Assessment Policy & Procedure (Higher Education)

Introduction
Assessment is normally undertaken for each unit in a course. Assessment aims to
- support and stimulate learning and teaching
- promote reflective and critical engagement
- evaluate understanding and/or performance

Assessment tasks are designed to
- align with the learning outcomes of the unit
- ensure coverage of the unit content and objectives
- create learning opportunities
- promote wider reading
- provide feedback

Assessment procedures
In order that assessment be as open, verifiable and uniform as possible, the following procedures are followed:
- Assessment criteria include not only knowledge of theological content but also the ability to reflect theologically and to apply theology to issues under consideration
- The methods of assessment vary from unit to unit and may be the result of negotiation between student and lecturer
- Since the system of assessment is designed to fit the unit and its presentation, the lecturer may operate with quantitative, statistical, qualitative, or attitudinal criteria in assigning grades
- Each student will be assessed in the manner indicated in the particular student unit outline, and in accordance with University of Divinity regulations where appropriate.

Key to grading
Results are published according to the following grades:

Coursework units

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HD</td>
<td>High Distinction</td>
<td>85% – 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td>75% – 84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Credit</td>
<td>65% – 74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>50% – 64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Pass grade only</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>Below 50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RPL</td>
<td>Recognition of Prior Learning</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Withdrawn</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thesis/Research units

Grade | Description            | Percentage
------|------------------------|------------
H1     | First class pass       | 85% – 100% |
H2A    | Second class A pass    | 75% – 84%  |
H2B    | Second class B pass    | 65% – 74%  |

Additional results

SP    | Satisfactory progress |
WH    | Result withheld       |

Assessment criteria and grade level standards

Assessment guidelines in all student unit outlines reflect the following criteria which are used by ALC lecturers to assess the written work of students.

To achieve a particular grade in the University of Divinity, an assessment task must substantially meet the descriptor for a particular grade band, as set out below.

**High Distinction (HD) = 85+**
Outstanding attainment of the unit learning outcomes to which the task is aligned; extensive engagement with a wide range of material; outstanding factual and conceptual knowledge; outstanding level of argument, analysis and insight; outstanding communication; (competently and accurately referenced).

**Distinction (D) = 75–84**
High attainment of unit learning outcomes to which the task is aligned; substantial engagement with a wide range of material; excellent factual and conceptual knowledge; excellent level of argument, analysis and insight; a very high standard of communication; (competently and accurately referenced).

**Credit (C) = 65–74**
Sound attainment of unit learning outcomes to which the task is aligned; competent engagement with a wide range of material; sound factual and conceptual knowledge; competent level of argument, analysis and insight; a high standard of communication; (competently and accurately referenced).

**Pass (P) = 50–64**
Satisfactory attainment of unit learning outcomes to which the task is aligned; engagement with a range of material (where required); sound factual and conceptual knowledge; satisfactory level of argument, analysis and insight; satisfactory standard of communication; (competently and accurately referenced).

**Fail (F) = 0–49**
An assessment task may fail for any of the following reasons:
Lacking in clear attainment of unit learning outcomes to which the task is aligned, such as by failure to address the set question; little or no engagement with relevant material; lacking factual and conceptual knowledge; unsatisfactory level of argument, analysis and insight; unsatisfactory standard of communication; little or no evidence of structure in the assessment task; (lack of adequate referencing).

This result will remain on the student’s academic record and transcript even if the unit is repeated and a passing grade is obtained.
Final grade requirements
The final grade given for a unit is based on the qualitative assessment of a set amount of work. Where a unit is assessed through a number of assignments, students must submit all assignments to receive a final grade for the unit. Grades awarded for work returned during the semester are not final, but are to inform and assist learning. Refer to the University of Divinity Assessment Policy.

Assignments
The following factors should also be noted carefully.

General
Assessment tasks are determined by the lecturer as outlined in the student unit outline.

Word limit
Each assessment task has a recommended length. The number of words in an assignment should normally be within 10% of the number set. Word count includes footnotes but excludes the references (i.e. reference list, endnotes.)

Presentation
Assignments should be prepared following the guidelines set down in the ALC Write On! Style guide

Assignment template
ALC provides a template for essays and assignments available from Assessment and results on the ALC website.

Academic integrity
Academic honesty is a core value of ALC. The College is committed to the basic academic right that students receive due credit for work submitted for assessment. Integral to this concept is the notion that it is clearly unfair for students to submit work for assessment that dishonestly represents the work of others as their own.

• On submission students need to declare their work is original
• Assignments will not be accepted for marking through Turnitin2 unless the declaration box has been ticked
• Refer to the Academic Misconduct Policy

Due date
All assessments/assignment are required by the due date. Any extension of time must be requested via an extension request form (lecturer’s or Dean’s).

Assignment copy
Where practical, students should keep a copy of all work submitted in case of:

  a. administrative problems (e.g. loss of assignment)
  b. academic grievance

Students should keep copies until the final grade is published or any appeal finalised.

Assignment submission
Assignments and essays are to be submitted for grading through ARK, to the specific assessment task within the enrolled scheduled unit. Refer to the Assignment submission procedure for general guidelines and a step-by-step procedure for assignment submission.

Extensions of time
Due to unforeseen circumstances, students may find themselves unable to submit assignments by the due date. Unforeseen circumstances are defined as those that:

  a. are beyond the student’s control, and
b. make it impracticable for the student to complete the assessment requirements by the due date.

Types of extensions
a. For extensions of up to two weeks—and no later than the final day of the examination period—students may apply for a **lecturer’s extension**.
b. For extensions of up to four weeks—or beyond the final day of the examination period for a semester—students may apply for a **Dean’s Extension**.

Lecturer’s extension
a. The student must apply formally, via the [Extension request form - lecturer’s extension](#), for the lecturer’s extension, no later than 3 days prior to the due date.
b. The lecturer may grant an extension for 1 to 14 days after the due date, at his or her discretion. The lecturer needs to be satisfied of reasonable grounds for granting the extension, and that it will not afford undue disadvantage or advantage to the student; if necessary, the lecturer will consult with the Head of School or Dean.
c. The student will be informed of the lecturer’s response, confirming the extension and including the new due date, or rejecting the extension.
d. The work must be submitted no later than the newly agreed due date, and no later than the final day of the examination period.

Dean’s extension
A student requiring an extension of 15 to 28 days, or an extension beyond the final day of the examination period for a semester, must seek a Dean’s extension.

The student must formally apply for the Dean’s extension, via the [Extension request form - Dean’s extension](#), normally not less than 5 days before an assessment item is due.

a. The Dean consults with the lecturer before granting the extension.
b. The Dean must be satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for granting the extension, and that it will not afford undue disadvantage or advantage to the student.
c. The student will be informed of the Dean’s response, confirming the extension and including the new due date, or rejecting the extension.
d. A Dean’s extension may be granted for up to 28 days from the end of the examination period, at the Dean’s discretion. An extension of longer than four weeks after due date for the assignment will not be granted unless warranted by exceptional circumstances.
e. The work must be submitted no later than the newly agreed due date.

All extensions
a. Students who submit work after the newly agreed due date will normally be penalised academically.

Overdue assignments
Overdue assignments for which an extension has not been granted and assignments submitted after the agreed extension will normally be penalised academically.

a. Work submitted up to one week late without an official extension will normally have its recorded grade reduced by one level (e.g. Distinction to Credit)
b. Work submitted later than one week but up to one month late without an official extension is normally awarded a Pass grade only, unless it fails to reach a Pass standard
c. For work submitted later than one month or on the last day of semester without an official extension, a Fail grade is normally recorded.

A student may appeal, in accordance with the [Appeals Policy and Procedures](#), against the reduction of a grade for late work.
Resubmission of assignments
Resubmitted assignments are subject to the following regulations and are granted at the discretion of the lecturer:

- where a paper does not conform to the assignment requirements in form or content and where the paper has not been graded, a student may resubmit without prejudice
- where a student resubmits a paper which has been graded and where written comments have been given by a lecturer, such a paper will receive a maximum grade of ‘P’
- where an assessment/assignment is required due to detected academic misconduct, the regulations of the plagiarism policy apply.

Enrolment variation

- Prior to the census date students can withdraw from a unit without penalty. No record of the enrolment will appear on their record.
- In the period after the census date up to the academic mid-point, students who withdraw from a unit will receive a grading of 'W' (Withdrawn) on their official transcript.
- Those who withdraw after the academic mid-point will normally be marked 'F' (Fail).

Examinations

Written examinations may be held at the end of a study period at the discretion of the unit lecturer. Normally examination papers are not returned to students after marking. However, individual lecturers may vary this practice. Students may also request to view an examination paper and its grading. Examination papers are kept for six months after the completion of the study period.

Students for whom English is a second language
Students for whom English is a second language may take extra time for each written examination. In the first year of study, students are allowed fifty per cent extra time. In subsequent years of study, students are allowed twenty five per cent extra time. Such students may take a dictionary into the examination.

Supplementary examinations

Supplementary examinations or supplementary work may be allowed in case of failure by a student in an individual unit. The highest grade for the successful completion of a supplementary examination/assessment is normally a Pass.

Satisfactory academic progress

Students are required to maintain satisfactory academic progress while completing their course.

For students enrolled in a coursework award, satisfactory progress means:

a. Successful completion of at least 50% of units attempted in a calendar year; and
b. Successful completion of each unit on the first or second attempt (that is, no unit is failed more than once), not including units from which a student withdraws.

For students enrolled in a higher degree by research, satisfactory progress means:

a. Successful completion of confirmation of candidature within the prescribed time limit; and
b. Submission of a satisfactory annual report during each year of candidature; and
c. Completion of prescribed attendance at research seminars and conferences during each year of candidature.

If a student is identified as being at risk of making unsatisfactory progress, intervention strategies are implemented, as per the University’s Course Progress Policy.
Repeated failures

If a student fails the same unit twice, and no supplementary exam is offered, the student is not eligible to enrol in that unit again. If the unit involved is a core unit, the student is not eligible to continue in the nominated course.

Variations to assessment

1. Assessment methods, tasks and timelines are specified in the student unit outline made available to students by unit commencement. It is expected that these details will only change
   a) where necessary for the integrity of the assessment
   b) due to unforeseen factors such as staff illness or student-articulated special need
   c) if there is justified reason for a student and/or lecturer to request alternative task/s
   d) if students qualify for a variation due to:
      i) supplementary assessment (including examination)
      ii) deferred assessment (including examination)
      iii) the provisions set out in the ALC Disability policy & procedure

2. Students may request a variation to unit assessment based on articulated special needs
   a) existing at the time of enrolment (e.g. medical, compassionate, or special circumstance)
   b) if they become aware of special circumstances after enrolment (e.g. community service grounds [for instance, elite athletes, jury duty, Defence Forces leave])

3. Variations which are required due to special circumstances (e.g. unexpected or exceptional) should be discussed with the lecturer at the earliest possible opportunity.

4. Any variations must be commensurate or equivalent with overall unit, level, outcomes, complexity and word length.
   a) The lecturer and/or Dean are responsible for informing/negotiating proposed changes with enrolled students.
   b) Students are not to be disadvantaged by the changes and any disruption is to be kept to a minimum.

5. Students are notified in writing of any changes. Students are required to request and negotiate variations to assessment/examination for each enrolled unit preferably at enrolment, unless the special circumstance provision relates to a permanent disability/condition/linguistic capability, when the variation to assessment may be for the duration of the course, but still needs to be negotiated at unit level.

Variations to examination

1. The following students are entitled to examination variations:
   a) Students of non-English speaking background who were:
      i) born outside Australia
      ii) arrived in Australia less than ten years previously, and
      iii) speak a language other than English at home
   b) Mature aged students (i.e. 21 years or over at the time of admission to their course of study) who speak a language other than English at home, and
   c) Overseas students of non-English speaking background where the language spoken at home is not English, and the medium of instruction is English

2. Students who meet the eligibility criteria above will be entitled to the following provisions:
   a) Extra time to be used for reading or writing. This will normally be an extra ten minutes per hour for every hour of standard examination time, and
   b) The use of a bilingual print dictionary (not annotated)
   c) Materials or resources approved by the lecturer and Dean, which are not enhanced or tampered with in any way that provides an additional advantage to the student. For example, if a student is allowed to take an English language or bilingual dictionary into the examination but other resources are not allowed, the dictionary must not have any additional notes or markings.
Associated documentation

University of Divinity policies and procedures
- Academic Misconduct Policy
- Appeals Policy and Procedures
- Assessment Policy
- Course Progress Policy
- Extensions and Special Consideration Policy
- Grievances Policy
- Results legend

ALC documents
- Assignment submission procedure
- Extension policy & procedure
- Extension procedure summary
- Extension request form - lecturer's extension
- Extension request form - Dean's extension
- Write On! Style guide