

## ASSESSMENT POLICY – FOUNDATION STUDIES

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# 1 Context

Within the Foundation Studies Program a criteria and standards-based approach to student assessment is used.

# 2 Scope

## 2.1 Rationale

Criteria and standards-based assessment requires that criteria be identified and performance standards be described so that students know the level of performance required for each assessment task.

## 2.2 Legislative Context

- The Higher Education Support Act (HESA)
- The Educational Services for Overseas Students Act (ESOS): 2000 The National Code

# 3 Definitions

Item	Definition
<b>Assessment Tasks</b>	Assessment Tasks includes, but are not limited to: essays, tests, examinations, laboratory, clinical or field practicum, projects, compilations, productions, presentations, performances, web-based discussion.
<b>Cohort</b>	Cohort refers to all students correctly enrolled in a unit of study.

Item	Definition
<b>Criteria</b>	Criteria are specific performance attributes or characteristics that the assessor takes into account when making a judgement about the student response to the different elements of the assessment task.
<b>Fair Assessment</b>	Fair Assessment - is assessment that is feasible for the students' level of progression through their program, has transparent processes (ie marked according to articulated criteria and standards) and provides timely and constructive feedback.
<b>Manager</b>	Manager - each discipline area will have a Manager, or a person with another title, coordinating the program area. Students should be made aware of the relevant person for the unit/program at the beginning of their studies.
<b>Mandatory Assessment Task</b>	Mandatory Assessment Task – formal assessment task that must be attempted to pass a given unit.
<b>Mixed Cohort Unit</b>	Mixed Cohort Unit - involves students being taught together, such as a Diploma cohort and a Foundation Studies cohort
<b>Moderation</b>	Moderation - means regulating the marking of individual markers to achieve consistency in the application of unit objectives, performance standards and marking criteria.
<b>Standards</b>	Standards - are statements describing the level or quality of student performance of criteria, in an assessment task.
<b>Valid Assessment</b>	Valid Assessment - refers to the explicit and clear alignment between intended learning outcomes and the assessment methods used to measure student achievement of those outcomes.
<b>Compulsory Assessment</b>	Compulsory Assessment - all assessment items that contribute to the final assessment mark may be considered to be compulsory.

Item	Definition
<b>Inherent Requirements</b>	Inherent Requirements - refers to the fundamental parts of a course or unit that must be met by all students. They are the abilities, knowledge and skills needed to complete a course. Students with a disability or chronic health condition can have adjustments made to enable them to meet these requirements. There may also be other considerations, such as cultural or religious considerations, that may impact the capacity of students to meet an inherent requirement and may require adjustments. However, any adjustments must not fundamentally change the nature of the inherent requirement.
<b>Threshold requirement</b>	Threshold requirement - a component of a unit that must be passed in order to pass the unit. UBSS – Universal Business School Sydney
<b>UBSS</b>	Universal Business School Sydney

## 4 Policy Statement

Within the Foundation Studies Program, assessment is based on established criteria and standards, not ranking, and will -

- guide and encourage effective student learning. Assessment tasks will align with learning outcomes which reflect course learning outcomes and relevant graduate attributes;
- fairly, validly and reliably measure student performance of intended learning outcomes; and define and maintain academic standards.

The number and nature of assessment tasks will be consistent with the unit documentation approved through the Courses and Units Approvals process. Variations will only be permitted to the extent that they are permitted by the Courses and Units Approvals process.

All units within the Foundation Studies Program will have:

- learning outcomes that have been informed by the UBSS graduate attributes in the context of the overall program and the discipline area;
- assessable tasks developed to measure student achievement of unit learning outcomes;
- standards developed by applying professional judgements about expected levels of student performance on assessment criteria.
- clear criteria and standards of performance developed for each assessment task, based on criteria published in the unit outline, made available to students at the start of the unit. These

criteria and standards will be described so that students are informed about the level of performance required for each assessment task.

## 5 Assessment in the Foundation Studies Program

The assessment system for each unit including gradings will be monitored by someone other than the course teacher to ensure it reflects formal assessment levels.

The monitor will normally be the relevant **Program Director** and/or Manager and will involve the following principles;

- where a unit involves more than one class the assessed coursework tasks and the assessment criteria applied must be consistent across all classes;
- course work results given by course teachers in each unit must undergo a moderation process each term, involving all teachers in the unit and an independent review and validation of the results. The independent review and validation should be carried out by the relevant **Program Director** and/or Manager;
- moderation of assessment tasks and final examinations will occur:
- before marking to ensure markers have a shared understanding of standards
- after marking to ensure markers have applied standards consistently. This will involve check marking at random and reviewing borderline fails
- moderation meetings including lists of attendees must be documented;
- final examination papers must be approved by more than one person with relevant experience. This should be the **Program Director** and/or Manager. A record of approvals must be kept for each examination period and the examination approval template used.
- marked examination papers must be subject to an independent review and validation process. Such a review is to be conducted by the **Program Director** and/or Manager.
- examination results in each unit must undergo a moderation process each teaching session involving all teachers engaged in examination marking and an independent review and validation of the results by the **Program Director** and/or Manager;
- the pattern of results including the percentage of students recording each grade in each unit will be recorded and be subject to analysis over time;
- changes made to the results given by teachers must be documented and recorded accurately. A nil return should also be used; and
- no changes are to be made to results after students have been given either assessment marks or final grades unless such changes are the result of a review of grade/change of grade.

Mathematical scaling of marks for an assessment task is not permitted after students have received marks for that assessment task but in exceptional circumstances the final marks for a unit may be adjusted for the whole cohort.

Threshold requirements may be set for individual units where they are included in the approved unit documentation. Where threshold requirements are not met and: the student has achieved a total mark of 50 or more for the unit, the appropriate grades

are Compulsory Fail or Practicum Fail; and the student has failed the unit overall, the appropriate grade is Fail.

The GRC will review and recommend approval of final grades by the **Executive Dean**.

## 6 Responsibility for Assessment

### 6.1 Senior Academic Staff

It is the responsibility of all senior academic staff who oversee units and programs, to ensure in their area of responsibility that -

- assessment methods and practices of all teaching staff, including part-time and sessional staff, comply with this policy;
  - correct and timely processes are followed by UBSS;
  - where units are taught across more than one campus/mode the assessment tasks and marking are to be equivalent;
  - quality processes are implemented to:
  - ensure timely and constructive feedback on assessment tasks; and
  - promote consistency in marking standards across units and academic programs
  - assessment tasks are aligned with learning outcomes and provide students with a variety of tasks that assess their knowledge and skills; and
  - assessment tasks are staged so that students are not over-loaded and have sufficient time to absorb and make use of assessment feedback in subsequent assessment tasks in the unit.
- Normally, one assessment task will be administered within the first half of the teaching session.

### 6.2 Teaching Staff

Teaching staff carry out their teaching responsibilities under the authority of their immediate supervisor.

Teaching staff are responsible for:

- providing students with a unit outline and learning guide at the commencement of the teaching period;
- ensuring assessment tasks are designed to measure students' achievement of relevant learning outcomes; and developing clear criteria and standards against which the level of student performance in the assessment task can be measured.

In developing assessment tasks, teaching staff are to:

- ensure assessment methods are valid for the relevant field of education; and
- assess the performance of students' work fairly, objectively and consistently against the criteria and standards. In providing feedback to students, teaching staff are to:
- ensure that feedback is timely and:
- justifies the mark given against the stated assessment criteria and standards; and identifies what could have been done to achieve a higher mark

- ensure adequate records of marks and any relevant comments on individual student assessment tasks are kept; maintain the principles of the UBSS Privacy Policy in relation to students;
- ensure deadlines for the submission of examination papers to the person responsible for the unit are met; and in instances of suspected student cheating, collusion and/or plagiarism, ensure actions taken are consistent with the College Academic Pathway Programs Academic Misconduct Policy.

### 6.3 Students

Students have a responsibility to:

- familiarise themselves with the UBSS policies on Assessment and Examinations;
- ensure they read and understand the assessment requirements and note the due dates and methods for submission of assignments provided in the learning guide, seeking clarification from their teacher or Program Director/Manager, if required;
- follow the teacher's guidelines and instructions for format and submission of assignments; and
- when enrolling in a unit after teaching has commenced, to obtain the relevant information on assessments in the unit from the teacher or Program Director/Manager.

Students are required to:

- complete all assessment items for the unit unless otherwise specified in the Learning Guide/Outlines;
- inform the teacher if they have difficulty accessing computer hardware and/or the required software when assignments are to be submitted electronically;
- keep a hard copy of their assessment material as well as the email that accompanied its submission, if submitted electronically; and
- have an Academic Integration Plan in place if they wish to have special requirements accommodated.

In relation to assessment tasks, students must:

- undertake all assessment tasks ethically, including avoiding any action or behaviour which would unfairly advantage or disadvantage any student, in accordance with the School Academic Pathway Programs Academic Misconduct Policy;
- submit, on time, their own individual work;
- collect all marked assessment tasks in sufficient time to learn from the feedback provided; and
- ensure they understand the requirements, including timetables, for examinations and other assessment tasks.

## 7 Number and Weighting of Assessments

Assessments that carry a weighting towards the final mark for the unit will be advised in the unit outline and will be consistent with the documentation approved through the Program Directors Team.

Determining the amount of assessment given should rely on a balance between effective measurement and effective learning; assignments should be comprehensive enough to measure achievement, but not so excessive as to detract from learning.

Normally there will be more than one assessment task from which the final mark and grade for a unit is derived. A specific weighting for each item of assessment must be nominated (e.g. 25%). The weighting will not be expressed as a range (e.g. between 20 and 35%). Normally a unit will not have more than one formal examination during the official examination period, unless approved by Academic Senate through the Courses and Units Approval process.

The maximum weighting for any one item of assessment will be 65% unless otherwise approved by Academic Senate through the Courses and Units Approval process.

Group work will carry a maximum weighting of 30% unless otherwise approved by Academic Senate through the Courses and Units Approvals process.

UBSS reserves the right to require a student to pass a particular assessment task or tasks in order to pass a unit (even if the total mark achieved is more than 50%). Where this is the case, it will be clearly stated in the documentation approved by Academic Senate through the Courses and Units Approvals process for the unit and on the information provided to the student in the unit outline.

## 8 Final Grades

Students will be advised in the learning guide how final marks and grades are to be determined.

The following table provides the grading schema for Foundation Studies units:

Grade	Full Grade Name	Percentage	Grade Points	Pass/Fail	Included in GPA Calculation Y/N
A	Excellent Pass	85 – 100	10	P	Y
B	Very Good Pass	70 – 84	8	P	Y
C+	Good Pass	60 – 69	7	P	Y
C	Satisfactory Pass	50 – 59	6	P	Y
D	Moderate Pass	40 – 49	4	P	Y
E	Marginal Achievement	30 – 39	2	F	Y
F	Fail	0 – 29	0	F	Y

## 9 Procedures

### 9.1 Support to Teaching Staff in Developing Assessment Tasks

To assist them develop criteria and standards-based assessment tasks, teaching staff may wish to refer to the UWS Assessment Guide.

### 9.2 Notification to Students of Assessment Tasks, Due Dates and Feedback

Any variation in the assessment task/s after assessment information has been provided to students in the learning guide and that affects all students within a subject, will only be made in exceptional circumstances. The relevant **Program Director/Manager** is to approve such changes, and all students are to be formally notified in accordance with normal UBSS communication protocols.

The numerical mark for every component of assessment in the unit, unless the component is assessed as satisfactory/unsatisfactory, will be made available to students.

The results of the final examination in a unit will be available from the **Program Director/Manager** responsible for the unit after the official grades and marks have been provided to students.

### 9.3 Submission and Collection of Assessment Materials

All assessments must be accompanied by a completed assignment cover sheet, which includes a student declaration confirming that the task has been undertaken ethically and that the work does not include plagiarism.

Students should collect their marked assessment task/s with sufficient time to understand why the mark/grade has been awarded and to learn from the feedback provided by the marker.

Unclaimed student work for assessment will be retained for a period of one month after the end of the relevant teaching session. Examination papers and final major assessments are kept for a period of 12 calendar months following the end of the relevant teaching session.

### 9.4 Late Submission of Assessments

Except where an extension has been approved for the submission of an assessment task by the relevant Curriculum Coordinator in line with the Academic Pathway Programs Special Consideration Policy, the following penalties will apply to the late submission of an assessment task:

A student who submits an assessment task after the due date for submission will be penalised by 10% per calendar day up to 10 days, ie marks equal to 10% of the mark given to the student for the assignment will be deducted as a 'flat rate' from the mark awarded for each calendar day the assignment is late up to 10 calendar days. Saturday and Sunday each count as one calendar day.

For instance, if a student achieves a mark of 8/10 and submits the task two days late, the penalty would be  $8 \times 20\% = 1.6$ , so the mark for the task would be 6.4/10; and

The assessment will not be accepted after the marked assessment task has been returned to students who submitted the assessment task by the due date.

## 9.5 Circumstances for Consideration of the Re-marking of an Assessment Task

Students will be provided with criteria and standards for each assessment task prior to the task being undertaken. Upon receipt of their marked assessment task, it should be clear to the student, based on their performance against the assessment criteria and standards, why they achieved the mark/grade given, and how they could have achieved a better mark/grade.

A unit may incorporate routine resubmission of work as part of the assessment process to enable students the opportunity to improve their performance against the criteria and standards.

If a student does not receive a passing mark for an assessment task and wishes to discuss their result with the person responsible for the unit, the student should review the quality of their responses against the assessment criteria and standards prior to arranging a meeting with the person responsible for the unit. Normally, a meeting with the person responsible for the unit should take place no later than one week after the marked assessment task is available for collection by the student.

If, at the end of the meeting with the student, the person responsible for the unit agrees that one or more of the student's responses to the assessment criteria and standards require re-marking, the reasons for the re-mark will be documented. The re-marking of an assessment task should be undertaken by the person responsible for the unit or similar level academic. Where a re-mark is undertaken all comments from the previous marker should be removed or, where possible, a copy of the submitted assessment task will be provided. Where the assessment task has been a live performance or the assessment of practical or clinical skills, the matter should be referred to the Program Director/Manager for approval.

If, at the end of the consultation, the person responsible for the unit does not agree that a re-mark is justified the student will be advised that the assessment task will not be re-marked. The student is to be made aware of the provisions for a review of grade at the end of the teaching session.

The outcome of the discussion with the student will be recorded.

## 10 Matters Affecting Assessment

### 10.1 Special Consideration

UBSS recognises that there will be circumstances beyond a student's control that may impact adversely on their performance. Under such circumstances, a student may make application for Special Consideration for the assessment task/s so affected. Definitions of misadventure and extenuating circumstances relevant to special consideration are provided in the UBSS Policy.

## 10.2 Official Results

Official results will be released at the direction of the **Executive Dean**.

## 10.3 Notification of a Final Grade and Provision of Marks to a Student

Students will only be advised online of final grades for a unit and subsequent changes of final grades for a unit. Students will not be provided with final grades for a unit by any other means. A final grade is awarded in relation to the total number of marks given for assessment tasks in a particular unit.

## 10.4 Circumstances when all Grades in a Unit may be Reviewed

Final grades in a unit are endorsed by the relevant **Program Director/Manager** or nominee and recommended to the Grades Review Committee for approval.

The **Program Director/Manager** may be asked to justify final grades allocated to a unit cohort.

If a significant number of students in a cohort receive extremely high or extremely low grades, or if there are significant inconsistencies between groups undertaking the unit in different locations or by different modes, the GRC, on the basis of evidence, may adjust the final marks.

## 10.5 Review of a Final Grade in a Unit

To seek a review of a final grade in a unit, students must follow the Academic Pathway Programs Review of Grade Policy.

## 10.6 Appeal

•**Appeal.** If the complainant is not satisfied with this outcome, they may submit their complaint in writing with full supporting documentation to the **Chair** of the UBSS Academic Senate. The **Chair** of UBSS Academic Senate must establish a committee of members from the Academic Senate within 10 working days to consider the complaint. The complainant must be notified in writing of the outcome within a reasonable period of time.

•**Second Appeal.** Students dissatisfied with the decision by the UBSS Academic Senate may request that the matter be dealt with by an independent external third party group.

International Students can take their appeal to the Overseas Students Ombudsman (OSO). More information is available at [www.oso.gov.au](http://www.oso.gov.au)

UBSS implements all recommendations arising out of the External Appeal process within the timeframe specified. When a timeframe is not specified, recommendations are implemented within 10 working days.

## 11 Document Change Control

Version	Change Description	Date	Author
v12	Refreshed format	November 2017	Professor Ian Bofinger
v12	Augmented appeals section (Section 10.6)	November 2017	Professor Greg Whateley
V12.1	Change of review date	June 2018	Jotsana Roopram