



Policy and Procedures –
Student Assessment

PENDING APPROVE

1. Overview

The Institute of International Studies (“TIIS”) 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:

- a. 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;
- b. Measure and confirm the standard of student performance and achievement in relation to a subject’s defined learning objectives;
- c. Acknowledge student effort and achievement with an appropriate grade;
- d. 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. A practice of continuous assessment and supplementary examinations shall be implemented.

Normally, assessment of a subject will have:

- a. Three items of assessment plus 10-15% for participation;¹
- b. No one assessment weighted more than 50% of the total mark;
- c. Assessment tasks which are formative, summative, and a mix of formative and summative;
- d. Ensure that at least $\geq 50\%$ of total assessments are invigilated individual work; and
- e. Limit group assessment to 40% of the total mark.

The forms of assessment used for each subject will be clearly delineated in the *Subject learning Guide* available to students.

Forms of assessment may include, as appropriate:

- a. **Written quizzes, tests and/or exams** – in the form of short answer questions, numerically based questions, limited use of multiple-choice questions (no multiple-choice questions in the final exam), essays, and case studies.
- b. **Written assignments** – in the form of essays, literature reviews, reports, work logs, portfolios, reflective journals, research reports, etc. Students should be made aware of the limited gain and high risk of using so called Contract writers (‘cheaters’), plagiarism, and/or doing or accepting ghost writing for assignments.
- c. **Seminars/presentations** – normally based around formal discussion groups where students will be delegated or choose topics for research and present their findings at subsequent seminars.
- d. **Practical assignments** – students may be required to complete a series of practical assignments designed to test students’ abilities under ‘real world’ conditions.
- e. **E-based assignments** – students may be required to respond to simulations, design strategies, develop modelling scenarios, prepare forecasts, develop applications etc.

¹ Some items of assessment may include more than one component.

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 *Unit 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 unit progressively throughout the trimester. They will be set tasks during the study period that allow their progress to be evaluated against set 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 enough 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 later. Typically, all marked assignments will be returned to students within two weeks.

Unit 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:

- a. the weight of each task in contributing to the overall mark;
- b. the formulas or rules used to determine the overall mark;
- c. minimum standards that are applied to specific assessment tasks, and the consequences if such standards are not met (including failure to submit tasks);
- d. rules regarding penalties applied to late submissions; and
- e. 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 *Policy and Procedures – Academic Integrity and Honesty*.

6. Submission of Assessment Items

Students are required to submit assessment items at the time and date specified in the *Unit 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 *Unit 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, assessments must be subjected to plagiarism detection software such as *Turnitin*. In all assignments, students should be rewarded for providing/integrating informed opinions (citing expert opinions) and penalised for giving unsupported (and/or plagiarised) opinions.

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 up to 10 percent 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 10 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 Program Coordinator and should be granted in writing. Mitigating circumstances are situations outside of the student's control that are likely to have had a significant adverse effect on a 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 reasonably beyond their control, may be eligible for special consideration. No consideration is given if 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 Program Coordinator for special consideration within three days of the assessment item due date or exam. When considering an application for special consideration, the Program Coordinator will consider one or more of the following:

- a. the student's performance in other assessment tasks in the subject;
- b. the severity of the event;
- c. the student's academic standing in other subjects and in the course; and
- d. 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:

- a. no action is taken;
- b. 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 Program Coordinator;
- c. the marks awarded to a related assessment may be expanded to cover the missed assessment;
- d. marks obtained for the completed assessment tasks are pro-rated to achieve a final percentage result;
- e. the deadline for assessment is extended;
- f. the student can 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, TIIS 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 a disability. Adjustments to assessment must balance basic issues of equity (all students) with fairness (e.g., consider the special characteristics/attributes of the requesting student).

Any adjustments made must be 'reasonable' so that they do not impose an unjustifiable hardship upon TIIS nor unfairly treat the student with a disability nor provide an unreasonable advantage.

A request for reasonable adjustment is made by the student in writing to the Lecturer for the subject affected, or by a Student Support staff member on their behalf.

Reasonable adjustments must be communicated to and approved by the Program Coordinator – such adjustments may involve varying the procedures for conducting an assessment, for example:

- a. Allowing additional time for completion of an assessment;
- b. Extending an assessment deadline/s;
- c. Varying an assessment's question and response modalities;
- d. Providing or allowing additional resources in examinations.

11. Requirements for Successful Completion of a Subject

Students must achieve at least 50% of the total marks for the subject to pass the subject – alternate requirements are listed in section 14 of this *Policy and Procedures* with the Codes NGP, CG, and CPL.

12. Resubmission

Where a student has completed all assessment tasks of a subject and achieves a near fail (i.e., a score of 46-49%) the Program Coordinator may recommend that s/he 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, if the student does not adequately complete the additional assessment work, FO*.

13. Supplementary Examinations

At the discretion of the Dean, students who score a near fail (≥ 45) may be allowed to write a supplementary examination with a score limited to 50% (P*) if they pass their supplementary examination or FO if they fail or do not write the supplementary exam.

14. 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:

| Grade | Definition |
|---|---|
| High Distinction (outstanding performance) Code: HD Mark range: $\geq 85\%$ | Outstanding work which exhibits sophisticated understanding and critical synthesis, analysis, and evaluation of the subject matter. While the work utilizes opinions of others, judgements about the value of the subject matter are made and drawn together in an organized whole. Gaps in the subject matter might also be identified and the implications discussed. |
| Distinction (very-high performance) Code: D Mark range: 75-84% | Substantial work of high quality, which demonstrates a clear understanding of the subject matter, in which the relationship between the constituent elements are identified clearly and discussed with some level of critical analysis. The work also applies abstract ideas in concrete situations. |

| Grade | Definition |
|---|---|
| Credit (high level of performance) Code: C Mark range: 65-74% | Sound and competent work, which demonstrates a reasonable but incomplete grasp of the subject matter. Recall and paraphrasing of the work of others with little integration. Some basic level of critical analysis is evident. Originality in the work is rarely evident. |
| Pass (competent performance) Code: P Mark range: 50-64% | Work that demonstrates a satisfactory engagement with the subject matter such that the student is said to have a general understanding of the field. |
| Non-graded Pass Code: NGP | Completion of an assessed task on a pass/fail basis. |
| Credit on Compassionate Grounds Code: CG | Credit granted for compassionate or equivalent grounds. |
| Credit Granted for Prior Learning Code: CPL | Credit has been applied for and granted for prior learning. |
| Deferred Code: DEF | Officially Deferred examination (e.g. due to illness on the exam day). DEF converts to an FO if not resolved in one trimester or renewed. |
| Withdrew without Failure Code: WO | Withdrew from the subject before census date or after the census date with special circumstances. |
| Fail (Outright) Code: FO Mark range: < 50% | Attempted all or most of the assessments but did not meet key learning objective/s of the subject. |
| Fail (Non-submission) Code: FN Mark range: < 50% | Did not attempted one or more of the assessments and, as a result, did not provide evidence that they met key learning objective/s of the subject. |
| Withdrew with Failure Code: WF | Withdrew from the subject after the census date. |

15. 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 Board of Examiners 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 Registrar and Dean 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.

16. 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 **unit** grade.

Students should first 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 Dean 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, the student believes:

- a. an error has occurred in the calculation of the grade; and/or
- b. the assessment decision is inconsistent with the published assessment requirements and/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 Dean 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 Dean 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 use TIIS's grievance handling procedures.

17. Version History

| Version | Approved by | Approval date | Details |
|---------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1.0 | Academic Board | 24 March 2016 | |
| 2.0 | Academic Board | 18 April 2019 | Major changes |
| 2.1 | Academic Board | 20 March 2020 | Minor changes |
| 2.2 | Academic Board | Outstanding | Minor changes |

Document owner: Dean