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

- support the attainment of course outcomes and graduate attributes
- assist students to achieve the learning outcomes of the unit
- ensure coverage of the unit content and objectives
- create learning opportunities
- help develop and assess generic academic skills
- promote wider reading
- are a means to 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Withdrawn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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>First class pass</td>
<td>85% – 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2A</td>
<td>Second class A pass</td>
<td>75% – 84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2B</td>
<td>Second class B pass</td>
<td>65% – 74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additional results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>Satisfactory progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WH</td>
<td>Result withheld</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Command of topic</th>
<th>Skill and application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HD</td>
<td>• Outstanding attainment of the unit learning outcomes to which the task is aligned</td>
<td>• Sophisticated use of appropriate references and sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85–100</td>
<td>• Application of factual and conceptual knowledge demonstrating a degree of originality and independent thought</td>
<td>• Demonstrates a high degree of precision and rigour in the argument, analysis and/or insight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Excellent and well-crafted communication (written or oral)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Highly developed use of prescribed referencing style with no noted errors (where applicable)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td>• High attainment of unit learning outcomes to which the task is aligned</td>
<td>• Skilful use of appropriate references and sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>• Application of factual and conceptual knowledge demonstrating a degree of independent thought</td>
<td>• Demonstrates evidence of sustained rigour in the argument, analysis and/or insight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75–84</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Effective and well-crafted communication (written or oral)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Competently and accurately referenced (where applicable)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit</td>
<td>• Sound attainment of unit learning outcomes to which the task is aligned</td>
<td>• Competent uses of appropriate references and sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>• Critical handling of factual and conceptual knowledge</td>
<td>• Demonstrates a well-structured and clearly expressed argument and/or analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65–74</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Concise and structured communication (written or oral)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Referencing/footnotes and bibliography, conform to the correct style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Command of topic</td>
<td>Skill and application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pass</strong></td>
<td>Satisfactory attainment of unit learning outcomes to which the task is aligned</td>
<td>Engagement with a range of appropriate references and sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Satisfactory factual and conceptual knowledge</td>
<td>Demonstrates some argument, analysis and/or insight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fail</strong></td>
<td>Lacking in clear attainment of unit learning outcomes to which the task is aligned</td>
<td>Little or no engagement with relevant material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Lacking factual and conceptual knowledge</td>
<td>Demonstrates a poor level of skill in argument, analysis and/or insight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>F</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrates confusion over the subject matter</td>
<td>Demonstrates little clarity or logical process in communication (written or oral)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–34</td>
<td>Poorly informed opinion-led work rather than evidence based argument</td>
<td>Demonstrates low-level skill of footnoting/referencing and bibliography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fails to demonstrate any satisfactory attainment of the learning outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Communication lacks structure and argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Absence or misuse of sources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A fail grade 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 i.e. word count or equivalent. The number of words in an assignment must be within 10% of the number set. Word count includes headings and all text, footnotes and references and excludes bibliography. Where a word count is specified for an assessment task, the submitted material must be accompanied by a statement of the word count. For more detail, refer to the University of Divinity Assessment Policy.

**Presentation**

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

Assignment cover sheet and template
ALC provides a template for essays and assignments available from Assessment and results on the ALC website. Signing the ‘Declaration of independent work’ is obligatory for submission of all written assessment tasks.

Due date
All assessments tasks are required by the due date. The time of submission is provided in the ARK assessment task. 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—students may apply for a lecturer’s extension.
b. For extensions of up to four weeks—students may apply for a Dean’s Extension.

Lecturer’s extension
a. The student must apply prior to the due date, by written application via the Extension request form – lecturer’s extension.
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
c. The student will be informed of the lecturer’s response, confirming the extension and the new due date, or rejecting the extension.
d. The work must be submitted no later than the newly agreed due date.
Dean’s extension
A student requiring an extension of up to 28 days must seek a Dean’s extension.

a. The student must prior to the due date, by written application via the Extension request form – Dean’s extension.
b. The Dean consults with the lecturer before granting the extension.
c. 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.
d. The student will be informed of the Dean’s response, confirming the extension and the new due date, or rejecting the extension.
e. The work must be submitted no later than the newly agreed due date.

Special grading consideration (additional extension types)
Allowable assessment variations in specific serious and exceptional circumstances may be granted by the Academic Dean, including extensions beyond that which are permitted under other forms of extension. Refer to the University of Divinity Assessment Policy.

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 student may appeal, in accordance with the University Appeals Policy, against the reduction of a grade for late work.

Implications for not meeting due dates
Late penalties are applied to work submitted more than 24 hours after the due date and time for an assessment task. See ‘Late penalties’ in the UD Assessment Policy.

Enrolment withdrawal—grade implications
- 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. 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 apply for extra time for each written examination, amounting to no more than twenty-five per cent of the advertised duration. 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 (‘research students’), 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
Assessment Policy
Course Progress Policy
Grievances Policy
Results legend
Statement of Rights, Responsibilities and Conduct of Members of the University

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