



TIIS
THE INSTITUTE
OF INTERNATIONAL
STUDIES

Student Assessment Policy and Procedure

STUDENT ASSESSMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. Overview

The Institute of International Studies (“the Institute”) has designed this policy to ensure that all student assessment tasks are appropriately designed to determine the extent to which students have met the learning and skills outcome requirements within a subject of study and to assist teaching staff to make decisions about the performance of individual students within a subject of study.

2. Rationale for Assessment

The rationale for assessment is:

- to promote, enhance, and improve the quality of student learning through feedback that is clear, informative, timely, constructive and relevant to the needs of the student;
- to measure and confirm the standard of student performance and achievement in relation to a subject’s defined learning objectives;
- to reward student effort and achievement with an appropriate grade;
- to provide relevant information in order to continuously evaluate and improve the quality of the curriculum and the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process.

3. Forms of Assessment

Some assessment is formative; it is specifically intended to assist students to identify weaknesses in their understanding, so that they may improve their understanding and enhance their learning. Other assessment is summative; its objective is primarily to pass judgment on the quality of a student’s learning, generally in terms of assigned marks and grades. Furthermore, critical reflection on the outcomes of assessment tasks, both formative and summative, can inform lecturers and students, not only about the quality of student learning but also about the effectiveness of teaching.

Normally, assessment of a subject will:

- have a minimum of two but no more than three different forms of assessment;
- have no single assessment task worth more than 50% of the total mark for the subject;
- include both formative and summative assessment tasks;
- limit group assessment to 30% of the total mark for the overall subject.

The forms of assessment to be utilised for each subject will be clearly set out in the *Subject Study Guide* provided to students.

Forms of assessment may include:

- **Written exams** - may take the form of short answer questions, numerically based questions, multiple-choice questions and essays, where appropriate.
- **Written assignments** - may take the form of essays, literature reviews, reports, work logs, portfolios, reflective journals, research reports and the like.
- **Seminars/presentations** - normally based around formal discussion groups where students will be delegated particular topics for research and will be required to present their findings at subsequent seminars.

- **Practical assignments** - students may be required to complete a series of practical assignments designed to test students' abilities under 'real world' conditions.
- **E-based assignments** –students may be required to respond to simulations, design strategies, develop modelling scenarios, prepare forecasts, develop applications etc.

4. Notification of Assessment

A fundamental aspect of developing a subject is the specification of the prescribed assessment tasks in a way that relates them directly to the subject objectives (including expected learning outcomes), the course structure, the teaching methods to be used, and the learning strategies to be fostered. The details of all assessment tasks will be stated clearly in the *Subject Study Guide* and include a statement of the objectives of the subject; its assessment plan, including weightings allocated to each assessable component and related submission dates; deadlines, sanctions and penalties.

5. Timing and Weight of Assessments

Students are expected to achieve the objectives of a subject progressively throughout the trimester. They will be set tasks during the study period that allows their progress to be evaluated against established criteria.

Assessment tasks will be designed carefully, first, to keep in proportion student time commitment and the weight of the assessment task in the overall assessment, and second, to reflect, as far as possible, the importance of each task in determining the effectiveness of students having met the subject objectives. This might mean that an important task, such as a final examination, is weighted more heavily. Care will be taken to avoid the imposition of a heavy imbalance of assessment load toward the second half of the study period. Assessment should reflect both the level of the subject and the credit points assigned.

Typically, one or more assessment tasks will be set, submitted, marked and returned to students by the mid-point of a subject. Although students need regular feedback on their progress, set assessment tasks should be kept to the minimum that is sufficient to enable students to make judgements about their progress. Due dates for assessment tasks will be well separated in time to provide students periods for reflective learning that are free from the pressure engendered by a looming deadline.

In some disciplines, students are expected to practise skill development continuously. To evaluate students' ability to perform such on-going 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 appraisal by an examiner.

Apart from examination scripts, all assessed work will be returned to the student, preferably in a class context where the student has the right to query the assessment result for clarification either then or at a later time. Typically, all marked assignments will be returned to students within two weeks.

Subject Study Guides will advise students at the beginning of a subject how all assessment results are to be combined to produce an overall mark for the subject. In particular, the subject outline will make clear:

- the weight of each task in contributing to the overall mark;
- the formulas or rules used to determine the overall mark;
- minimum standards that are applied to specific assessment tasks, and the consequences if such standards are not met (including failure to submit particular tasks);
- rules regarding penalties applied to late submissions; and

- precise details of what is expected in terms of presentation of work for assessment.

Emphasis will be placed on appropriate referencing conventions and requirements, on the degree of cooperation permitted between students, and on what constitutes academic dishonesty and the consequences of committing it as outlined in the *Academic Integrity and Honesty Policy and Procedure*.

6. Submission of Assessment Items

Students are required to submit assessment items at the time and date specified in the *Subject Study Guide*. Assessment items submitted after the due date will be subject to a penalty unless the student has been given prior approval in writing for an extension of time to submit that item.

Assessments should be submitted in the form specified in the *Subject Study Guide*. Where assessment items are submitted electronically, the date and time the email was received will be considered the date and time of submission. Where practical, all assessments must be subjected to plagiarism detection software such as *Turnitin*.

7. Penalties for Late Submission

An assessment item submitted after the assessment due date, without an approved extension or without approved mitigating circumstance, will be penalised. The standard penalty is the reduction of the mark allocated to the assessment item by 10% of the total mark applicable for the assessment item, for each day or part day that the item is late. Assessment items submitted more than ten days after the assessment due date will be awarded zero marks.

Extensions to assignment deadlines based on mitigating circumstances will be at the discretion of the Course Coordinator, and should be granted in writing. Mitigating circumstances are circumstances outside of the student's control that may have had an adverse effect on the student's work or ability to work.

8. Special Consideration

Students whose ability to submit or attend an assessment item is affected by sickness, misadventure or other circumstances beyond their control, may be eligible for special consideration. No consideration is given when the condition or event is unrelated to the student's performance in a component of the assessment, or when it is considered not to be serious.

Students must apply in writing to the Course Coordinator for special consideration within three days of the due date of the assessment item or exam.

When considering the application for special consideration, the Course Coordinator will take into account one or more of the following:

- the student's performance in other assessment tasks in the subject;
- the severity of the event;
- the student's academic standing in other subjects and in the course; and
- any history of previous applications for special consideration, especially where they indicate a chronic problem.

If an application for special consideration is accepted, any one of the following outcomes may be appropriate:

- no action is taken;
- additional assessment or a supplementary examination is undertaken. Additional assessment may take a different form from the original assessment. If a student is granted additional assessment, the original assessment may be ignored at the discretion of the Course Coordinator. Consequently, a revised mark based on additional assessment may be greater or less than the original mark;
- marks obtained for the completed assessment tasks are pro-rated to achieve a final percentage result;
- the deadline for assessment is extended;
- the student is allowed to discontinue from the subject without failure. This is unlikely to occur after an examination or final assessment has taken place.

9. Assessment Feedback

To minimise the number of requests for reviews of an assessment decision, the Institute will ensure that students are provided with feedback from markers that enables them to understand the reason for their results.

10. Reasonable Adjustment

Students with a disability may request reasonable adjustment to an assessment task to accommodate their disability. Adjustments to assessment must take into account the special characteristics of the student.

Any adjustments made must be 'reasonable' so that they do not impose an unjustifiable hardship upon the Institute.

A request for reasonable adjustment is made by the student in writing to the Lecturer for the subject affected.

Making a reasonable adjustment will involve varying the procedures for conducting an assessment, for example:

- allowing additional time for the completion of an assessment;
- extending deadlines for an assessment;
- varying question and response modalities for an assessment;
- providing or allowing additional resources in examinations.

11. Requirements for Successful Completion of a Subject

Students must attempt all assessment tasks and achieve at least 50% of the total marks for the subject to pass the subject.

12. Resubmission

Where a student has completed all assessment tasks and marginally fails a subject of study (i.e. has achieved a score of 46-49%) the Course Coordinator may recommend that the student be offered the option of completing additional assessable work which, if completed at the prescribed standard, will result in the student passing the subject. The grade awarded after the additional assessment is

finalised is limited to P* or FO*. If the student does not take up the opportunity to complete additional assessment work the grade remains as an FO.

13. Grades*

During each subject, students will be provided with an evaluation of their individual performance with reference to the criteria for each assessment in accordance with the following guidelines: (simplified)

Grade	Definition
High Distinction (outstanding performance) Code: HD Mark range: 85% and above	Complete and comprehensive understanding of the assessment task content; development of relevant skills to an outstanding level; demonstration of an outstanding level of interpretive and analytical ability and intellectual initiative; and outstanding achievement in all objectives of the assessment task.
Distinction (very high level of performance) Code: D Mark range: 75-84%	Very high level of understanding of the assessment task content; development of relevant skills to a very high level; demonstration of a very high level of interpretive and analytical ability and intellectual initiative; and comprehensive achievement of all objectives of the assessment task.
Credit (high level of performance) Code: C Mark range: 65-74%	High level of understanding of the assessment task content; development of relevant skills to a high level; demonstration of a high level of interpretive and analytical ability and significant achievement of all major objectives of the assessment task.
Pass (competent level of performance) Code: P Mark range: 50-64%	Satisfactory understanding of most of the basic assessment task content; development of relevant skills to a satisfactory level; adequate interpretive and analytical ability and achievement of most of the major objectives of the subject.
Non-graded Pass Code: NGP	Successful completion of an assessed task on a pass/fail basis, indicating satisfactory understanding of subject content; satisfactory development of relevant skills; satisfactory interpretive and analytical ability and achievement in all major objectives of the subject.
Fail (outright) (attempted all assessments but did not achieve 50%) Code: FO Mark range: below 50%	Inadequate understanding of the basic subject content; failure to develop relevant skills; insufficient evidence of interpretive and analytical ability; and failure to achieve some or all of the major objectives of the subject
Fail (non-submission) (did not attempt all assessments and did not achieve 50%) Code: FN Mark range: below 50%	Inadequate understanding of the basic subject content; failure to develop relevant skills; insufficient evidence of interpretive and analytical ability; and failure to achieve some or all major and minor objectives of the subject.
Withdraw With Failure Code: WF	Withdrew from the subject after the census date.
Withdraw Without Failure Code: WO	Withdrew from the subject before census date or after the census date with special circumstances.
Credit Granted Code: CPL	Credit has been granted for the subject of study following an application and its approval.

14. Publication of Results

All subject results must be reviewed and properly approved before publication. The Teaching and Learning Committee will nominate three of its members (but not any student representative) to sit at the end of each study period as the Results Review Committee to approve results prior to publication. At least one of the members will be an independent member of the Teaching and Learning Committee.

Once results have been approved, the Academic Director will ensure that the approved mark and grade is recorded in the student database against the relevant subject and students notified of their results via their registered Institute email address.

15. Review of an Assessment Decision

A student may request a review of an assessment decision. A request for a review may relate to the decision regarding an individual assessment item or a final subject grade.

In the first instance, students should approach the Lecturer, where appropriate, to discuss their concerns about the assessment decision. Where the issue regarding the assessment decision is unable to be resolved at this level, a request for a review may be made in writing on the prescribed form and lodged with the Course Coordinator within five working days of formal notification of the assessment result.

The grounds upon which the student may request a review of an assessment decision are:

- that the student believes that an error has occurred in the calculation of the grade; and /or
- a demonstration that the assessment decision is inconsistent with the published assessment requirements or assessment criteria.

Students should note that each review against an assessment decision is determined on its own merits without reference to other applications.

The Course Coordinator will normally respond to the request for a review of an assessment decision within ten working days and may confirm or vary the original decision. All decisions relating to reviews of assessment decisions are sent to the Academic Director who compiles an annual report for review by the Teaching and Learning Committee.

If a student remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the review of an assessment decision they may utilise the Institute's grievance handling procedures.

16. Related documents

Subject Study Guide

17. Version History

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Details
1.0	Academic Board	24 March 2016	Document creation – Final Draft

Document owner: Academic Director