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Assessment Policy and Principles

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Approval Authority | Mana Whakaae	Te Tumu Tuarua Akoranga | Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic
Contact Officer | Āpiha Whakapā	Te Amo Paeroa Akoranga | Dean (Academic Governance)

Introduction | Kupu Whakataki

Assessment is the main mechanism the University uses to obtain evidence to determine whether students have met the learning outcomes and the course and programme objectives as described in course outlines on *AKO | LEARN* and in departmental or school handbooks. Ensuring the quality, reliability, validity, fairness, and comprehensiveness of assessments is thus key to guaranteeing the quality of the University's qualifications, as defined in the *University Calendar*.

Assessment can take a wide variety of forms, reflecting the diversity of the University's qualifications. The principles and guidelines outlined in this document should be viewed in this light, and not be seen as a constraint or discouragement from innovative assessment practices.

This Policy and principles are how the University and its staff collectively view the purpose, use, and delivery of assessment in a manner that best promotes learning, consistent with the provisions of s 267(4) of the *Education and Training Act 2020*.

Scope

This Policy specifies general principles about assessment, and policy on the delivery and implementation of assessment at the University level. Faculties, schools and departments may specify additional requirements appropriate to their academic and professional context. Any additional requirements must be consistent with this Policy and its principles.

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Principles

Assessment at the University is guided by the following core principles. Assessments should be:

1. **Reliable:** Assessment should provide an accurate and consistent measure of student performance. This involves both consistency in marking and the authenticity of student work.

2. **Valid:** Assessment tasks should be appropriate to the level, content and learning outcomes of the course and the graduate attributes of the programme and University. A valid task will be one that measures what it purports to assess.

3. **Fair and Equitable:** The assessment should not bias one group of students over another and should not rely on material outside the scope of the course.

4. **Transparent, clear and inclusive:** Assessment intentions and expectations should be clearly described and unambiguous to students. The language used and marking expectations should be inclusive and not discriminate on the basis of factors including (but not limited to) gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, disability or political affiliation.

5. **Relevant and aligned with learning outcomes:** Assessment should align with one or more learning outcomes of the course.

6. **Manageable and have reasonable workloads:** Assessment tasks should be reasonable and practicable in terms of the time and resources required for both students and staff.

Policy Statement | Kaupapa Here

1. Usage and Scope

1.1 This Policy applies to all for-credit non-research courses and all research courses of less than 90 points offered by the University of Canterbury.

1.2 Departments, schools, faculties and the University will ensure that this Policy along with other related policies and documents (e.g. regulations, special considerations, student handbooks, etc.) are adhered to and readily accessible to all staff and students, and that students are regularly notified of where to find them.

1.3 The principles outlined in this Policy shall be considered as part of the course design, approval and review processes at department/school, faculty and University levels.

1.4 Exceptions to some provisions in this Policy may apply to cohort-based qualifications (where all students take the same courses at the same time); however, any exception must still uphold the principles of this Policy and must be approved by the relevant Amo | Dean or nominee.

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2. Roles and Responsibilities

Academic Administration Committee: The Academic Administration Committee is responsible for ongoing review and evaluation of assessment practice and policy including the oversight of assessment and moderation procedures at the University.

Faculty Boards, Faculty Academic Programmes Committees and/or Faculty Learning and Teaching Committees: Faculty Boards or their sub-committees are responsible for developing faculty-wide assessment and moderation procedures, monitoring the effectiveness of these procedures and revising them as needed.

Amo Matua | Executive Dean: The Amo Matua | Executive Dean is responsible for the overall delivery of programmes within the faculty and the quality assurance of these programmes which includes quality assurance of assessment. The Amo Matua | Executive Dean or their delegate is responsible for approving exceptions to certain constraints on assessment as permitted under this Policy.

Tumuaki Tari/Kura | Heads of Department/School: Heads of Departments/School are responsible for:

- ensuring faculty assessment policies are adhered to in their department/school;
- appointing course coordinators and examiners (if different);
- ensuring course coordinators, examiners and markers carry out their designated duties;
- ensuring fair and consistent assessment practice within their department/school;
- monitoring the process and outcomes of moderation in accordance with the moderation policy of their faculty; and
- ensuring Course Coordinators submit final grades into the Student Management system after approval by an examiners' meeting.

This authority in full or in part may be delegated to Programme Directors or to a Department/School Committee. Where an individual has two roles (such as Head of School and course coordinator) relating to a particular academic decision, responsibility for the higher-level approval should be delegated to a senior colleague. As per the Academic Administration Regulations, where there is no Head of Department/School, these responsibilities revert to the Amo Matua | Executive Dean.

Course Coordinators: The course coordinator (not necessarily involved in teaching the course) is normally a permanent academic staff member who among other duties is responsible for all assessment in the course, whether or not it contributes to the final grade. In particular, course coordinators have oversight of:

- the design of assessment tasks and marking criteria;
- communicating the details of assessments through the course outlines, Course Information System, email, and AKO | LEARN;
- the quality of assessment;
- the appointment of markers (if this is not the examiner);
- marking processes, including post-assessment moderation; and
- submitting final grades into the Student Management system after approval by an examiners' meeting.

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Examiners: An examiner is a person who has immediate responsibility for the design of an item of assessment including ensuring that it is fit for purpose, aligned with the relevant course learning outcomes, and that pre-assessment moderation is undertaken as required by the faculty procedures. The examiners will usually be academic staff members, however adjunct professors, assistant lecturers, teaching fellows, postdoctoral fellows and teaching assistants can be appointed as examiners by the Tumuaki Tari/Kura | Head of Department/School.

Markers: A marker is someone appointed by the course coordinator to mark an assessment item as per the standards set by the examiner.

Students: Students are responsible for managing their workload, ensuring the assessment item submitted is their own work, submitting the correct assessment item on time, attending classes and doing the work involved in a course to the best of their ability.

3. Assessment Information

3.1 The course coordinator shall ensure that details of the assessment types, due dates and times, and the weightings of all assessments have been specified in course outlines and appropriate University databases, including the Course Information System (CIS) and AKO | LEARN. Due dates and weightings of assessments (other than the exact dates and times of tests and exams which are subject to scheduling by central timetabling) shall be available within the first week of the course.

3.2 Examinations held in the examination period of that semester will be scheduled after the deadline to add or withdraw courses. The date, time and duration for examinations will be published no later than 15 working days following the deadline to add or withdraw courses.

3.3 The course coordinator may impose conditions that must be met before the formal examination can be sat or a passing grade awarded. These conditions could include minimum levels of attendance or the completion of specific work to a given standard. Any such conditions shall be detailed in the course outline, the Course Information System and AKO | LEARN. The rationale for such requirements and the expectations shall be communicated clearly to all students to whom they apply.

3.4 Once a course has started, the conditions of assessment can only be changed if there has been no objection to the changes after clear communication to the students via the Course Information System, email and AKO | LEARN. This does not apply when subject to the emergency provision of this Policy or when the relevant Amo | Dean and the Tumu Tuarua Akoranga | Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic jointly determine that the conditions of the assessment have become impracticable due to unforeseen events not subject to the emergency provisions of this document. Course coordinators shall retain a record of how that agreement was reached. Any change shall be communicated through the Course Information System, email and AKO | LEARN.

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3.5 Course coordinators may approve extensions, alterations and the use of special facilities for assessment items as specified in the Special Consideration regulations.

3.6 Alternative assessment delivery mechanisms and conditions will be provided to the student where they have a Learning Support Plan outlining those provisions approved by Student Accessibility Services and the relevant Head of Department/School or nominee.

3.7 Students' performance in an assessment item will be judged against clear assessment criteria that align with the learning outcomes of the course, for example in a rubric or marking scheme.

3.8 Where teamwork is used, mechanisms to award marks to individual members will be put in place when the assessment is designed and such mechanisms shall be communicated to students with the assessment's requirements.

4. Course Work and Feedback

4.1 For tests with a course weight of 10% or more, one or more members of the teaching staff shall be contactable to answer questions on the test for the duration of the test or during hours published with the test for multi-day tests.

4.2 Unless otherwise specified in the course outline, or in the case of a formal examination, marked assessment items should normally be returned to a student within three weeks of the date that the test or assessment submission took place.

4.3 Except in the case of a formal examination, the marked assessment should be accompanied by feedback (either collective or individual) that is sufficient to allow students to form both an accurate appraisal of their performance and an understanding of how they could improve in future.

4.4 Return of students' assessed work shall comply with University policies with regard to the *Privacy Act 2020* and the *UC Privacy Policy*, and must not be disclosed to anyone other than the student concerned, or staff who require access in order to perform their work.

5. Formal Examinations

5.1 Where an assessment is a formal examination, as defined by the Taught and Project Course Assessment Regulations, additional requirements include:

i) The time for an in-person invigilated formal examination, without any extra time allowances, will be no longer than 3 hours;

ii) Paper-based formal examination scripts shall be preserved for six months from the date results are released. For up to three months after the release of results, a student may apply in writing to the Examinations Office for a copy of their formal examination script (a fee applies). During this period students may view their script in the department or school at no cost. After three months and until

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the exam scripts are destroyed, a student may apply directly to the department or school to have their original script returned, at no cost. Once an original formal examination script is collected by the student, no application for reconsideration of grade or appeal will be accepted in relation to that script.

6. Timing

6.1 Assessments which contribute to students' final grade for the course will be scheduled to be completed and submitted between the official start date of the course and the official end date of the course.

6.2 Assessments will be scheduled so that the workload for students in any single course is reasonable and manageable in the time provided by the course's credit points value.

6.3 No tests or examinations may be held on Sundays or public holidays without the permission of the Tumu Tuarua Akoranga | Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic.

6.4 Except for assessment in courses that have on-going engagement during mid-semester breaks such as fieldwork, clinical, workplace and professional practice placements, or performance music recitals, or any approved extensions or alterations for assessment items as specified in Section 3 above, no tests or examinations shall be held, or assessment dates fall due, during the mid-semester break. That is the period between the last day of lectures before a mid-semester break and the first day of lectures after a mid-semester break.

6.5 For courses with a formal examination, no assessment will fall due in the week between the end of lectures and the beginning of the mid-year or end-of-year examination periods, except in the case of any approved extensions or alterations for assessment items as specified in Section 3 above, or by permission of the Tumu Tuarua Akoranga | Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic or nominee.

6.6 All assessments (including assignments) held during the mid-year or end-of-year examination periods shall be scheduled and/or timetabled by the *Examinations Office*. Tests and Examinations held during this period shall be administered by the Examinations Office except with the permission of the Tumu Tuarua Akoranga | Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic or nominee.

6.7 Field trips cannot be held during the period from the end of lectures to the end of examinations.

6.8 Faculties and Schools with cohort-based qualifications and qualifications with core courses will endeavour to coordinate the assessment schedules of courses at each year level to reduce clashes and competing assessment deadlines. In the first instance this should occur at school or department level as appropriate.

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7. Assessment of Live Oral and Performance Achievement

7.1 In the case of a formal test or examination based on a live (face-to-face or live online) oral or performance presentation, two examiners, or an examiner and an independent witness, should be present. Provided that the student is informed in accordance with the *UC Privacy Policy* and guidelines, a video recording by the internal examiner may be substituted for an independent witness, which will be stored for a minimum of 6 months before being deleted.

8. Online Assessments

8.1 Where tests and examinations are administered online and the work is to be completed individually, the course coordinator and/or examinations office (where relevant) shall ensure:

i) That the time during which a student can complete an online assessment is reasonable given their location and time zone;

ii) That except in the case of an emergency, any hardware and software requirements for the assessment, including the use of software or services that help prevent breaches of academic integrity, are communicated to students at the start of the course in the Course Information System, course outlines and AKO | LEARN so students can obtain the required equipment;

iii) That instructions as to what material can be used during the assessment are clear, that any required materials are accessible to all students, and that, under the conditions set, the use of any excluded material is likely to be identified;

iv) That clear instructions are provided for students who encounter technical difficulties during the assessment, especially if the assessment has time constraints.

9. Academic Integrity

9.1 The course coordinator shall ensure that students are provided with clear guidelines as to what constitutes academic misconduct, particularly in relation to plagiarism, and what actions are taken in the event of academic misconduct being suspected (*Misconduct Procedures – Guide for Students*). A link to this guide should be included in course outlines.

9.2 Where practicable, assessments should be submitted online and via plagiarism detection software, unless there are compelling reasons not to do so and this has been approved by the Tumuaki Tari/Kura | Head of Department/School.

10. Religious or Representative Activities and Student Assessment Obligations

10.1 Provided that the integrity of the assessment is not compromised, where possible departments/schools shall give favourable consideration to making alternative arrangements for students involved in religious observances or in representative,

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national or international sporting or cultural events as allowed under the Special Considerations regulations and policy.

11. Moderation

11.1 In order to accommodate differences in subject areas and accreditation and certification requirements, each faculty will have its own moderation policy and process. This must be developed by the relevant Faculty Board, or if applicable, Programme Committee, in consultation with course coordinators and other academic staff of that faculty, and must be approved by the Academic Administration Committee. This policy shall, at a minimum, cover:

i) Responsibilities of examiners, markers and moderators;
ii) Moderation of assessment before delivery;
iii) Moderation of assessment marking;
iv) Moderation of final course grades; and
v) Reporting requirements to examiners' meetings.

11.2 An academic staff member is required to provide pre-assessment moderation of the examination for a course before it is received by the Examinations Office.

11.3 Moderation of marking is required whenever a single assessment answer is being marked by more than one person or system to ensure consistency of marking. The course coordinator is responsible for ensuring training is provided to all markers to ensure overall quality and consistency of marking for the assessment.

12. Grades and Examiners' Meetings

12.1 The conversion of marks to letter grades shall follow the University's common grading scale as published in the *University Calendar*.

12.2 Unless otherwise stated in the Faculty Moderation Policy, adjustment of marks may occur through post-assessment moderation and scaling processes. Students should be notified if scaling processes will be used.

12.3 Departments (or the relevant academic/programme unit) will hold examiners' meetings to consider and approve final grades. Records of examiners' meetings would typically include the initial marks and grades, and any decisions made at the meeting, including any changes to the initial marks and grades submitted to the meeting. Initial marks and grades and meeting records are to be submitted to the appropriate Amo | Dean for storage for future reference. All changes of grade after that meeting shall be lodged through the Change of Grade system.

12.4 The relevant Head of Department/School should draw up terms of reference for examiners' meetings to formalise membership and approval authority.

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13. Emergency Provisions

13.1 These provisions can be activated when the Tumu Tuarua Akoranga | Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic has declared there is an emergency.

13.2 If the DVCA declares an emergency, and published assessment items need to be modified, the following provisions apply:

i) These changes shall be coordinated at the appropriate academic level to reduce timetable clashes;
ii) These changes should not unfairly advantage or disadvantage any group of students;
iii) These changes should make allowance for the changed circumstances of students and staff;
iv) These changes shall be recorded in writing;
v) These changes shall be clearly communicated to students via the Course Information System, email and AKO | LEARN.

14. Academic appeals and disputes about assessment processes and grades

14.1 Students with concerns about assessment processes, marks or grades should follow the procedures outlined in the Taught and Project Course Assessment Regulations and the *Appeals Regulations*. At all stages *UCSA Advocacy services* are available to support students throughout any dispute.

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Related Documents and Information

Legislation

- Privacy Act 2020 (New Zealand Legislation website)

UC Policy Library

- Misconduct Procedures – Guide for Students
- Appeals Regulations
- Privacy Policy

UC Website and Intranet

- Ako - Learning and Teaching (University website)
- Examination Instructions to Candidates
- Key Dates (University website)
- Examinations (University website)
- University Regulations (University website)

Document History and Version Control Table			
Version	**Action**	**Approval Authority**	**Action Date**
For document history and versioning prior to 2013 contact ucpolicy@canterbury.ac.nz			
1.00	Conversion into new template	Policy Unit	Sep 2013
1.01	Hyperlinks updated.	Policy Unit	Oct 2013
1.02	Procedure/Guideline 5.3 – replaced AVC(A) with DVC(A)	Policy Unit	Jan 2014
1.03	A/A changed from Chair, Academic Board to DVC(A&I).	Policy Unit	Mar 2014
1.04	Hyperlinks updated.	Policy Unit	Jun 2014
2.00	Major review of document content.	DVC(A&I)	Aug 2014
2.01	Contact Officer updated.	Policy Unit	Apr 2015
2.02	'Faculty' references removed to reflect College-Faculty merger; scheduled review date moved to June 2017 to align with regulations review.	DVC(A)	Jun 2016
3.00	Scheduled review by Contact Officer, changes to bring in line with revised regulations, further amendments forthcoming. Change of titles for Approval Authority and Contact Officer.	AVC(A)	May 2018

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Version	**Action**	**Approval Authority**	**Action Date**
3.01	AA and CO roles updated ahead of scheduled review completion, hyperlinks updated	DVC(A)	Nov 2021
4.00	Major review and updates to document content.	DVC(A)	Dec 2022
4.01	Hyperlinks updated	Policy Unit	Aug 2023

This document remains in force until it is updated.

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