7.1 Learning in relation to the body of knowledge identified in the unit outline;
 - 7.2 Understanding of the key concepts of the unit;
 - 7.3 Ability to deduce, infer, analyse, synthesise, and evaluate;
 - 7.4 Ability to apply theories to discipline practice;
 - 7.5 Ability to evaluate content and/or concepts as a basis for professional decision making;
 - 7.6 The capacity for independent thought;
 - 7.7 Ability to develop new ideas based on sound scholarship;
 - 7.8 Ability to select, use and document the source of their ideas; and
 - 7.9 Capacity to argue and communicate coherently and persuasively, either symbolically or in written form.

PROCEDURE

1. Assessment Requirements

- 1.1 Lecturers will ensure that students are fully informed of unit objectives and expectations, including the assessment requirements for the unit. For each unit, this information will be provided to students in writing by the end of the first week of each semester.
- 1.2 Unit outlines will be provided to all students in the first week of each semester of study. Unit outlines and unit guide books will provide details of the processes for aggregating the various assessment outcomes of the unit to produce an overall mark and corresponding grade.
- 1.3 For each unit, the unit outline and guide will state clearly the:
 - 1.3.1 learning outcomes and objectives of the unit;
 - 1.3.2 scope and detail of assessments;
 - 1.3.3 minimum standards that are applied to specific assessment tasks;
 - 1.3.4 the weight of each assessment in contributing to the overall mark; and
 - 1.3.5 submission dates for all assessments.
- 1.4 The unit guide will include information on the use of appropriate referencing conventions and requirements, on the degree of cooperation permitted between students, and upon what constitutes academic misconduct and the consequences of committing it as outlined in *Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure HEPP02*.
- 1.5 The unit guide will note that there are no circumstances under which assignments will be accepted for submission after the start of the examination period.

2. Timing and Weighting of Assessments

- 2.1 There should be a clear correlation between credit points and workload without the necessity for a direct mathematical linkage.
- 2.2 The assessment load for essay-based assessments for an entire unit (12 weeks full-time) would amount to 3750-4500 essay words or an equivalence in similar evidence. Equivalence may be reached through cumulative assessments over the unit duration.
- 2.3 At the postgraduate level, the essay-based assessment load is 4500-6500 words or an equivalent combination of essay and non-essay assessment, for a 12-week unit.
- 2.4 Broad equivalences for other means of assessment should be applied in achieving the total stated essay word requirements. In establishing proportionality between different assessment types consideration should be given to:
 - 2.4.1 the complexity of the assessment;

- 2.4.2 the estimated amount of time required to plan, sort and structure the response;
- 2.4.3 the amount of the project that will require creative, reflective, or analytical thought and evidence of deep learning that is not able to be routinely drawn from texts and lecture notes.
- 2.5 The equivalences below may vary according to the 3 criteria above, based on the professional judgement of the unit coordinator or discipline expert:

Assessment Type	Broadly Equivalent to 1000 Words/Standard Essay
Written/Multiple Choice Examination	1 hour
Essay in foreign language	500 words
Group written assessment	750 words per member
Unstructured reflective journal	2000-3000 words
Verbal presentation	20 minutes
Group presentation	10 minutes per member
Clinical practicum assessment	20 minutes

- 2.6 Additional considerations when establishing fair assessment workload:
 - 2.6.1 Length of an assessment does not always equate with difficulty: a reflective journal will not be as inherently demanding as a formally structured essay; an essay in a language other than English (or the student's native language) is likely to be more demanding than an essay in English.
 - 2.6.2 Where English is the language used in unit delivery and the student does not speak English as their primary language, no changes should be made to the length of the assignment, but rather in the time/level of support provided.
- 2.7 Students are expected to attain the objectives of a unit of study progressively throughout a semester.
- 2.8 Students will be set tasks during the semester (formative assessment) so that their progress can be evaluated against established criteria. Such tasks will contribute to the final assessment in a unit of study.
- 2.9 Assessment tasks will be designed carefully, so that they:
 - 2.9.1 keep in proportion the required time commitment and the weight of the assessment task in the overall assessment; and
 - 2.9.2 reflect the importance of each task in determining whether students have met the unit objectives.
- 2.10 This might mean that an important task, such as a final examination, is weighted heavily. Care will always be taken to avoid the imposition of a heavy imbalance of assessment load toward the second half of a semester.
- 2.11 One or more assessment tasks will be set, submitted, marked, and returned to students by the midpoint of each unit. Although students require regular feedback on their progress, the number of assessment tasks will be kept to the minimum that allows effective judgements to be made about student progress.
- 2.12 Due dates for assessment tasks will be well separated in time so as to give students periods of time for reflective learning that are free from the pressure engendered by deadlines.
- 2.13 In some disciplines, students are expected to practise skill development continuously. To evaluate the ability of students to perform such ongoing tasks, consideration will be given to strategies for self-assessment. In this way, students can obtain evidence concerning their level of understanding of the work, while avoiding the stress of frequent formal assessment by an examiner.
- 2.14 Apart from examination scripts, all assessed work will be returned to the student, preferably in a class context. The student has the right to seek clarification of the assessment result.
- 2.15 Unit outlines will advise students at the beginning of a unit of study how all assessment results are to be aggregated to produce an overall mark for the unit. The unit outline combined with the assessment task and unit guide will make clear:
 - 2.15.1 the weight of each task in contributing to the overall mark;
 - 2.15.2 the formulas or rules used to determine the overall mark (rubric);
 - 2.15.3 minimum standards that are applied to specific assessment tasks, and the consequences if such standards are not met (including failure to submit particular tasks);
 - 2.15.4 rules regarding penalties applied to late submissions; and
 - 2.15.5 precise details of what is expected in terms of presentation of work for assessment.
- 2.16 Emphasis in assessment will be placed on:
 - 2.16.1 appropriate referencing conventions and requirements;
 - 2.16.2 the degree of cooperation permitted between students; and

2.16.3 anything which constitutes academic misconduct and the consequences of committing it as outlined in the *Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure HEPP02*.

3. Group Work

- 3.1 Some assessment tasks may require students to work in groups.
- 3.2 Group work assessment will not account for more than 40% of the total allocation of marks for a unit of study. The procedure for establishing groups, and the roles and responsibilities of the members of each group will normally be decided by the students, within a framework specified by the lecturer. The lecturer retains a supervisory and dispute resolution role.
- 3.3 For all group work, the lecturer will provide clear guidelines for students.
- 3.4 Where member(s) of a particular group default or where input to the group work is significantly uneven, the lecturer may adjust the grade for an individual group member or set of group members. This process can be instigated by an individual group member or the lecturer. All group members will be given reasonable time to provide feedback to the lecturer before a decision is made.

4. Moderation

- 4.1 The aggregated mark for the unit of study will be moderated. As a result of moderation, it is possible the final grade awarded to a student for a unit of study may not be consistent with the individual marks awarded to the student for individual assessment items.
- 4.2 For guidance on moderation processes refer to *Moderation Policy and Procedure HEPP35*.

5. Special Consideration

- 5.1 Special Consideration is available when unexpected circumstances beyond a student's control have affected their ability to complete an assignment. An application for special consideration will only be considered where compassionate and compelling circumstances exist. Students may apply for a Special Consideration to request:
 - 5.1.1 An assignment extension where more than 7 calendar days is needed;
 - 5.1.2 A supplementary assessment; or
 - 5.1.3 To defer an examination.
- 5.2 See the *Supplementary Assessment and Special Consideration Policy HEPP82* for detailed information.

6. Written Assessments

- 6.1 All written assessment tasks must meet the requirements set out in the assessment documentation and unit outline and be submitted by the published due date.
- 6.2 Late submission of a written assessment is defined as submission of the response after the published due date.
- 6.3 Except under approved compassionate and compelling circumstances, all late submissions will attract a grading penalty. Penalties will apply if a written assessment is submitted after the assessment due date and without an approved assessment extension.
- 6.4 The word limits for written assessment tasks should be not greater than the following, where examination also forms part of the student's overall grade for the unit of study:
 - 6.4.1 100 level unit: 3000 words
 - 6.4.2 200 level unit: 3500 words
 - 6.4.3 300 level unit: 4000 words
 - 6.4.4 400 and 500 level unit: 5000 words
- 6.5 The word limits for written assessment tasks should be not greater than the following, where no examination is part of the unit assessment requirements:
 - 6.5.1 100 level unit: 4500 words
 - 6.5.2 200 level unit: 5000 words
 - 6.5.3 300 level unit: 5500 words
 - 6.5.4 400 and 500 level unit: 6500 words

7. Oral Presentations

- 7.1 Some units will have assessment tasks which require students to make oral presentations. A rescheduling of the due date for delivery of an oral presentation will take place only in the case of approved application for special consideration, where compassionate and compelling circumstances apply.

8. Tests

8.1 Many units have assessment tasks which are written tests/exams. Attendance at the scheduled time for a written test is mandatory. Attendance is excused only in the case of an approved application for special consideration where compassionate and compelling circumstances apply.

9. Tutorial Participation

9.1 Up to 10% of the final mark for a unit may be based on active participation in tutorials. The criteria for active participation tutorials will be listed in the unit outline for each unit of study.

10. Submission of Assessment Tasks

10.1 Written assessment tasks should be submitted electronically and, where stipulated, through Moodle.

10.2 Where hard copies of assessments are endorsed in the unit outline, a secure collection centre must be stipulated in the unit outline. All hardcopy assessments are required to have a stamped, signed acknowledgement of receipt.

10.3 It is the student's personal responsibility to keep a copy (digital or hard copy) of all their submitted work until the final course grades are recorded and released.

11. Application for Extension of Submission Deadline for an Assessment Task

11.1 Where an extension of more than 7 calendar days is needed, please apply for Special Consideration.

11.2 An extension to the submission deadline for an assessment task should only be granted where the following criteria apply:

11.2.1 the student has made a written request for an extension prior to or within 2 working days of the due date for the assessment item; and

11.2.2 the student has justified his/her request on the basis of individual circumstances that are reasonably likely to have prevented them from completing the assessment by the specified deadline.

11.3 Applications for extensions must be submitted to the Unit Convenor via email.

11.4 The Course Coordinator will coordinate the process of considering requests for extensions to ensure consistency of outcomes.

11.5 Any extension granted must specify in writing a new due date for submission of the assessment item, during which the student can submit the work without a penalty being applied.

11.6 Except where exceptional circumstances exist, the duration of any extension granted should take reasonable account of the delay experienced by the student, and permission to submit after the normal due date for the assessment without penalty should not be open-ended.

11.7 In granting and managing extensions and deadlines, the Course Coordinator should take into account issues of equity and transparency so as not to disadvantage students who have met set deadlines.

11.8 Where a request is made on medical grounds, an appropriate medical certificate must be presented.

12. Late Penalties for Assessment Tasks

12.1 For students without pre-approved extensions, the following penalties apply:

12.1.1 Late assignment penalty is 5% of the total mark applicable for the assessment task, for each day or part day that the item is late (a "day" for this purpose is defined as any day on which SCEI-HE campus student administration is open). For example: 'If the assessment task is out of a total of 20, the student would lose 1 mark per day off the mark received for the assessment task once it is graded. So, if he/she received a mark of 16/20 for the task, 1 mark for each day late would then be deducted from the mark of 16'.

12.2 Where minimum grades are required in individual assessment tasks for an overall pass, assessments will be considered to have met the criteria if the raw mark for the assessment, before the late penalty is applied, meets the standard.

12.3 If, due to a late submission, a student's mark for the assessment task has reached 0% and the item has not yet been submitted, the student may still be required to submit it in order to be considered for a pass grade in the unit. This is required to ensure the student has attempted the learning outcomes required by the assessment task.

12.4 The final grade for the unit will be calculated on the sum of marks after any late penalties have been applied.

12.5 For some assessment tasks, as identified in the unit outline, late submissions may not be permitted.

13. Resubmission of an Assessment Task

13.1 Once an assessment task has been officially submitted it is deemed to have been presented for grading and cannot be resubmitted to improve the grade. A resubmission of an assessment task may be required but for educative purposes only. In these circumstances the student will receive feedback about the submission but the initial grade will remain unchanged.

14. Reporting of Results

14.1 Unit Convenors are responsible for reporting all grades and marks to the Course Coordinator. The Course Coordinator will ensure that the results for an assessment task are published within 2 weeks of the due date of each assessment task.

14.2 The final grades are published 2 weeks after the end of the examination period on the date provided in the Academic Calendar.

15. Feedback to Students About Their Performance

15.1 Timely feedback to each student throughout each semester is considered an essential component of the teaching and learning process at SCEI-HE.

15.2 Feedback will be provided to students within 2 weeks of the assessment submission date. Please note that:

15.2.1 informal discussions during lectures and tutorials will only occur when all assessments have been submitted;

15.2.2 Feedback on final examination papers is available on request.

16. Review of a Mark or Grade

16.1 A student may request a review of a mark or a grade for any assessment task.

16.2 In the first instance, students are encouraged to approach the unit lecturer to discuss their concerns about the mark or grade they have been assigned. The lecturer will provide a detailed explanation of the reasons for the provision of the mark or grade, usually based on a clear marking guide, or rubric.

16.3 If a student wishes to make a formal request for a review of a mark or grade, it must be made in writing and lodged with the Course Coordinator (where the Course Coordinator is the lecturer) within 10 working days of formal notification of the mark or grade.

16.4 The grounds upon which the student may request a review of a grade are:

16.4.1 the student believes that an error has occurred in the calculation of the mark or determination of the grade; or

16.4.2 the student believes that the mark or grade is inconsistent with the published assessment requirements (rubric) or assessment criteria.

16.5 The following reasons are not appropriate grounds for requesting a review of a grade:

16.5.1 close proximity of the result to another level of grade;

16.5.2 a comparison with the performance of another student or students;

16.5.3 the student's belief that the result is not commensurate with their effort;

16.5.4 financial difficulties experienced by the student; or

16.5.5 issues relating to the employment prospects of the student.

16.6 Students should note that each review of a mark or grade is determined on its own merit without reference to other applications.

16.7 No appeal in regard to an assessment result will be considered more than 3 weeks after the date of publication of the result.

16.8 The Course Coordinator will normally respond to the request for a review of a mark or grade in writing within 10 working days of receiving a properly completed application, and will make a decision to either confirm or vary the original decision.

16.9 The Academic Director will present an annual report of requests for reviews of marks or grades for review, as compiled by the relevant Course Coordinator(s), to the Teaching and Learning Committee as a component of SCEI-HE's quality assurance process.

17. Retention and Disposal of Assessments

17.1 Students are required to keep a copy (electronic or hard) of all items they submit for assessment, in case they are misplaced or lost, unless the format of the assessment item precludes a copy being made and

stored.

17.2 Faculties are required to retain all uncollected assessment tasks for a minimum of 6 months from the date of issue of results.

17.3 At the completion of the 6 month period, all assessment tasks not collected by students may be destroyed except for material which relates to appeals that have not yet been finally determined or material that is required for moderation or accreditation purposes.

17.4 Marks for individual assessment tasks as well as exam records are to be retained for the duration of the accrediting period.

18. Assessment Grading Scale

18.1 During each unit of study, students will be provided with an evaluation of their individual performance with reference to the criteria for each assessment task.

18.2 Student performance in individual units of study will be graded in accordance with the following guidelines:

Grading System Grade	Definition
High Distinction (outstanding performance) Code: HD Mark range: 80% - 100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and comprehensive understanding of the unit content Development of relevant skills to an outstanding level Demonstration of an extremely high level of interpretive and analytical ability and intellectual initiative Excellent achievement of all major and minor objectives of the unit
Distinction (very high level of performance) Code: D Mark range: 70% - 79%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very high level of understanding of the unit content Development of relevant skills to a very high level Demonstration of a very high level of interpretive and analytical ability and intellectual initiative Comprehensive achievement of all major and minor objectives of the unit
Credit (high level of performance) Code: C Mark range: 60% - 69%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High level of understanding of the unit content Development of relevant skills to a high level Demonstration of a high level of interpretive and analytical ability and intellectual initiative Analytical ability and achievement of all major objectives of the unit, with some minor objectives not fully achieved.
Pass (competent level of performance) Code: P Mark range: 50% - 59%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate understanding of most of the basic unit content Development of relevant skills to a satisfactory level Adequate interpretive and analytical ability Achievement of all major objectives of the unit, with some minor objectives not achieved.
Fail (unsatisfactory performance) Code: N Mark range: 0 – 49%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate understanding of the basic unit content Failure to develop relevant skills Insufficient evidence of interpretive and analytical ability Failure to achieve some or all major and minor objectives of the unit
Fail – No Assessment Submitted Code: NS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did not present any work for assessment, to be considered as failure.
Advanced Standing Code: AS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Credit has been granted for the unit of study following an application for Advanced Standing.
Result Withheld Code: RW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A final grade is yet to be awarded for the unit, as the student has been given an additional or alternate opportunity to pass the assessment.
Withdraw with Academic Penalty Code: WWP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applies to a student who withdraws from a course after the last day to withdraw without academic penalty
Withdraw without Academic Penalty Code: WOP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applies to a student who withdraws from a course after the Census Date but before the date to withdraw without academic penalty
Withdraw Code: W	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applies to a student who has withdrawn from a course before the Census Date

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure HEPP05
Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure HEPP02
Examinations Policy and Procedure HEPP31
Special Consideration (Assessment) Form HEFOR10
Student Complaint and Grievances Policy and Procedure HEPP03
Student Progress and Exclusion Policy and Procedure HEPP29
Supplementary Assessment and Special Consideration HEPP82

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000: Section 21 (2B)
Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA)
National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018, Standard 8.4

RESPONSIBILITIES

Academic Board: Responsible for the development, compliance monitoring and review of this policy and any associated procedures and guidelines.
Students: Responsible to submit assessment tasks by the published deadline and to sit tests and examinations at the time and date published.
Lecturers: Required to publish details of assessment tasks in the student assessment documentation and ensure they are consistent with the formally approved assessment tasks.

DOCUMENT AND RECORD CONTROL

Created	Feb 2016 (V1.0)
Amended	Jun 2019 (V1.1); May 2020 (V1.2); Feb 2021 (V1.3); Jun 2021 (V1.4); Feb 2022 (V1.5); May 2022 (V1.6); Jan 2024 (V1.7)
Last reviewed by	Quality Assurance and Compliance Unit (Jan 2024)
Last approved by	Quality Assurance and Compliance Manager (Jan 2024)
Version	1.7
Effective date	January 2024
Next planned review	January 2025