Institution	Universal Higher Education (UHE)
Policy name	Student Assessment Policy
Policy Governance	Academic Board

1. Introduction

Student assessment plays an important role in student academic achievement. Assessments also ensure that students achieve the learning outcomes. Student attainment of skills and knowledge is highly dependent on the quality of assessment design, methods, assessment criteria, and timely and constructive feedback provided to students. The quality and integrity of assessment also safeguards academic standards.

2. Policy principles

Assessment practices at UHE are designed to contribute to high quality learning by students and underpin the development, delivery and quality assurance of courses, and are based on the following principles:

1. Assessment as a central feature of the curriculum is valued as a strategy to engage students in learning that is productive
2. Assessment cohesively links the learning outcomes, content, and learning and teaching approaches at the subject and course levels
3. Assessment is an integral part of the whole of course design and gives particular attention to the needs of first year students
4. Assessment provides valid evidence of achievement by students of course and subject learning outcomes, including graduate attributes
5. Assessment reflects rigorous academic standards associated clearly articulated criteria, associated standards, and weightings
6. Assessment is fair, equitable and inclusive and clearly communicated to students
7. Assessment patterns provide progressive, timely and meaningful feedback to students and staff through both formative and summative elements
8. Assessment approaches ensure that reliable and consistent judgments are made about a student's performance
9. Assessment is moderated and reviewed as part of academic quality assurance processes.

3. Policy outcomes

The policy for assessment is designed to
- clearly and succinctly articulate UHE's assessment principles and practices to students, staff and external stakeholders
- provide a robust framework to develop, implement and evaluate assessment practices, procedures, protocols, resources, and tasks consistent with the *Higher Education Threshold Standards*
- facilitate consistent application of assessment standards and practices
- promote exemplary student behaviour and practice in the application of and provision for academic integrity
- address issues of equity and fairness.

4. Designing assessment for learning

Assessment is an integral part of the curriculum design for any course or subject. The relevant Program coordinator have the responsibility to ensure that the choice of learning

activities and associated assessment items are clearly informed by the desired learning outcomes and are consistent with whole of course design.

At the course level, the relevant Program Coordinator's are responsible for ensuring that assessment design and practice:

- assists students to achieve and provide evidence of achieving the course learning outcomes
- addresses the subject and course learning outcomes, challenges students to deeper learning, and provides opportunities for students to demonstrate their full capabilities
- is sequenced to allow students to build and monitor their capabilities progressively and realistically.

At the subject level, Program Coordinators are responsible for ensuring that assessment design and practice

- is efficient in terms of both student and staff workload in relation to the value of the task
- is effective to provide clear, relevant, valid and reliable evidence of the learning outcomes desired from the subject
- provides a reasonable spread of assessment items throughout the teaching period so that timely feedback can be provided to assist students to achieve the subject and course learning outcomes
- is inclusive to promote equal opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds to excel.

5. Criteria and standards

UHE has adopted a criterion-referenced approach to assessment where assessment is based on pre-determined and clearly articulated criteria and associated standards of knowledge, skills, competencies and/or capabilities.

Threshold assessment conditions that apply for a student to be eligible to receive a passing grade in a subject, such as the requirement to complete a specific assessment task or meaningfully attempt all assessment items, require a clear academic rationale based on pedagogical needs and/or discipline practices. The rationale and conditions must be consistent with the principles of the assessment policy and be clearly specified in the subject outline.

The relevant Program Coordinators are responsible for ensuring a whole of course approach to assessment including alignment of criteria and standards to subject and course learning outcomes.

The relevant Program Coordinators are responsible for

- establishing valid criteria that are consistent with the assessment item and aligned to the relevant subject learning outcomes
- establishing clear standards that are high but attainable and designed to motivate students and impact positively on their learning
- communicating criteria and performance standards to students in a timely manner, before they commence the assessment item
- assuring a shared and calibrated understanding of standards amongst the teaching team.

6. Communication and feedback to students

The subject outline provides students with broad details of assessment items (the number, type, weight, indicative due date, and the subject learning outcomes to be achieved).

Changes made to assessment requirements once the teaching period has commenced require agreement of all students taking the subject, endorsement from the relevant Program Coordinators and Chief Academic Officer, and approval of the change to the subject outline through the usual approval process.

7. **Feedback to students**

High quality feedback seeks to build sustainable graduates' attributes to critically review and judge work and to focus their learning. Feedback is available on all assessment items including those completed in the examination period and across a course, and should draw upon a range of strategies across a course such as self-review, peer review, automated responses, mentors and comments by the teaching team.

Subject assessment items (formative and/or summative) are designed to facilitate the provision of feedback to students from an early stage in the subject such as prior to the teaching period, to allow students to monitor their progress towards subject and course learning outcomes and determine where improvements can be made to enhance their learning. Feedback on each assessment will be provided to the students within 15 days after the due date of submission.

The relevant Program Coordinators are responsible for designing and reviewing feedback strategies across a course.

Program Coordinators are responsible for ensuring high quality and timely feedback is provided to students during the teaching period as an integral component of the learning process.

8. **Review and moderation of assessment**

Program Coordinators are responsible for the continuous improvement of the quality of the teaching and learning in their subjects, and the relevant Program Coordinators are responsible at the whole of course level for reviewing assessment and implementing improvements. Subject and relevant Program Coordinators are expected to consider the following strategies for review:

- consideration of student results to provide feedback on whether the learning activities in the subject have allowed students to demonstrate achievement of the subject learning outcomes, and to identify common misunderstandings or gaps in student learning
- moderation of assessment tasks, criteria and standards with peers
- consideration of the assessment practices to ensure fit with whole of course design
- professional accreditation of the course
- independent external consideration of assessment
- benchmarking of criteria, standards and grades with comparable institutions.

Consistency and objectivity of marking and grading are supported by well-designed assessment tasks, criteria and standards aligned to subject and course learning outcomes and supported by professional learning opportunities for subject and course teaching teams. Assessment processes and grading rely on the professional judgement of the academic staff. Professional judgements are calibrated through moderation approaches that involve academic peers and experts within and across institutions discussing, reviewing and comparing student work and the expected academic standards in consultation with professions where relevant.

Program Coordinators are responsible for internal moderation of their subjects to ensure that marks and grades awarded between tutorial groups and by different teaching staff are

internally consistent.

The relevant Program Coordinators are responsible for moderation of assessment to assure academic standards of the course are appropriate, including outlining and reviewing moderation strategies used to support consistency and reliability of assessment and grading across a course.

Academic Integrity Committee has responsibility for assuring the effectiveness of moderation strategies as part of course development and approvals, course review, and accreditation and reaccreditation processes.