

Assessment Policy

1. PURPOSE/OBJECTIVE

To outline NIC's principles that guide the processes to be used in the conduct and management of assessment and feedback practices in all units.

2. APPLICATION

This policy applies to all NIC students and the staff involved in the assessment process.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

Assessment is the process of collecting evidence and making judgments on whether learning outcomes have been achieved (see *criteria-based assessment*) and providing feedback to students.

NIC Assessment Design Principles

General

- There are 3 or more assessment tasks in each unit
- The assessment tasks and methods are diverse (involve multiple forms or modes of performance)
- Assessment methods comprise both *formative* and *summative assessment* tasks
- A low risk diagnostic test is delivered as early in the semester as feasible. Normally, this should be delivered by the end of week 4
- The assessment tasks provide students with the opportunity to self assess the quality of their work
- The assessment tasks align with the learning outcomes as detailed in the unit outline
- The complexity and challenge of the assessment tasks are appropriate for the level of the unit
- The design and wording of assessments address issues of equity and inclusiveness to accommodate the diversity of the student body and support internationalisation
- The wording of assessment guidelines specifies what is required to achieve the expected standard

Examinations (if applicable)

- The educational rationale for the examination is stated in the unit outline
- The final examination is worth no more than 60% of the total mark for the unit

Participation (if applicable)

- The justification for having participation as an assessment component is explained, in relation to the learning outcomes, in the unit outline
- The basis upon which participation is assessed is fully and clearly described in the unit outline

Group assessment tasks (if applicable)

- The justification for having group tasks as an assessment component is explained, in relation to the learning outcomes, in the unit outline

Grading System

The assessment grade is a measure of the extent to which the desired learning outcomes described in the unit outline have been achieved. The grades the students achieve are descriptive rather than numeric and are officially defined as:

HD High Distinction 85 -100:	Outstanding standard indicating comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an outstanding level of academic achievement; mastery of skills; and achievement of all learning outcomes.
D Distinction 75-84:	Excellent standard indicating a very high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a very high level of academic ability; sound development of skills; and achievement of all learning outcomes.
CR Credit 65-74:	Good standard indicating a high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a high level of academic achievement; reasonable development of skills; and achievement of all learning outcomes.
P Pass 50-64:	Satisfactory standard indicating an adequate knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an adequate level of academic achievement; satisfactory development of skills; and achievement of all learning outcomes.
F Fail 0-49:	Failure to satisfactorily achieve learning outcomes. If all compulsory course components are not completed the mark will be zero. A fail grade may also be awarded following disciplinary action.
S Satisfactory	A grade awarded in a course for which only a pass or fail is available. No marks are provided.

Grading of group assessment tasks

- Group assessment task cover sheets are to be filled out and signed by all members of the group, indicating the level of contribution from each member
- Group assessment tasks in which contributions of individual students cannot be identified are graded on a pass/fail basis
- Group assessment tasks in which contributions of individual students cannot be identified must not constitute more than 30% of the total assessment, unless the unit is graded on a pass/fail basis only.

Integrity of Assessment Process

Transparency

NIC effectively communicates assessment requirements to students. Students are clearly informed about:

- The range of assessment tasks to be performed
- The requirements of all assessment activities
- The marking criteria and weighting for each assessment task
- The submission dates and presentation requirements
- Provision for extension, review and appeal

All requirements and due dates are published in the unit outline at the commencement of the semester.

Moderation of assessments

NIC undertakes regular *internal* and *external moderation* activities as a quality assurance mechanism. These activities ensure that all assessment marking processes are consistent, accurate and in line with the criteria defined for an assessment task. In addition, extensive external moderation with University of Newcastle assures the validity of assessment instruments and reliability of assessment decisions.

Academic Honesty

Throughout the duration of their studies at NIC, students are expected to conduct themselves in an honest and ethical manner, and in accordance with accepted standards of academic conduct. NIC will deal fairly and efficiently with issues of student misconduct in assessments through its Academic Honesty Policy. For the purposes of assisting students to undertake their studies effectively and with integrity, NIC engages the facilities of plagiarism and collusion detection software in units suited to its use. The software being used at NIC is [Turnitin](#). Students must be informed in the unit outline that plagiarism detection software or other processes may be routinely used, and where routinely used, be given the opportunity to check their own work prior to submission.

Academic grievance

NIC will deal fairly and efficiently with grievances concerning assessment through its Academic Grievance Procedures.

Grade review

NIC students have the right to apply for a review of final grades within 7 days of the release of results.

Assessment Feedback to Students

Feedback is an integral component of the NIC assessment process. The aim of the assessment feedback is to encourage learning and provide informative and constructive guidance for future learning. It identifies strengths and weaknesses in performance, gives guidance on how to perform better and encourages students to develop strategies to prepare for future tasks. For in-semester assessments, lecturers are expected to provide students with the marks awarded for assessment as well as relevant feedback within 14 days.

Equity

Special Consideration

NIC recognises that a student's performance in assessment tasks or examinations may be affected by compassionate or compelling circumstances. The NIC Special Consideration policy allows for reasonable adjustment to the standard assessment requirements and ensures equitable assessment for all students.

Late submission

Assessment tasks lodged after the due date must be submitted in accordance with the instructions provided in the relevant unit outline.

Assessment disability guidelines

NIC will make *reasonable adjustments* to assessment, where appropriate and practicable, to provide students with identified disabilities with an appropriate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of learning outcomes providing academic standards are not compromised.

Retention of Records

All items submitted or completed by a student for the purpose of assessment or evaluation will

be retained at **least until the end of the grade appeal period (six months)**, unless returned to the student.

At the end of the retention period, the items will be destroyed or returned to students.

4. DEFINITIONS

- **Assessment**

Assessment is the process of collecting evidence and making judgments on whether learning outcomes have been achieved.

- **Criteria-Based Assessment**

This means that students' work is assessed with reference to written criteria derived from explicit learning outcomes; assessment tasks are designed to indicate progress towards the desired learning outcomes; and the assessment grade is a measure of the extent to which the learning outcomes have been achieved.

- **Formative Assessment**

Facilitates effective approaches to learning by monitoring student progress against explicit standards and by providing feedback to students. Feedback is a key element of formative assessment in that it provides students with information about how their performance compared with the standard required, and it assists them in achieving that standard.

- **Summative Assessment**

Involves the making of judgments about student learning against explicit criteria and standards at the end of a unit and these judgments are translated into grades.

- **Internal Moderation**

Refers to comparison of assessment tasks and evidence collected to make a judgment within an organisation.

- **External Moderation**

A process established across teaching institutions. An external validation can provide an opportunity to exchange information about assessment methods and reach consensus about the validity of their approaches. It helps to apply consistent standards and make consistent judgments.

- **Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances**

Compassionate or compelling circumstances are generally those beyond the control of the student and which have an impact upon the student's course progress or wellbeing. These could include, but are not limited to:

- A serious illness or injury that prevents a student from completing or sitting an exam or seriously affects their preparation for the exam or submitting assessments (a medical certificate supporting that the student was unable to attend classes will be required)
- Bereavement for *immediate family members*, family relationship breakdown
- The student is involved in custody proceedings for their child (these cases should be supported by police or court reports)
- Immediate family member with long-term medical condition requiring care
- The student is pregnant (a medical certificate supporting that the student was unable to attend classes will be required)
- The student is a party in legal proceedings where the timing is beyond the student's control (these cases should be supported by police or court reports)
- A legal commitment, where a student is called for jury duty or is subpoenaed to attend a court, tribunal or hearing, and the requirement to attend is specified in supporting documentation
- A student has been caught up in a natural disaster, political uprising or other tragic event

- **Reasonable Adjustment**

The amendment of assessment procedures or materials to enable their use by students with specific needs or disabilities.

- **Immediate Family Member**

An immediate family member includes a spouse, de facto spouse, parent, parent-in-law, sibling or child.

5. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Unit Outline Master Template
- Assignment Cover Page Master Template
- Academic Honesty Policy
- Academic Grievance Procedures
- Special Consideration Policy

AMENDMENT HISTORY

Department:	Academic	
Approval Authority:	SMT	
Approval Date:	18 August 2014	
Date for Next Review:	August 2017	
Revision Date	Version	Summary of changes
16/02/2011	1	Policy developed and implemented.
17/09/2012	2	Policy updated to reflect current UPD formatting.
18/08/2014	3	Policy reviewed and updated