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National Academy of Professional Studies (NAPS)

Assessment Policy

Related Documents	SS001 Student Grievance and Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure SS019 Student Code of Conduct A004F Special Consideration Application A009 Student Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure SS013 Student Progression and Exclusion Policy SS014 Student Progression and Exclusion Procedure A005 Examinations Policy and Procedure A005A: NAPS Guidelines for Examination Supervisors (Appendix A in A005)
HE Standards Framework 2015	Standard 3.1. Standard 1.4. These are linked to various elements of Domain 7 in relation to the publication of information about courses of study to inform prospective students and other stakeholders. Standard 1.4.1 Standard 1.5.3.

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1. Policy Rationale

The National Academy of Professional Studies (NAPS) regards appropriate assessment as integral to the maintenance of academic and professional standards at both unit and course levels. Assessment must be fair, equitable, transparent and reasonable. Carefully designed assessment tasks allow students to demonstrate progress towards attaining documented learning outcomes. Assessments provide vital feedback to students regarding their learning. It is also a key factor in directing student learning and motivation.

2. Overview

The policy articulates the values, principles and procedures underpinning assessment at NAPS. It provides guidance to both staff and students on how assessments are made and how students can appeal assessment decisions. It should be read in conjunction with related subsidiary rules and procedures of NAPS.

This policy is applicable to all students and all academic staff. The responsibilities of staff and students are detailed to ensure that all assessments, from initial design to ongoing quality assurance, meet NAPS high standards and are aligned with learning outcomes. It applies to both award and non-award courses.

Non-compliance to the policy by Academic staff will be referred to the relevant Dean who, depending on the level of impact, will report the matter to the Academic Board for any actions required to rectify the situation.

3. Guiding Principles

Assessment is to be designed to contribute to high-quality student learning and underpin the development, delivery and quality assurance of units and courses.

All assessments must:

1. be standards-based and provide evidence of the level of achievement with respect to learning outcomes, graduate attributes and criteria as outlined in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF);
2. must be a transparent process carried out with honesty, integrity and confidentiality;
3. be integral to pedagogically-informed learning and teaching;
4. comprise a variety of tasks which are reasonably achievable by students; and must be fair, inclusive and equitable with due recognition of reasonable achievement;
5. be marked by appropriately qualified and competent assessors, with grades applied consistently in accord with the Grading Criteria and explained to students through the provision of a rubric for each task;
6. encourage and reinforce learning through the provision of meaningful and timely feedback;
7. assess graduate attributes which are scaffolded in the course and unit learning outcomes;
8. should all be pre and post moderated by a second appropriated qualified academic in the field;

9. new tests/exams are set for each trimester – there is no roll-over of examination papers (i.e. student will not be assessed by a very similar test/exam or by an exact same exam (with or without figures just being altered); and
10. have requirements that are clearly communicated so that students know what is expected in order to complete the assessment tasks to the required standard.

This document is guided by the Higher Education Standards Framework 2015 Standard 2.4 (Student Grievances and Complaints) which advises that:

1. “Current and prospective students have access to mechanisms that are capable of resolving grievances about any aspect of their experience with the higher education provider, its agents or related parties.
2. There are policies and processes that deliver timely resolution of formal complaints and appeals against academic and administrative decisions without charge or at reasonable cost to students, and these are applied consistently, fairly and without reprisal.
3. Institutional complaints-handling and appeals processes for formal complaints include provision for confidentiality, independent professional advice, advocacy and other support for the complainant or appellant, and provision for review by an appropriate independent third party if internal processes fail to resolve a grievance.
4. Decisions about formal complaints and appeals are recorded and the student concerned is informed in writing of the outcome and the reasons, and of further avenues of appeal where they exist and where the student could benefit.
5. If a formal complaint or appeal is upheld, any action required is initiated promptly.”

4. Assessment Design

Assessment Practice

NAPS assessment practice is:

1. designed to promote purposeful, higher order learning skills of analysis, synthesis and validation;
2. implemented using standards-based assessment;
3. managed to provide efficiency and accountability to all stakeholders;
4. based on a culture of academic integrity that is actively supported by NAPS;
5. regularly reviewed for effectiveness in achieving desired outcomes and quality assurance; and
6. continually improved through peer review, ongoing staff development, benchmarking and other quality assurance processes.

The form of assessment used is based on appropriateness and relevance to learning outcomes.

Assessment tasks may be individual or group tasks.

Examples of tasks are:

- written assignments based on research;
- case studies or problem-solving exercises;
- invigilated tests and exams;
- oral presentations;
- class participation;
- debates;
- role plays;
- grant writing or project proposals;
- posters; and
- concept maps.

Sample rubrics for most of the above assessment tasks are provided in Appendix 1.

Examinations can be held mid-trimester or at the completion of the unit.

Final Examinations are invigilated summative assessments held during a designated examination period at the end of a unit.

Assessments fall into three main categories:

1. **Diagnostic assessment** provides information on students' prior knowledge at the start of a unit.
2. **Formative assessment** takes place over a period of learning and is intended to provide feedback on how a student is progressing. It helps teaching staff to diagnose learning needs and to design, negotiate and modify learning activities. It also helps the student to determine how they are performing during the trimester and where they might be able to improve their performance.
3. **Summative assessment** is the collection of information through the formal assessment components of a unit in order to improve teaching and learning, but also to contribute to the determination of a student's final grade.

The pass mark in every assessment task is 50% unless a different pass mark is specified in the relevant unit outline. Where there is a final examination in the unit, a student must also obtain a pass grade in the final examination.

Assessment Feedback

Constructive and timely feedback is to be provided to students and may take several forms. Assessment feedback is intended to help students understand strengths and weaknesses in their academic performance and to assist the improvement of their learning and progress towards achieving specified learning outcomes.

Rubrics are a solid way to provide students with clear expectations and guidance in relation to assessment tasks. In addition, marking according to a rubric provides students with detailed feedback; helps to ensure that learning outcomes are measured and achieved; and can strengthen moderation.

Sample Rubrics are provided in Appendix 1: Sample Rubrics as a guide for lecturers so they can amend them for each unit as required. Further resources for creating rubrics are listed in Appendix 2.

Grading

Marks and grades awarded to students are to be based solely on merit in relation to prescribed academic standards. Each assessment will be given a numerical mark or grade. The unit coordinator and the President or their nominee are jointly responsible for the accuracy of the uploaded final unit marks and grades.

Assessment rubrics

Each unit taught in the Academy will be assessed in accordance with an assessment rubric developed for unit. Accordingly each unit outline shall include an appropriate assessment rubric. This ensures transparency in the grading of assessment tasks.

Alignment with Learning Outcomes

From their unit outlines, students are able to understand the links between how each assessment task links with the learning outcome for that unit, and how those outcomes link with the course outcomes and also the AQF

Confidentiality and Security

Principles of privacy, confidentiality and security are to be maintained throughout the administration of student assessment, especially in relation to:

- examination papers and student scripts;
- the confidentiality of assessment results;
- access to grades; and
- the authority to disclose grades to students using student identification numbers.

Quality Assurance and Management of Assessment

NAPS' assessment practices are regularly reviewed at institutional, school, and course levels as part of NAPS' ongoing quality assurance and improvement processes. The Teaching and Learning Committee is responsible for conducting an audit each teaching period to maintain adherence to the Assessment Policy. The results of the audit must be submitted to the Academic Board for comment and approval. The Board may give directions on actions needed for improvements and shall also take account of any aspects of the Teaching and Learning Institutional and Benchmarking Plan that relates to the implementation of improvements.

5. Procedures for Staff

Unit Assessment Requirements

Unit outlines, must be provided to students at the beginning of a teaching period. Detailed unit outlines must include assessment tasks including:

- a. Assessment tasks;

- b. due date for submission;
- c. and other relevant submission instructions
- d. total marks or weight for the assessment
- e. group work guidelines where relevant including peer assessment.

An assessment plan once published can only be amended with the approval of Dean of the Department provided it is demonstrated that the change will not disadvantage students in any way, and the change is consistent with learning outcomes in the unit. A change once approved, must be notified to students by the subject coordinator in writing or by email or through the Moodle page of the unit.

Assessment Marking and Feedback

- a. the unit coordinator is responsible for the marking of all assessment tasks and examinations in his/her unit. Marking of a final examination paper will be completed as soon as possible. Marking of all written assessments normally is to be completed within two weeks of the submission date of assessment tasks. However, where tasks are set to be completed in Week 8 (or later), all assessment marking should be completed within 10 working days of the submission date of the assessment tasks.
- b. all marking is conducted internally; and
- c. all marking and assessment is done in a timely manner.

Examinations

- a. Procedures for the conduct and supervision of invigilated examinations during NAPS' designated examination periods are detailed in A005 Examination Policy which includes Appendix A005A: NAPS Guidelines for Examination Supervisors.
- b. Each unit coordinator must submit the final examination paper and supplementary examination paper (including marking guides) to the Course Convenor by Friday at the end of Week 6 of the trimester. At a minimum, all unit coordinators must certify that:
 - i. the examination will measure student achievement in meeting expected learning outcomes as described in the unit outline;
 - ii. the examination can be completed by a reasonably competent student in the time available;
 - iii. instructions to students on the cover page are accurate and complete;
 - iv. the marks are fairly allocated across questions and marks are clearly allocated so that students understand their weighting as a percentage of the total mark; and
 - v. the examination paper does not contain syntax, spelling or grammatical errors or abbreviation that are not fully described when they are first used in the paper.
 - vi. The marking guides for each question have been confirmed to align against the stated learning outcomes for the final examination assessment;

- vii. That the examination paper has been moderated by another appropriately qualified academic in that field and that a moderation document/process has been recorded.
- c. Alternative quality assurance measures include the relevant Dean (or delegate) reviewing all exam papers covering the above points.

Supplementary Assessment

- a. If a student does not attend a scheduled final examination (or the major assessment item in a unit without an exam), the student will be graded as 'Fail Absent' (FA) in that unit. If a student has a valid reason for not attending or completing the final examination, such as illness or other exceptional circumstances, the student may apply to the Dean for special consideration by completing A004F Special Consideration Application Form. They need to provide documentation/evidence regarding their reasons. If granted, a supplementary assessment, usually in the form of a supplementary examination, will be required.
- b. If a student does not complete an in-trimester assessment task that fulfils a unit learning outcome but does attend the final exam, then the student will be graded as a 'Fail Incomplete' (FI) in that unit. In such circumstances, a student will receive a 'Fail Incomplete', even if the total mark in the unit is more than 50%. If the overall mark is 45% or greater, a student with a Fail Incomplete grade will be provided with an opportunity to take a supplementary exam or another form of assessment to determine whether learning outcomes have been met.
- c. If a student has a valid reason for not attending or completing assessments, such as illness or other exceptional circumstances, the student may apply for special consideration by completing the A004F Special Consideration Application Form.
- d. If a student has achieved an aggregate mark in the unit between 45% and 49% a supplementary assessment task may be prescribed by the unit coordinator to finally determine whether expected learning outcomes have been met. When the supplementary assessment is an examination, this will normally occur during the special consideration examination period. The maximum grade for a supplementary assessment shall not exceed 50%.
- e. A student shall be granted no more than four supplementary passes in any given course in the Academy.
- f. Where a student obtains a grade between 45% and 49% in a final unit, but fails a supplementary assessment, the Dean may recommend to the Academic Board that the student be awarded a conceded pass.

Normally a student can take only one supplementary assessment in a unit each trimester.

Grading

- a. At the end of every trimester and examination period, the Dean shall convene a meeting of staff which serves as the examinations meeting to ratify the final grades and marks for all units assessed in the trimester or period. Final grades and marks assessed in all units can only be published after ratification by the Dean and the examiners' meeting.
- b. Students who have failed to complete the Write Site Module (WSM) will not receive their grades until they have done so.

- c. Students who declare on their assessment cover sheet for their first assessment task that they have completed the WSM when they have not, have committed academic misconduct and the NAPS Student Academic Integrity Policy will apply.
- d. The Dean will report to the Academic Board (or designated Academic Board Committee) the progression rate and grade distribution and any actions required to rectify instances of non-adherence to A004 Assessment Policy.
- e. Results will normally be made available to students within ten working days after the Academic Board has ratified the results and the formal examination period has ended.

Determining Academic Status

At the end of each study period, the academic status of each student enrolled in an award course is evaluated in accordance with the following criteria:

1. **Good standing:** making satisfactory progress and permitted to continue;
2. **Conditional:** at academic risk of not achieving satisfactory course progress; i.e. has failed 50% or more of the units in which they were enrolled. The student will be permitted to re-enrol only after an interview and under conditions imposed by the Dean (or delegate) of the relevant School, which shall include a study program;
3. **Terminated:** has not made satisfactory course progress and is not permitted to continue.

Academic Transcripts

An official Academic Transcript contains information relating to Year of study, Unit Code, Unit Name, Credit Points Gained and Grades. It will also include a statement indicating that it is an official transcript issued by the Academy and will be signed by the Registrar.

6. Procedure: Student Roles and Responsibilities

Assessment

- a. It is the responsibility of students to ensure they have all relevant documentation for the unit (available via MOODLE) and that they understand all assessment requirements specified in the unit outline.
- b. All assessment tasks must be submitted on time unless a student has obtained a formal extension from the unit coordinator prior to the submission date. To obtain formal approval, a student must complete an Assessment Extension Form and submit it to the coordinator. Requests for extensions must be supported by appropriate documentation, such as medical certificates or other relevant information. Extension requests must be lodged prior to the due date and a copy of the application attached to the completed assignment. Only in cases of exceptional circumstances will students be granted extensions of submission time. In all other cases where work is submitted late without an approved extension, the assessment may be subject to a penalty of 5% for each day that the submission is late up to a maximum of 10 days. Where the submission is more than 10 days late, the assessment task shall not be graded. If an extension is granted, a student will be notified in writing of the specifics of the extension.

- c. If a student is absent or fails to submit on the due date of an assessment without a valid reason, they will receive no marks for the assessment. If a student has a valid reason for being absent from or is unable to submit an assessment, they must provide documentary evidence and apply to the unit coordinator for a deferred assessment or alternative assessment task.
- d. The application must be made to the unit coordinator within five working days of the assessment date.
- e. An application for an extension or deferred assessment may be rejected if there is a reason to believe that a student is seeking to achieve an unfair advantage. This judgment will be based around the stated circumstances of the application and may also include other information known to NAPS or the unit coordinator.
- f. A Plagiarism Declaration Form must be submitted with all assessment tasks except properly invigilated exams. The declaration affirms that the work being submitted is the student's own work, all sources have been acknowledged, the information contains no plagiarism and that the information is not knowingly inaccurate. It also affirms that the student has read and understood the Student Code of Conduct and A009 Student Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure. All assessment tasks need to be submitted through plagiarism detection software and unit coordinators may also request early drafts of assessments be submitted in this way. Academic Misconduct, including plagiarism and third-party assistance, is a serious offence and students will be subject to the severe penalties in A009 Student Misconduct Policy and Procedure. Unit coordinators will make this explicit to students when addressing assessments at the beginning of each unit and throughout the course. A summary of conduct requirements is also available in the Student Handbook.
- g. All students are required to successfully complete the Write Site Module (WSM) before submitting their first assessment task.
- h. Students must attach email confirmation of the successful completion of WSM to their first assignment and declare that they have successfully completed it on their assignment cover sheet.
- i. Assessment tasks should be presented as outlined by the unit coordinator at the beginning of the unit. If assessment items are not presented in this manner, unit coordinators will request that students re-submit their tasks within a short period of time as deemed appropriate by the unit coordinator. Failure to re-submit an appropriately presented assessment task may result in a zero mark for the assessment task.
- j. For group work, all individuals in the group are responsible for the group assessment submission.
- k. A supplementary assessment may be available to those students who fail the unit but have achieved an aggregate mark of 45% or more in the unit.
- l. Unless it is their last trimester before graduation, a student can take only one supplementary assessment each trimester unless there are documented, extenuating circumstances. No deferment is available to students who do not complete the supplementary assessment.

7. The Grading System

Students are assessed for each unit on the following basis:

Table 1: Grading Criteria

Grade / Mark	Descriptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High Distinction ▪ 85% -- 100% ▪ 8.5-10/10 	An outstanding level of achievement. The student has an extensive knowledge and understanding of the unit material and unit objectives beyond the normal expectations of the course. This constitutes a very high level of competence.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Distinction ▪ 75% -- 84% ▪ 7.5-8 	A high level of achievement. The student exhibits a comprehensive understanding of the unit content and unit objectives and can readily apply this knowledge. This constitutes a high level of competence.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Credit ▪ 65% -- 74% ▪ 6.5-7/10 	A substantial level of achievement. The student has a thorough knowledge and understanding of the unit content and unit objectives and is competent in the processes and skills of the course. This constitutes a reasonable level of competence.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pass ▪ 50% -- 64% ▪ 5-6/10 	Satisfactory achievement. The student has demonstrated an acceptable level of knowledge and understanding of the unit content and unit objectives and has achieved a basic level of competence in the processes, skills and knowledge of this unit. This constitutes an adequate level of competence.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fail ▪ 0 – 49% ▪ 0-4.5/10 	Unsatisfactory achievement in the unit. The student has limited knowledge and understanding of the unit content and unit objectives and has not been able to demonstrate a satisfactory level of competence and skill in the unit content.

Passing Requirements

- a. To achieve a passing grade in a unit a student must satisfy ALL of the following requirements:
 - i. Attempt all within-trimester assessment tasks to the satisfaction of the unit coordinator;
 - ii. Attend the final examination and submit an examination script; and
 - iii. Achieve an overall mark of at least 50% in the unit. Where there is a final examination for the unit, the student must obtain no less than 50% in the final examination.
- b. Where a unit does not have a final examination (such as a project or research unit), the requirement to attend and submit an examination script does not apply.
- c. Students are normally unable to repeat a failed unit more than twice (see SS013 Student Progression and Exclusion Policy).

When an international student does not meet satisfactory academic performance he/she will be reported to the Department of Home Affairs as soon as practicable after this has been ascertained. This is in accordance with the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018.

The roles and responsibilities of students are detailed in the Student Handbook, the NAPS Student Code of Conduct and on the NAPS website under 'Present Students/Know Your Responsibilities. Students are expected to be aware of them.

For detailed information regarding intervention strategies, unit retakes and exclusion see SS013 Student Progression and Exclusion Policy on the NAPS website (Present Students/Student Policies).

Graduation

A student must pass all required units in an award course to graduate. The units passed must include all core units required for each level of study in the course.

8. Assessment Appeal Procedure

Step 1: Self-Review. Students should review their assessment items and note any comments provided by the lecturer.

Step 2: Informal Review. Where a student is dissatisfied with the assessment of an assignment and/or an examination result, the student should approach the relevant lecturer/unit coordinator in the first instance to discuss this and/or request review of that assessment. The consultation should be sought as soon as practicable and within seven days of notification of the assignment or examination result.

Step 3: Formal Review. If the student remains dissatisfied with the decision made after consultation with the lecturer/unit coordinator, the student may request a formal review by completing the SS001F Complaint Form. Their complaint will be noted on R004 Complaints and Assessment Appeals Register. Formal reviews against the assessment of assignments and or examination results must be lodged with the Student Services Office within five (5) working days of receipt of the assignment or examination result, subject to deadlines.

Formal reviews lodged after five (5) working days will generally not be considered. The request for review must clearly describe the grounds for formal review. There is no cost involved in lodging a formal review. A formal review may only be requested once per assessment.

The grounds for appeal will be based on one or more of the following:

- a. the learning outcomes were not clearly defined in the unit material;
- b. assessment tasks were not clearly defined in the unit material;
- c. an assessment procedure outlined in the unit material was not followed;
- d. alleged wrongful advice from teaching staff on issues such as the content of the examination or approval of an extension for an assignment;
- e. inappropriate application of marking criteria;
- f. errors in the calculation of the grades; and/or
- g. failure to mark a question.

The relevant Dean or their nominee will determine if the grounds for review are justified as per this policy. If the grounds for review do not meet the requirements of this document, the Student Services Office will notify the student that their review request has been rejected within five (5) working days. If the review is warranted, the Student Services Office will forward the request to the Dean who will nominate an independent marker to conduct the review with 5 business days.

Step 4: Review and Resolution. Following review by the independent marker, the student will normally be notified of the outcome via email within two (2) weeks of the date of lodgement of the formal review. All documentation pertaining to the review will be recorded in the student's file. If the original marking did not appropriately reflect the result of the assessment item, the result will be amended. The amended mark (higher or lower) will be recorded as the final result of that assessment item.

Step 5: Further Appeal. If the student remains dissatisfied with the decision, the student may appeal in line with SS001 Student Grievance and Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure.

9. Policy Review

NAPS may make changes to this policy and procedures from time to time to improve the effectiveness of its operation. In this regard, any staff member, student or member of Academic Board who wishes to make any comments about this policy may forward their suggestions to the Dean who may choose to refer the issue to the Academic Board (or designated Academic Board sub-committee).

10. Further Assistance

Any staff member who requires assistance in understanding this policy should first consult their nominated supervisor who is responsible for the implementation and operation of these arrangements in their work area. Should further advice be required staff should contact the relevant Dean.

11. Additional Resources for Rubric Development

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Quinlan, Audrey. *A Complete Guide To Rubrics: Assessment Made Easy For Teachers Of K-College*. 2nd ed., Rowman & Littlefield Education., 2011.

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Stiggins, R.J. 2001. *Student-involved classroom assessment*. 3rd ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

"The Advantages of Rubrics: Part One in a Five-Part Series". *TeacherVision* <https://www.teachervision.com/advantages-rubrics-part-one-five-part-series>