

Assessment Policy and Procedure

1. Introduction

The Australian Performing Arts Conservatory (APAC) Assessment Policy and Procedure sets out the principles, scope, purpose, policy statements, procedures and responsibilities relating to APAC's approach to assessment. This Policy and Procedure is designed to support academic quality, to foster good practice and to drive compliance with mandated higher education standards.

1.1. Purpose

The intent of this Policy and Procedure is to set out an approach to assessment which supports academic quality and academic standards, in a manner compliant with mandated higher education standards and which fosters good practice.

1.2. Scope

This Policy and Procedure applies to each unit offered by APAC and to all students and to all staff involved with assessment.

1.3. Principles

- assessment promotes effective student learning through motivating engagement with discipline content and active participation in learning activities;
- assessment is aligned with unit and course learning outcomes, graduate attributes, and reflects clearly defined standards of student performance;
- assessment is designed to maintain professional and academic standards;
- assessment and feedback on assessment are fair, equitable, transparent and inclusive;
- assessment is designed and calibrated to reflect the credit value of the relevant unit and to ensure that student learning is not impeded by an overload of requirements;
- a variety of assessment tasks is used in each unit, and includes both formative and summative assessment;
- the purpose, expectations, requirements and grading criteria relating to each assessment tasks are made clear to students;
- assessment methods are valid and reliable;
- assessment and feedback on assessment are authentic;
- staff involved in assessment are appropriately qualified;
- assessment processes include timely feedback and grade notification, enabling students to improve future performance; and
- assessment practices and processes will be regularly reviewed, including as part of comprehensive course reviews.

2. Policy Statements

2.1. Learning and Academic Standards

Assessment supports academic standards in two interconnected ways. First, assessment is designed to promote effective student learning and to facilitate academic achievement, by motivating broad and deep engagement with discipline content, and by motivating active participation in learning activities. Second, assessment is designed to measure a student's level of academic achievement relative to clearly described academic standards. Accordingly, assessment methods are valid, reliable and authentic. Assessment is always aligned with unit and course learning outcomes and graduate attributes and is calibrated to facilitate the achievement of those outcomes and to confirm their achievement. Assessment both facilitates, and confirms, achievement of academic standards.

2.2. Fairness and Transparency

- i. The purpose of assessment tasks is always made clear to students, including outlining their relationship to unit and course learning outcomes. Expectations and requirements regarding particular assessment tasks are clearly explained, as are their objectives. The criteria on which marks will be awarded, are explicit and well justified, and are well explained to both students and markers. Timely, clear, and authentic feedback on assessment is given in a considered and sensitive manner with a view to improving students' academic achievement.
- ii. Assessment tasks are varied, spaced reasonably over the teaching period to avoid assessment overload and to allow time for feedback to be utilised to improve academic achievement. The assessment for a particular unit proportionately reflects its credit value. Both formative and summative assessment are used in each unit. Assessment tasks are devised taking account of the diverse backgrounds of the student cohort, and there is provision for reasonable adjustment to ensure equity.

2.3. Review and Improvement

- i. APAC's broad approach to assessment is regularly reviewed, including as part of comprehensive course reviews utilising feedback from students, staff involved in the assessment process, advice from external experts, and benchmarking with processes and practices at other institutions. In particular, there is benchmarking of grading to support academic standards. See APAC's *Moderation Policy and Procedure*.
- ii. Issues regarding compliance or academic standards identified in the review process, including issues concerning the proper application of this Policy and Procedure, are expeditiously addressed. Identified opportunities for improvement are considered and pursued where feasible.

3. Procedure

3.1. Grade Codes and Grade Notations

Grade codes and grade notations used are listed in the table below. The meaning of each is given by a short and, where applicable, is correlated with an assessment result expressed as a percentage.

Grade	Description	Result	Grade (Numeric)
High Distinction (HD)	Exceptional standard demonstrating comprehensive and high-level, insightful understanding of academic concepts and/or the application of artistry. Outstanding work demonstrating originality, with thought-provoking attention-to-detail in performative context, and no shortcomings in terms of imagination, innovation, creativity, and aptitude. Assiduous adherence to the principles of academic writing.	85%>	7
Distinction (D)	Excellent standard demonstrating broad and advanced-level, insightful understanding of academic concepts and overall excellent work demonstrating some originality, well-considered attention to detail in performative context, and limited shortcomings in terms of imagination, innovation, creativity and aptitude.	75 – 84%	6
Credit (C)	Good standard demonstrating broad and sound understanding of academic concepts, and overall good work demonstrating limited originality, attention to detail in performative context, but with noticeable shortcomings in terms of imagination, innovation, creativity and aptitude.	65 – 74%	5

Grade	Description	Result	Grade (Numeric)
Pass (P)	Satisfactory standard demonstrating sufficient understanding of academic concepts, and overall satisfactory work demonstrating little or no originality, limited attention to detail in performative context, with numerous shortcomings in terms of imagination, innovation, creativity and aptitude.	50 – 64%	4
Pass Conceded (PC)*	Unsatisfactory standard, failing to demonstrate a basic understanding in relation to all learning outcomes but demonstrating a basic understanding in relation to some.	47-49%	3
Fail (F)	Unsatisfactory standard, failing to demonstrate a basic level of understanding and achievement.	<50%	0
Fail Non-submission (FNS) **	Fails to satisfy the requirements of the unit by not attempting all assessment tasks.	N/A	0
Withdrawn (W)	Withdrawn from the unit after the census date and up to the final date for withdrawal without academic penalty.	N/A	N/A
Academic Credit (AC)	Indicates that credit has been given for a unit or part of a course on the basis of prior formal learning. ***		-
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)***	Indicates that Advanced Standing has been given for a unit or part of a course on the basis of prior informal or non-formal learning.		-

* No more than 20 credit points of PC grades may be counted towards completion of an AQF level 7 bachelor degree; no more than 10 credit points of PC grades may be received at the highest unit level of the course. No PC grade will be offered if any of these limits would be breached. A PC grade is deemed to satisfy prerequisites for higher-level units.

** A requirement for a passing grade in any unit is submission of all assessment tasks.

***See the Advanced Standing Policy and Procedure.

3.2. Assessment Tasks

- i. Assessment tasks for each unit are designed to align with the unit and course learning outcomes, and graduate attributes, and reflect the academic content of the unit. Lecturers liaise with the Heads of Discipline (HOD) and the Director of Higher Education (DoHE) to ensure that assessment tasks are appropriate.

A variety of types of assessment tasks are developed for each unit. Assessment criteria are provided for each assessment task. Challenges and complexity are appropriate to the year level. Assessment tasks are spaced to avoid workload congestion and to enable timely feedback, and, collectively, constitute a student workload proportionate to the credit value of the unit.

All units must have a unit outline with comprehensive details of unit rationales, learning outcomes, content, delivery and assessment, mapping to learning outcomes, weighting, and assessment details for each assessment tasks.

- ii. At the commencement of each teaching period, lecturers will provide an overview of the unit content, and schedules, together with a detailed explanation of the assessment tasks, marking criteria and their relationship to learning outcomes and progress. Final grades for the teaching period will be published, subsequent to ratification by the Grades Ratification Committee.
- iii. Assessment tasks reflect the purpose of the assessment task, including whether it is summative or formative, and whether or not the task is undertaken under examination conditions. Methods of assessment are consistent with the learning outcomes being assessed.

Summative Assessment

- iv. All summative assessments must address the learning outcomes listed in the unit outline and will be used to determine the final grade for the course. A unit has a maximum of (4), and a minimum of (3), summative tasks (excluding progressive tasks), including any examinations. No assessment task will be weighted at more than 50 percent of the overall assessment for the unit.
- v. Assessment tasks designed for completion under non-examination conditions (e.g., assignments completed during a study period, such as major papers, research reports or problem sets, provide the basis for judging whether, and to what degree, unit learning outcomes have been achieved.
- vi. All practical assessments will be assessed by a panel comprising a minimum of two suitably qualified academic staff.

Examinations

- vii. Assessment under examination conditions (including invigilated exams and in-class tests) should be at a level consistent with the expectations of the course and will employ an appropriate range of assessment tools and strategies.

Formative Assessment

- viii. Formative assessment tasks, which may include class discussion activities and online quizzes, allow for feedback on progress towards achieving the learning outcomes of a unit. These tasks are not used to calculate the final mark and grade for the unit.

Group Assessment

- ix. Group assessments must contain components that can be assessed individually. A maximum of 35% of the assessment marks for the unit may be allocated as mark for a group assessment task. Students must be informed in advance of how their individual marks will be determined.

Tutorial Participation

- x. Tutorials are an important part of the learning process. Students are expected to actively attend and participate in all tutorials.

Assignment Referencing and Submission

- xi. Students are required to use the APA referencing system when referencing a direct source or paraphrasing another person's work. Students are to use bibliographies reflecting expectations for an academic paper. Students are to complete all assessments in the format specified in the unit outline. Cover pages for assignments should contain the following information:

- Student name and number
- Unit name
- Lecturer's name
- Title of assignment
- Date due

Students must keep a copy of all assignments submitted.

Changes to Assessment

- xii. Changes to assessment may only be made under exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the DoHE. Students are to be notified of the change immediately to minimise disadvantage.
- xiii. Changes to units, such as changes to structure, credit points, assessment types, weighting and updates for currency must be approved by the Academic Board and recorded in the *Curriculum Currency & CI Register*. Significant changes may require a Material Change to be submitted to TEQSA for approval. A full review of units and courses is conducted for the renewal of course accreditation submission to TEQSA. A Material Change Notification must be submitted to TEQSA for any major changes to a course in accordance with TEQSA's Material Change Notification Policy. The mechanism for tracking the number of changes is in the *Curriculum Currency and CI Register*.

Feedback to Students

- xiv. Feedback may be provided via verbal or written comments from lecturers directly on the assessment, or via the Learning Management System. Feedback should be respectful, timely, and provide suggestions for improvement. Feedback should be

consistent with the assessment criteria so that students understand how marks have been allocated and how they may improve next time. Feedback on summative assessment should be provided to students within two weeks of the due date for the assessment item, or at least two weeks prior to the next assessment item due date. All feedback for the semester should be provided to students before the final examination.

3.3. Academic Integrity

Copyright and academic integrity requirements apply to assessment tasks. In particular, there is zero tolerance of plagiarism and contract cheating. APAC's expectation is that an assessment task is either:

- the individual effort of the student;
- effort of an individual student who may have interacted with others to better understand the topic, but who is responsible for submitting an individual piece of work;
- the sole effort of the student, based on an answer provided in course materials; or
- group performance or production tasks, with allocated roles and responsibility

APAC expects that all sources used in an assignment are acknowledged. Failure to provide such acknowledgment is plagiarism. Work that is not completed by a student yet submitted as that student's work is cheating.

Moodle, the learning management system, contains the following statement which students must accept when submitting assignments.

"This assignment is my own work, except where I have acknowledged the use of the works of other people or submissions that are part of a collaborative assignment."

See also APAC's Academic Honesty Policy and Procedure.

3.4. Rules and Appeals

Assessment Due Dates

- i. Students must submit all assessment items by the published due date, except where an extension has been granted. Unless it is otherwise specified, assignments will be deemed to meet the deadline if they are submitted by 11.59pm (Brisbane time) on the published due date.

Late Submissions

- ii. Late submissions without prior approval will have penalties imposed.
- iii. Extension requests must be submitted no fewer than 24 hours before the published assessment deadline, using the *Assessment Extension Request Form*. The maximum extension period, where there are no extenuating circumstances is one (1) week. Requests for extensions of no more than one (1) week are assessed by the unit lecturer. Requests for extensions beyond one week will be considered, if there are extenuating circumstances, on a case-by-case basis by the relevant HoD or DoHE.
- iv. Late submission, without an approved extension, of assessment other than practical/performance assessment incurs a 5% decrease in mark for each day it is

overdue. If the assessment is submitted more than two (2) weeks after the due date or approved extension, 50% is the maximum mark that can be awarded

- v. If a student does not attend a Practical/Performance, Rehearsal, or Presentation assessment, and has not communicated this to the unit lecturer in the prior forty-eight (48 hours), the student will be automatically awarded a failing grade. If students encounter extenuating circumstances and cannot notify the lecturer prior to the Practical/Performance, Rehearsal, or Presentation assessment, students must show cause for special consideration within forty-eight (48) hours of the scheduled assessment task. If an extension has been applied for and granted before the due date for all assessment types, then the penalty does not apply.

Absences for In-class Assessments

- vi. Students are expected to be present for all in-class assessments including, presentations and practical skills tests. Failure to attend the assessment may result in a fail grade for the assessment task. Students must notify the unit lecturer of their intended absence in advance and provide a valid reason in writing. If students encounter extenuating circumstances and cannot notify the lecturer prior to the in-class assessment, students must show cause for special consideration within forty-eight (48) hours of the scheduled assessment task.

Attendance at Examinations

- vii. Students are required to attend all examinations scheduled for units in which they are enrolled. Students will receive a Fail for an examination unless they provide in writing evidence of a valid reason for their absence, such as a doctor's certificate for illness or other evidence of an event beyond their control.
- viii. A student can request to defer examinations because of illness, misadventure, or other reasonable or compassionate causes. Requests may be made in writing to the DoHE, who will notify the student when the next possible time the examination will be held, if the request is approved. A new examination must be set for the deferred examination.

Special Consideration and Appeals

- ix. A student may apply for special consideration if they fall ill during an examination and need to leave early. Other unforeseen circumstances that may affect a student's results, such as a death in the family, may also be grounds for special consideration. Written evidence must accompany an application for special consideration, such as a medical certificate or death certificate.
- x. Students who are dissatisfied with an assessment outcome may lodge an appeal under APAC's *Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure*.

4. Responsibilities

4.1. The Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is responsible for:

- assuring itself that there is an effective system for assessment in place which is compliant with mandated standards, and which exemplifies good practice.

4.2. The Academic Board

The Academic Board is responsible for:

- monitoring the implementation of this Policy and Procedure;
- ensuring that APAC's approach to assessment supports academic standards and academic quality;
- approving requirements in relation to assessment; and
- considering review findings regarding assessment and taking appropriate actions.

4.3. Learning and Teaching Committee

The Learning and Teaching Committee is responsible for:

- making recommendations to the Academic Board regarding assessment, including on the basis of review findings.

4.4. Grades Ratification Committee

The Grades Ratification Committee is responsible for:

- approving grades, late grades, changes of grades, review of marks, review of grades, moderation of units and ratification of executive decisions in relation to student grades.
- monitoring and reporting on methods of assessment, ensuring they are consistent with the learning outcomes being assessed and are capable of confirming that all specified learning outcomes are achieved, and that grades awarded reflect the level of student attainment.
- providing a report to the Academic Board following each meeting of the Grades Ratification Committee.

4.5. The Director of Higher Education

The DoHE is responsible for:

- implementing this Policy and Procedure.

4.6. Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- acting in accordance with this Policy and Procedure; and
- seeking advice as required on matters to do with assessment.

4.7. Students

Students are responsible for:

- acting in accordance with this Policy and Procedure.

5. Relevant Documents

- APAC Academic Honesty Policy and Procedure
- APAC Advanced Standing Policy and Procedure
- APAC Moderation Policy and Procedure
- APAC Privacy Policy and Procedure
- APAC Records Management Policy and Procedure
- APAC Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure
- Australian Qualifications Framework
- Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000
- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
- National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018
- TEQSA Guidance Note: Monitoring and Analysis of Student Performance 2020
- TEQSA Material Change Notification Policy

6. Definitions

- **Course** is an approved sequence of study leading to the conferral of a higher education award.
- **Census Date** is the effective final enrolment date and charges liability date for a course or units, after which a student cannot withdraw without significant academic or financial penalties.
- **Formative Assessment** is an assessment used to provide students with feedback about their progress throughout a study period but is used to calculate the final unit grade.
- **Reasonable Adjustment** a measure or action that has the effect of assisting a student with a disability on the same basis as a student without a disability, and may include an aid, a facility, or a service that the student requires because of their disability. An adjustment is reasonable if it achieves this purpose while taking into account the student's learning needs and balancing the interests of all parties affected, including those of the student with the disability, the education provider, staff and other students.
- **Summative Assessment** is an assessment used to evaluate student learning, skill acquisition, and academic achievement, and used to calculate the final unit grade.

- **Unit** is a discrete unit of study with its own name, code and value that makes up part of a course.

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