Assessment Policy

Version number	3
Approved by	Academic Board
Date of approval	29/07/2020

Purpose

Sydney Institute of Higher Education (**SI**) acknowledges that assessment activities are essential to measuring student achievement of the expected learning outcomes. Throughout each program of study at SI, there will be a series of assessment tasks aligned with specific learning outcomes, sequenced to enable students to progressively build knowledge. On demonstrating all of the required learning outcomes to satisfactorily complete all required units within a program, students will then receive a specified higher education qualification.

This *Assessment Policy* establishes the principles underpinning assessment design at SI. It then details the procedures that work to implement these principles, including assessment evaluation, review and improvement, staff and student responsibilities with regard to assessment tasks, and the process of assessment submission, grading, and special consideration and appeals of grades.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff involved in designing and administering program assessments at SI.

Principles

Students are expected to build knowledge progressively throughout their higher education program at SI. Learning and teaching activities will be carefully planned and carried out in line with the relevant learning outcomes.

Students will have demonstrated the intended learning outcomes of each unit in order to pass units, progress through a program and receive a qualification at the completion of all required units within a program.

Thus, assessment tasks will be designed to:

- Provide students with defined outcomes to work towards in each unit that are aligned with the program content, learning and teaching material, and academic standards
- Be appropriate to the level and nature of study in the relevant program and unit
- Be appropriate to the weighting of the assessment task in final grades
- Allow students to demonstrate the relevant learning outcomes
- Allow markers to accurately measure student achievement of the learning outcomes

Additionally, assessment tasks are to be based on up-to-date knowledge in the field of study, industry best practice, and current pedagogical theory.

Assessment tasks will be consistent and fair. To this end, SI will ensure that:

- All students receive instructions, including all conditions of submission, and the grading criteria for each assessment task with ample time to ask questions prior to submitting their work.
- All assessment tasks undergo moderation (see *Moderation Policy*)
- The marking process is transparent and consistent
- For examinations, exam conditions are consistent and support students in performing at their best.

Assessment marking will occur in a timely manner. All assessments will be marked and returned to students within 14 days of submission of the assignment.

Students are entitled to receive constructive feedback on their work in accordance with the *Examinations Policy*. Written feedback will be provided on all assessment tasks. Students may also seek additional oral feedback by attending student-staff consultation sessions.

Procedures

Assessment design, evaluation, and improvement

The *Academic Board* will evaluate assessment design during the program development, approval, review, and improvement processes. The *Program Monitoring Committee* and *Learning and Teaching Committee* shall monitor, review, and improve assessment tasks and report on their activities to the *Academic Board*.

Taking advice from the academic management committees, the *Academic Board* will ensure that assessment tasks:

- actively engage students in the learning process
- are closely aligned with program learning outcomes and unit learning outcomes
- are connected coherently with program content and teaching materials
- are designed to facilitate deep learning rather than surface learning
- develop critical inquiry skills
- include both formative and summative assessment tasks within units
- are spread throughout the term such that, across a year of study within a program, assessments are evenly spread, with the exception of final and midterm exams which occur at set points in the term
- are provided to students along with clear marking criteria
- incorporate opportunities for students to obtain useful feedback on their progress toward achieving learning objectives
- are designed to accommodate the principles in both the *Disability Support Policy* and the *Anti-discrimination Policy*.

The Program Director will review all assessment tasks at the end of each term, taking into account:

- Student feedback
- Student achievement
- Feedback from academic staff

The <u>Program Director</u> may recommend changes to the assessment strategy for the next teaching period.

Staff and Student Responsibilities

Academic Staff

<u>Program Directors</u> are expected to:

- Ensure that the unit outlines for the program include all learning outcomes for the units.
- Check assessment design to ensure it aligns with the program learning and teaching material and has the capacity to measure student achievement of the learning outcomes at the appropriate level.
- Assess the spread of assessments to avoid unintentional overloading of students.
- Lead moderation activities for the program as per the *Moderation Policy*
- Approve the final marks and grades to students once moderation has taken place.

Academic staff teaching to students are expected to:

- Explain the learning outcomes to students at the beginning of the term and approaching each assessment task
- Provide students with the grading criteria and instructions for each assessment task at the time the assessment task is allocated
- Provide marks and feedback on assessment tasks (not including the final exam) within two weeks of their submission

Any academic staff member involved in marking student assessment tasks will:

- Use the grading criteria to mark submissions
- Treat all student submissions impartially, consistently, and objectively
- Identify suspected plagiarism and, in response, follow the procedures outlined in the *Misconduct Policy*
- Identify students at risk of unsatisfactory progress
- Attend marking and moderation meetings as per the *Moderation Policy*
- Submit student marks once marking for each assessment task is finalised
- Submit final marks and grades to the <u>Program Director</u> at the end of each term

Students

Students are expected to:

- Observe assessment due dates, submission methods, and assessment requirements
- Act in accordance with the *Academic and Professional Integrity Policy* and be aware of the measures outlined in the *Misconduct Policy*
- Seek advice and clarification from academic staff and assistance from academic skills support staff as needed

- Review all feedback received on assessments

Assessment submission

Assessments will be submitted through the learning management system (**LMS**) and will be analysed by plagiarism detection software.

Students will be penalised 10% of the total assessment task value per day if they submit it late.

Requests for extensions are to be submitted in accordance with the *Special Consideration Policy*.

Requests for disability adjustments are to be submitted in accordance with the *Disability Support Policy*.

Grading system

All assessment tasks will be graded according to the following system:

Result code	Result name	Mark range	Description
HD	High distinction	85 - 100	When you demonstrate an exceptionally clear understanding of the subject matter and appreciation of issues.
D	Distinction	75 - 84	When you demonstrate a strong grasp of the subject matter by noting the key issues.
CR	Credit	65 - 74	When you demonstrate a competent understanding of the subject matter by noting most of the main issues.
P	Pass	50 - 64	Satisfactory. When you address most of the assessment criteria adequately but may have lacked in-depth and breadth.
F	Fail	0 - 49	When you don't meet the learning outcomes of the unit to a satisfactory standard.
CN	Cancelled	No mark	When your enrolment has been cancelled.
FR	Failed requirements	No mark	When you don't meet the learning outcomes to a satisfactory standard, for units which are marked as either Satisfied requirements or Failed requirements, and/or you don't meet the attendance requirements.
SR	Satisfied requirements	No mark	When you meet the learning outcomes to a satisfactory standard, for units which are marked as either Satisfied requirements or Failed requirements, and you also meet the attendance requirements.
WD	Withdrawn	No mark	When you discontinue a unit before the relevant census date. WD grades do not appear on your academic transcript. There is no fee liability.
WW	Withdrawn without Fail	No mark	When you discontinue a unit before the Academic Withdrawl date. WW grades appear on your academic transcript. There is a fee liability.
WF	Withdrawn Fail	No mark	When you discontinue a unit after the Academic Withdrawl date but before the end of the Withdrawl Date. WF grades appear on your academic transcript. There is a fee liability.
IN	Incomplete	No mark	When your progression in a unit is incomplete due to a pending administrative process. IN grades appear on your transcript.

Grade Point Average (GPA)

The GPA provides an overall view of student performance in a program and is a leading indicator of student achievement. A GPA is also an internationally recognised measure of a student's performance.

The GPA has a number of uses, including:

- being a measure used to rank students for prizes, merit and scholarships
- assisting in identifying students at risk
- monitoring academic progress

SI has adopted a 4-point GPA scale for the ordinal result scheme:

Result code	Result name	Mark range	Grade Point Value
HD	High distinction	85 - 100	4
D	Distinction	75 - 84	3
CR	Credit	65 - 74	2
P	Pass	50 - 64	1
F	Fail	0 - 49	0
CN	Cancelled	No mark	Not included in the GPA calculation
FR	Failed requirements	No mark	Not included in the GPA calculation
SR	Satisfied requirements	No mark	Not included in the GPA calculation
WD	Withdrawn	No mark	Not included in the GPA calculation
WW	Withdraw without Fail	No mark	Not included in the GPA calculation
WF	Withdrawn Fail	No mark	Not included in the GPA calculation
IN	Incomplete	No mark	Not included in the GPA calculation

GPA is calculated by dividing the total grade points by the total credit points as per the worked example below:

Unit	Credit Points (A)	Mark (%)	Result	Grade Point Value (B)	Grade Points (A x B)
Unit 1	12.5	74	Credit	2	25
Unit 2	12.5	81	Distinction	3	37.5
Unit 3	12.5	69	Credit	2	25
TOTAL	37.5				87.5

Total Grade Points (A x B) / Total Credit Points (A)
87.5 / 37.5 = 2.33
GPA is calculated as 2.33.

Special consideration, disability adjustments and appeals

When students, due to circumstances beyond their control, are prevented from completing the assessment task to the best of their ability or by the due date, they may apply for Special Consideration for the specific assessment tasks that were affected.

Students studying while under a disability may use disability adjustments to ensure they partake fully of educational offerings. Adjustments may include alteration of assessment due date or the assessment task, dependent on the nature of adjustment needed.

Students may appeal assessment outcomes by lodging an appeal via the procedure outlined in the *Student Complaints and Appeals Policy*

Policy Implementation and Monitoring

The *Academic Board* delegates responsibility for implementation of this policy to the academic monitoring committees and academic staff as per 'Procedures' above.

The *Academic Board* will review all periodic reports from relevant committees and staff members, in accordance with the *Compliance Calendar*.

Based on these monitoring activities, the *Academic Board*, in accordance with the *Compliance Calendar*, will provide a report to the *Corporate Governance Board* and ensure that findings are taken into account in planning, quality assurance and improvement processes.

Definitions

Academic staff: staff employed at SI in a learning and teaching or research capacity.

Academic withdrawal date: the last date in the study period to withdraw from a unit and/or course with a "WW" notation such that there is no academic penalty but there is a financial cost. This date is the close of business Friday week 6 in a 12 week term.

Assessment: the process of grading, marking and reviewing student assessment tasks against the assessment standards and criteria. This includes devising and using assessment criteria, standards and assessment criteria s; reviewing and comparing the marks and grades awarded to individual student submissions for the same assessment task within a unit of study.

Assessment task: a learning task within a unit of study designed to test the demonstration of program and unit learning outcomes. Examples include assignments, exams, online quizzes, essays, presentations, portfolios, essays, reflective journals. Assessment tasks will include clear instructions and guidelines on marking criteria and standards, and assessment criteria.

Program: a sequenced program of units that a student enrols in and for which they receive a qualification upon graduation.

Program Director: the most senior academic staff member responsible for the delivery of a specific program at SI. The <u>Program Director</u> is responsible for the planning and development of a program, particularly unit curriculum information, and works in conjunction with other senior academic staff.

Grading criteria: a marking guide devised to evaluate the quality of student responses in an assessment task that contains the criteria and standards identified in the assessment task guidelines communicated to students. Student assessment tasks are assessed against the attainment of these criteria and

standards using the grading criteria.

Grade Point Average (GPA): a numerical calculation, weighted by credit points, of the mean of the grades received over a defined study period (e.g. term, year, program).

Graduate attributes: The specific qualities, knowledge, and characteristics that SI seeks to foster amongst its students throughout the entirety of its learning and teaching practices. Graduate attributes are applicable in a range of contexts and are acquired throughout a SI degree.

Learning outcome: an objective that can be measured that describes the knowledge, skills and their application that a student can demonstrate on completion of an assessment task, a unit or program of study.

Special consideration: A measure that takes into account any adverse, extenuating or unforeseeable circumstance that may affect a student's performance during an assessment task or their ability to complete the assessment task on time.

Program Director: the academic staff member responsible for the delivery of a unit at SI. The Program Director is responsible for the planning and development of a particular unit at SI, and works in conjunction with other academic staff.

Withdrawal date: the last date in the study period by which to withdraw from units with a "Withdrawn Fail" notation. This date is the close of business on the last day of the teaching period of the unit.

Review schedule

This policy will be reviewed by the Academic Board every three years.

Version History				
Version number:	Approved by:	Approval date:	Revision notes:	Next review date:
1	Academic Board	5/9/2018	Approved	5/9/2021
2	Academic Board	16/09/2019	Timing for return of feedback to students	16/09/2022
3	Academic Board	29/07/2020	Inclusion of additional fail grades	29/07/2023

Related Documents		
➦	🗋	Academic and Professional Integrity Policy
➦	🗋	Anti-Discrimination Policy
➦	🗋	Disability Support Policy

➡	🗋	Examinations Policy
➡	🗋	Misconduct Policy
➡	🗋	Moderation Policy
➡	🗋	Program Development and Approval Policy
➡	🗋	Program Review and Continual Improvement Policy
➡	🗋	Special Consideration Policy
➡	🗋	Student Complaints and Appeals Policy
➡	🗋	Graduate Attributes and Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)
➡	🗋	Academic Board - Terms of Reference
➡	🗋	Learning and Teaching Committee - Terms of Reference
➡	🗋	Program Monitoring Committee - Terms of Reference
➡	💼	Program Director - Business
➡	💼	Program Director - ICT