Assessment Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) The purpose of the Assessment Policy is to work with the [Learning and Teaching Policy](#) to guide the design and adoption of valid assessment practices that shape and support the best possible student learning experience and outcomes.

Section 2 - Scope/Application

(2) This policy applies to:

a. all units and microcredentials offered by ACU;
b. students undertaking such units and;
c. academic and professional staff with responsibility for assessment.

(3) The Policy is not applicable to examination of research theses and projects to which the [Higher Degree Research Regulations](#) apply.

Section 3 - Policy Statement and Principles

(4) This Policy is informed by best practice principles. It works to ensure that all academic and professional staff with responsibility for designing, administering, and making decisions relating to assessment have a shared understanding of these principles. The principles of this policy align with the [ACU Mission, Identity and Values](#) and embed principles of Catholic Social Thought.

Principles:

(5) Assessment must be valid by accurately measuring student achievement of the learning outcomes.

a. Validity in assessment is essential and fundamental.
b. Assessment of student learning must reflect achievement of learning outcomes and align with the ACU [Graduate Attributes](#).
c. Students are assessed according to transparent criteria that align with learning outcomes.
d. Students engage with assessment with integrity and not circumvent the purposes of the assessments they are required to complete. This is in line with the [Student Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy](#).

(6) Assessment must be Inclusive and Equitable.

a. Assessment must be accessible to all ACU students.
b. Equivalent assessment may be developed to facilitate access to all students based on principles of inclusion and equity in line with the [Students with Disability Policy](#) and [Special Consideration Procedure](#).
c. Assessment validity is predicated on equity and inclusion.

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(7) Assessment must be relevant and valuable to students.

   a. Assessment involves students completing tasks that are preparatory for their future lives and professions.
   b. Staff and students must be able to understand the relationship between assessment tasks and their relevance and value.

(8) Assessment must support student learning.

   a. Effective assessment motivates, guides, and scaffolds engagement in study behaviours and cognitions that are needed for students to achieve learning outcomes.
   b. Assessment must support a sustained developmental narrative across the different stages of student learning.
   c. Effective learning is supported by effective feedback.

(9) Assessment must be constructively aligned with all other unit components.

   a. Assessment must be causally linked to the achievement of learning outcomes. This linkage must be visible in the unit outline.
   b. Assessment tasks must be constructively aligned with the unit aim, learning outcomes, and learning and teaching strategy to create a developmental narrative throughout the unit.

(10) The development and expression of assessment literacy must be integrated into the teaching strategy and learning experiences of all units.

   a. Staff must purposefully design and sequence assessment to scaffold a progressive development of students' understandings of different kinds of knowledge skills.
   b. Assessment design must support students to develop an understanding of the purpose and sequence of assessment to enable this understanding to inform their learning.
   c. Students should have the opportunity to develop the ability to accurately self-assess.

(11) All aspects of assessment must be quality assured.

   a. All aspects of assessment must be quality assured including aspects preceding, during and after student involvement with assessment – pre, peri and post assessment.
   b. Assessment must be based on judgements that use pre-specified criteria and performance standards rather than judgements based on comparisons between students.
   c. Students should have the opportunity to be involved in design and evaluation aspects in the QA of assessments through faculty and university governance fora.
   d. Consensus moderation must be undertaken to ensure assessment practices are valid, equitable, and supportive of students' learning.

Section 4 - Relevant stakeholders

- Academic Registrar
- Faculty Board (or equivalent)
- Executive Deans
- National Lecturer in Charge (or equivalent)
- Lecturer in Charge
- Course Coordinators

- Disability Advisors
- Centre for Education and Innovation

Section 5 - Review

(12) In line with the University's [Policy Development and Review Policy](#) this policy is scheduled for review every five years or more frequently if appropriate.

Section 6 - Further Assistance

(13) The Centre for Education and Innovation provides a wide range of resources to enable high-quality, engaged learning experiences. For further support or queries please email CEI@acu.edu.au.

Section 7 - Definitions

(14) Terms used in this policy and associated procedures are consistent with the [Glossary of Student and Course Terms](#). The following specific definitions also apply:

Term	Definition
Assessment	The process whereby student learning outcomes are measured and developed, feedback is given to students on their progress and final results are awarded.
Assessment criteria	Qualities or features of students' work which allow it to be described. Assessment criteria are paired with "Performance standards".
Assessment literacy	Understanding the relationship between assessment design and learning. For staff, this means designing assessment to scaffold a progressive development of different kinds of knowledge in accordance with adult learning theory. For students, this means using an understanding of the purpose of assessment to inform learning, including the ability to self-assess.
Asynchronous learning activities	These are where educational activities, discussions, and assignments engage students in learning at their own pace.
Consensus moderation	Any process by which a person can ensure that their judgements are broadly consistent with colleagues with comparable expertise. It generally involves some form of peer review and reference to internal and external benchmarks.
Constructive alignment	Combines the concepts constructivism and alignment. Constructivism is a theory that proposes learning progresses over time from simple to more complex outcomes. The term alignment refers to the desirability of ensuring a relationship between different components of learning to work together to achieve specified learning outcomes. Combined, these terms mean the sequencing of all learning and teaching components to support a developmental narrative matching the way adults learn to progressively achieve learning outcomes.
Equivalent assessment	Assessment activities undertaken within one context which work to achieve comparable learning outcomes to assessment activities in another context. For assessment in two different contexts there is no requirement for them to be identical.
Formative assessment	Generally intended to monitor student learning. It provides feedback to teachers to improve teaching and to students to improve learning. These tasks may be marked but do not contribute formally to final grades.
Horizontal integration	Designing assessments that are linked across units that students engage in during the same time period
Hurdle requirement	An assessment task that is mandatory to complete and pass to achieve a passing grade in a unit.
Learning outcomes	What students should be able to demonstrate they know, understand, or can do at the completion of a learning experience, unit, or course.

Term	Definition
Performance standards	Descriptions of different levels of performance on assessment criteria.
Pre-assessment	Before students undertake their assessment tasks. Aspects include assessment strategy and assessment item design, the specification of assessment criteria and performance standards, ensuring all teaching staff have a shared understanding of these.
Peri-assessment	While students undertake assessment, and while it is marked. Aspects include explaining tasks to students, maintaining a shared understanding of the tasks, criteria and standards, marking, providing formative feedback to students.
Post assessment	After all assessments are completed and marked but prior to moderation. Includes reviewing task design, criteria and performance standards, reviewing samples of students work to verify and improve validity, identifying trends and potential issues prior to publication of marks, and grade administration.
Quality assurance	Activities that serve to improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment. As a process, the quality assurance cycle involves planning, implementation, evaluation, and action to improve.
Scaffold	Learning activities, resources, and assessments support learning in a developmental way that aligns with adult learning theory. For example, helping students to progress from learning content, to concepts, and then to developing the ability to apply these.
Summative assessment	In general, is intended to evaluate student learning by comparing it against a predetermined standard or benchmark. Whilst evaluation is the primary function of summative assessment, they should also be used for formative purposes. These tasks must be marked and contribute formally to final grades.
Synchronous Learning Activity	An interactive learning activity in which all students are participating simultaneously e.g., tutorials.
Vertical integration	Designing assessments to build progressively on student experience and learning throughout a unit and program.

Section 8 - Associated Information

(15) For related legislation, policies, procedures and guidelines and any supporting resources please see Associated Information tab.

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